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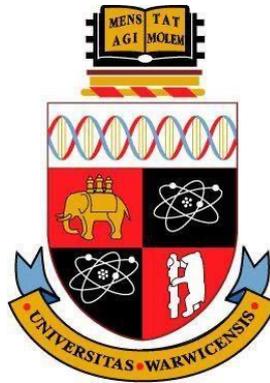
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**Challenging traditional understandings of leadership and followership  
through discourse: A sociolinguistic case study of a  
basketball team.**

by Anastasia Stavridou

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in Applied Linguistics

Department of Applied Linguistics

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*It is, therefore, long overdue, but is dedicated to them all.*

## Declaration

I declare that the thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or part, in any previous application for a degree at another university.

## Abstract

The study of leadership has attracted scholarly attention for decades and has been studied from various disciplines and analytical approaches; yet leadership remains an ambiguous concept. Moving away from position-based approaches to leadership, which are linked with individuals in hierarchical positions, this PhD project investigates the performance of leadership and followership practices in a UK university-level basketball team with no officially assigned coach. Through this case study analysis, leadership and followership are understood as discursive and collaborative constructs which various members of the team can enact, provided that they contribute to the accomplishment of the team's goals.

Adopting an ethnographic design and using qualitative techniques, the study unpacks the discursive construction of leadership and followership practices during the team's time-out interactions (i.e., the 60-seconds halt in the game which allows coaches to communicate with the team). The data, comprising more than 110 hours of video recordings and 7 semi-structured interviews, is analysed using the tools of Interactional Sociolinguistics.

Taking as a reference point previous critical approaches which challenge heroic notions of leadership, this study questions the notion of normalised leader-follower distinctions commonly found in sports literature and concludes that leadership and followership are ambiguous practices which are realised through discourse and are, in many cases, independent of hierarchy. While players make leadership claims, they are often engaged in followership activities too, illustrating that these concepts are more nuanced and often performed interchangeably. Contrary to psychological studies, followership is also understood as a discursive accomplishment rather than as the acceptance of the influence or the leadership of others. Consequently, the study contributes to ongoing theoretical debates about leadership and followership while adding to the current, rather limited, sociolinguistic body of literature about discursive leadership and followership in the world of sports.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction to the topic

The current thesis uses discourse analysis to raise questions about binary understandings of leadership and followership previously utilised in sports, shed light on the dynamics between leadership and followership, and illustrate the complexity and versatility of the two concepts. The study of leadership has captured academic interest from various disciplines for decades (Antonakis et al., 2004; Brass, 1990; Conger and Riggio, 2007), ranging from behavioural and organisational studies (Jackson & Parry, 2001; Popper, 2000), to workplace communication (Holmes & Marra, 2004; Schnurr & Zayts, 2011), educational management (Bush, 2018; Heck & Hallinger, 2005) and sports teams (Chelladurai, 2007; Fransen et al., 2015a, b). Nonetheless, leadership and followership have been approached as mutually exclusive practices, performed by particular individuals who can only enact one of them. While all these studies investigate leadership phenomena by focusing on the role of leaders as a factor for team cohesion or effectiveness, they tend to overlook followership and its significance to decision-making or conflict-management. This is particularly the case in sporting contexts where previous studies adopt leadership models which strictly separate leaders from followers. Therefore, by applying a discourse analytical approach to the study of leadership and followership, this thesis aims to offer a sociolinguistic nuance, particularly new to sports literature, contribute to contemporary leadership and followership debates, and encourage similar studies in the world of sports.

**Leadership:** The complexity of leadership is reflected in the number of scholars who have attempted to define it; Northouse (2019, p. 2) claims that there are as many definitions about leadership as the number of people who have attempted to define it. Likewise, Grint (2000, p. 1) states that his “understanding [of leadership] has decreased in direct proportion to [his] increased knowledge: in effect, the more [he] reads, the less [he] understands”. Such statements show how complex and multifaceted leadership phenomena are and explain scholars’ several attempts to

provide authentic conceptualisations of what constitutes leadership and how it is accomplished (Bass, 1998; Sinclair, 1998).

***Followership:*** Initial definitions of the concept of followership associated followers with subordinates and perceived them as passive recipients of leaders' practice (as summarised in Northouse, 2019, p. 294-295).

Taking such mainstream approaches as a reference point and utilising empirical data from a university-level basketball team with no officially assigned coach, the study illustrates how the traditional understandings of leadership and followership are often more complex, not always dependent on notional roles and formal positions. Therefore, the concepts are more fluid and less straightforward. Early studies in the leadership and followership dynamics have pointed out the interacting roles of leaders and followers where "[a] follower is a potential leader who chooses not to become active in a given situation" (Heller & Van Till, 1982, p. 407-408). Nevertheless, these studies are based on individuals' choices and behavioural patterns whereby they choose to adopt the role of the leader or of the follower (Heller & Van Till, 1982; Horsfall, 2001).

Contrary to these assumptions, the current PhD study examines the two concepts qualitatively by applying a discourse analytical framework to the study of leadership and followership. It offers empirical data to illustrate how asymmetrical power relations among the players of the basketball team in research give space to more players to step up and take over leadership responsibilities. Moreover, the data analysis suggests that followership practices are as crucial as the leadership ones for the team's successful problem-solving or strategic planning. Hence, in opposition to previous leadership studies in team sports which separate leaders from followers and present followers as "passive" and "silent" (Alcorn, 1992; Guenter et al., 2017), the current study illustrates the proactive role of followers and their importance for leadership performance. It does this by analysing naturally occurring data.

## 1.2 Previous leadership studies in sports teams

Sports contexts are rich research sites offering authentic data – both observational and interactional, for the study of several phenomena (Wilson, 2009), including leadership. Yet, sociolinguistic studies on leadership discourse in sports teams are still not widely published. In most cases, sports teams have caught scholar's attention in cognate fields, such as (sports) psychology, sociology and sports management. Research has focused on quantifying coach effectiveness (Sullivan & Kent, 2003), on the links between team cohesion and athlete satisfaction (Gomes et al., 2011; Light Shields et al., 1997), or, specifically on the relation between cohesion and intrateam communication (Smith et al., 2013; Sullivan & Gee, 2007).

In all these studies, leadership has been approached quantitatively, by utilising leadership models based on statistical tools with the aim of understanding coaches' efficacy or the coach-athlete relationship (see for instance, Shields et al., 1997; Sullivan & Kent, 2003). Particularly, using the Multidimensional Model of Leadership (MML developed by Chelladuari & Carron, 1978), Light Shields et al. (1997) measure the relationship between leader behaviours and team cohesion. Using the Coaching Efficacy Scale and the Leadership Scale of Sports models (Chelladuarai & Saleh, 1980), other studies examine coaching efficacy as a predictor of leadership style (Sullivan & Kent, 2003) or as a predictor of university coaches' level of commitment (Kent & Sullivan, 2003). More recently and with an interest in interpersonal relationships and the shared nature of leadership between coaches and team players, Fransen et al. (2015a) apply social network analysis to investigate how leadership is shared between the team captain and the informal emerging leaders. As leadership is associated with coaching practices, the notion of followership is not considered in these leadership studies, and followership is often overlooked in the sports field.

Recently however a shift towards more discourse-oriented studies which adopt a discursive leadership approach introduced by Gail Fairhurst (2007) has been noticed. In this approach, the notions of leadership and followership have received greater critical attention. Among others, Wilson's (2011) PhD thesis closely examined how the discursive strategies of the players of a rugby team signal membership of a

particular Community of Practice (CofP)<sup>1</sup> and create leader identities. More recently, a study by Schnurr et al. (2021) on a netball team highlights the benefits of using discourse analysis when showing how emergent leadership is claimed, negotiated, challenged, and finally conceptualised among the players of a netball team. This is further discussed in Section 2.3.

Despite the increasing interest in discourse analytical studies which investigate issues in the sports context, the concept of followership and its enactment in relation to leadership remains somewhat under-researched. Taking as a reference point these recent studies, alongside the current follower-centred approaches to leadership, my PhD thesis aims to question simplistic understandings of leadership by illustrating how leader and follower identities are shaped discursively, and to provide a more critical sociolinguistic perspective to the study of leadership and followership phenomena.

### 1.3 Addressing the research gap

As outlined in Section 1.2, previous leadership studies in the sports context, mostly employ a quantitative methodology and only focus on leadership phenomena. Studies focusing on followership or combining the study of leadership and followership are still limited. As a result, debates on the two concepts remain at a theoretical level without providing empirical data for the study of leadership and followership in naturally occurring environments.

The focus on quantitatively measured datasets on the one hand and the lack of empirical evidence on the other result in definitions of static terms which are based on quantitative enquiries and predictions rather than on data deriving from the in-situ enactment of the practices. Consequently, the definitions fail to address the complexities of the two notions and only provide superficial understandings of them.

While some studies apply a discourse analytical lens to address and unpack leadership phenomena in sports teams, most of them explore only the leadership

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<sup>1</sup>Communities of Practice (CofP), as defined by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Lave and Wenger, 1991, will be further discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.

aspect of the leadership-followership continuum. Hence, there appears to be a lack of empirical studies which concentrate on both leadership and followership practices. Therefore, the present research aims to engage in more critical discussion about the two concepts deriving from a more holistic study of them, and to address this gap in the literature.

As a consequence, the study moves away from “measured” aspects of leadership which associate the phenomenon with team cohesion, coach efficacy and interpersonal relations among the interacting parts, and focuses on the discursive strategies employed by the players when claiming leadership and followership and thus, constructing their leader and follower identities. In fact, some of the aforementioned discourse analytical studies as well as studies discussed in more detail in Section 2.5, follow the discursive perspective to the study of leadership, and they specifically use Interactional Sociolinguistics for the analysis of the data. Apart from these studies in the sporting world, a recently published study by Schnurr & Mohd Omar (2021) also highlights the benefits of utilising Interactional Sociolinguistics as an analytical framework when analysing examples of leadership, gender and humour in a range of (online) interactional contexts, such as emails, WhatsApp messages and face-to-face meetings. Nevertheless, to the best of my knowledge, there is no study exploring the leadership and followership performance among the players of a sports team which employs Interactional Sociolinguistics as an analytical framework. Thus, the present study aims to illustrate how the methodological tools of Interactional Sociolinguistics can benefit the study of complex social phenomena such as leadership and followership by shedding light on aspects of the phenomena which cannot be captured by quantitative studies.

By applying Interactional Sociolinguistics as an analytical framework, the analysis of leadership and followership moves beyond the superficial level of understanding that qualitative methodologies (for instance, questionnaires or surveys) offer, and ultimately, helps unpack and conceptualise leadership and followership in the sports world as well as the dynamics between these two practices. Hence, employing Interactional Sociolinguistics to the study of leadership and followership offers a more holistic and thicker description of these versatile social practices.

To conclude, with the current study I aim to address the gap in the existing literature on the discursive construction of leadership and followership, and, to contribute to the current calls for more critical approaches to leadership and followership. This is done by analysing naturally occurring data deriving from observations, video-recordings during the team's games, and follow-up interviews with the players. Using the players' linguistic strategies (directives, use of address terms, motivational and encouraging comments, war cry) as distinctive features of both sports discourse and of the team under investigation, the study explores how the players construct their leader and follower identities and how these notions shift from time-out to time-out or even during the same one. Having addressed the research gap, the next section explains the motivation behind the study and Chapter 1 concludes with the thesis outline.

#### 1.4 Motivation of the study

My motivation for conducting a study on leadership mainly stems from my interest in leadership research which I first explored during my postgraduate studies. Having studied phenomena of leadership, teamwork and communication from a discourse analytical perspective and touched on issues related to how individuals construct themselves as leaders through their linguistic choices, I decided to pursue a PhD to further investigate the topic of leadership phenomena. As I was at the early stages of my research and after being invited to join a research project of the Sports Culture and Communication Research Collective (SCCRC) on the leadership processes among the players of a netball team, I discovered that sociolinguistic studies in sports teams were still limited. Hence, I decided to follow this trajectory in my study.

Although this thesis has been driven from my interest in discursive construction of leadership performance that extends beyond the team captain to include players with no assigned roles in the team, the focus has been evolving over the course of the study. Looking at data where leadership practices were shared between two players (Chapter 5) and realising that besides leadership, some players also perform followership had a critical contribution to the study focus. Although the notion of followership was not included in the initial research agenda, it emerged as a core

topic when I started the analysis of data. After a preliminary analysis of data, I realised that followership practices were also pivotal when decisions were made among the players. A brief survey of the existing followership literature was enough to grab my research interest and make me question mainstream understandings of leadership and followership, and unpack how these are conceptualised through discourse instead of being dichotomous terms, as previously perceived by studies in sports.

## 1.5 Thesis outline

The thesis consists of eight chapters. The Introduction (Chapter 1) is followed by the Literature Review (Chapter 2). Chapter 2 discusses key concepts of my study, such as the two paradigms of leadership psychology and discursive leadership, the various leadership constellations, followership, as well as Critical Leadership Studies (CLS) extensively. The chapter concludes with the research questions.

The Research Methodology (Chapter 3) elaborates on the study design and its limitations, the research site and the framework used to analyse the data, namely, Interactional Sociolinguistics. Chapter 3 concludes with a discussion of the several methods through which data was collected (observations, video-recordings and semi-structured follow-up interviews), my role as a researcher, and lastly, with the limitations and ethical considerations of the study.

The following three chapters (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) zoom into the micro-level of the interactions and illustrate how leadership and followership performance is accomplished by one, two or more team players respectively. While analysing the data in Chapters 5 and 6, particular emphasis is also put on the notion of followership activities which occur during the communicative practices.

The Discussion chapter (Chapter 7) clarifies the main findings, links them with the current trends of leadership studies and discusses them critically.

Finally, the Conclusion chapter (Chapter 8) summarises the main findings, highlights the contributions of the study to the field of leadership in sports contexts and indicates areas for future research.

## 2. Literature Review

This chapter provides the theoretical background of the study, discusses previous research on relevant aspects of leadership and followership – situated both in sporting contexts and in the wider body of leadership and followership literature – and thus, outlines how the empirical data aim to bridge the conceptual gap in our understandings of leadership and followership. The Literature Review is divided into three broader clusters: *(i)* the theoretical, *(ii)* the contextual, and *(iii)* the conceptual frames for this study.

In more detail, 2.1 introduces leadership and followership and explains how previous research has situated the co-existence of these two concepts. The relationship between leadership and followership becomes clearer in 2.2 which further discusses the notion of followership. Then, 2.3 elaborates on traditional understandings of leadership and the different leadership constellations, thus leading to a critical evaluation of the phenomenon by introducing Critical Leadership Studies in 2.4. The theoretical cluster concludes with the discursive approach to leadership which is the paradigm adopted in the current study in 2.5.

The contextual cluster follows in 2.6 which elaborates on aspects of leadership specifically in the sports domain. Hence, the sections in this cluster discuss previous studies of leadership discourse in the sporting context which often reinforce unidirectional leadership structures.

Lastly, the final part of the chapter concludes with the conceptual frames of the study, such as identity and the discursive construction of it (Section 2.7), the concept of Communities of Practice (CofP) in 2.8 and finally some features of sports discourse which are useful for the understanding of the processes taking place during time-outs (Section 2.9). The Literature Review concludes with the Research Questions in 2.10.

### ***The theoretical cluster: Leadership and followership***

As the following sections illustrate, leadership and followership have been treated as two distinctive concepts which can co-exist but are mutually exclusive. Despite the range of leadership constellations acknowledging the involvement of various individuals in the leadership performance (for instance, co-leadership, distributed or shared leadership), previous studies emphasise leadership over followership and tend to reinforce this dichotomy between the two concepts. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap in the literature by providing empirical data which is analysed and critically discussed in the following chapters. In this chapter, the critical discussion of the two concepts is done in 2.4 where CLS are introduced.

#### 2.1 Leadership: a brief introduction to the term

Theorising leadership is a challenging task (Angouri & Marra, 2011; Schnurr & Van De Mieroop, 2017) that researchers from various disciplines have attempted to conceptualise and explore (Holmes & Marra, 2004; Holmes et al., 2011, p. 42). Although leadership has been traditionally studied by organisational sciences (Sinclair, 1998; Parry, 2001), the increased interest in and focus on language within social sciences has led to a linguistic turn in the study of leadership (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Svennevig, 2008; Tourish, 2007). On his attempt to conceptualise leadership, organisational scientist Keith Grint (2010, p. 3) identifies **four** trajectories of approaching leadership:

- i. ***a person-based approach*** – understood when an individual performs leadership;
- ii. ***a process approach*** – associated with the leadership style adopted by the leaders;
- iii. ***a positional approach*** – based on the authority, on the notional roles that one has; and
- iv. ***a results' approach*** – evaluated based on the achieved goals of a group.

In line with the assumption that defining leadership is tricky, Ilie & Schnurr (2017, p. 3) note that these various approaches suggested by Grint (2010) are highly linked and overlap with each other.

Although it is not within the scope of this research to focus on the various ways of conceptualising leadership, it is worth unpacking Grint's approaches in brief. Person-based leadership was the focus of early leadership studies and emphasises leader's influence; thus, leadership is described as an interpersonal process (Ilie & Schnurr, 2017, p. 3). However, more recent scholarship views leadership as a practice in which the focus shifts from the leader to the interaction between leaders and those who are viewed as followers. According to Burns (1978), who first introduced the concept of "transactional leadership", leadership is described as "a social process that involves leaders and followers interacting and working together to achieve common interests and mutually defined ends". By contrast, transformational (or relational) leadership emphasises the relationship that the leader creates with their followers and how organisational members and leaders interactively define and negotiate leadership (Ilie & Schnurr, 2017, p. 3). As highlighted in the introduction, although followers are incorporated in the theories developed for understanding leadership as a practice, leaders and followers are seen as clearly distinguishable roles filled by different individuals who are either superior or inferior to one another.

The ability to influence others, which lies at the core of the person-based approach to leadership, is the focal point highlighted by many leadership studies conducted in the areas of business communication, organisational studies and psychology (Alvesson, 1995; Gilbert et al., 2017; Manson et al., 2014; Parry, 2001; Sinclair, 1998). In these studies, leadership is associated with hierarchical positions and "heroic" leaders who set goals for their followers. Nonetheless, the flatter organisational structures of contemporary organisations (Clifton, 2017, p. 45; Schnurr, 2013, p. 19, 174), increase the interest in discourse analytical approaches to leadership which focus on the interactions of the interlocutors instead of looking at the personal traits of individual leaders. Discursive leadership, a term introduced by Gail Fairhurst (2007), has been proposed as an alternative to leadership psychology. Both concepts are discussed in more detail below.

### 1.1.1 Leadership psychology vs discursive leadership

The two strands of leadership scholarship, leadership psychology and discursive leadership, originate from the dualism between two major schools of thought, essentialism and social constructivism. Essentialism refers to the philosophical stance that derives from the works of Plato and Aristotle on the essence of things and ideas, according to which reality pre-exists social order (as summarised in Angouri, 2018, p. 18). As Bucholtz (2003, p. 400) explains, essentialism considers that cultural and/or biological characteristics are inherited by social groups, and consequently, they determine the groups' attributes and behaviour. Thus, leadership psychologists place leadership in the mental capacities or internal capabilities of the leader, and on their effectiveness to influence followers and implement tasks (Chen, 2008; Clifton, 2017, p. 45; Fairhurst, 2008; Robinson, 2001). This approach to leadership is mostly applied in business, management and organisational studies, where leaders are seen as charismatic heroes who are typically presented as management models (House & Howell, 1992; Jackson & Parry, 2001; Popper, 2000; Proctor-Thomson & Parry, 2001). Nonetheless, heroic approaches to leadership have been increasingly challenged over the past decade by numerous scholars both in the field of linguistics (see for instance, Clifton, 2012, 2017, Holmes & Marra, 2004, Holmes et al., 2007, Schnurr & Chan, 2011; Vine et al., 2008) and in the field of organisational studies (Day et al., 2004; Gronn, 2002; Mehra et al., 2006). Although the latter has traditionally adopted leader-centred perspectives, according to which leaders have clearly identifiable positions and tasks to fulfil, recent studies question such perspectives which are limited to the personality and skills of one charismatic leader and disregard the team dynamics and performance (Mehra et al., 2006).

On the contrary, according to social constructivism, realities are created through interactions and are reflective of the activities of social agents (Chen, 2008; Hacking, 1999). As Astley (1985) underlines there is not "some objectifiable reality truth waiting to be uncovered through scientific inquiry" in social constructionist terms. Rather, there can be multiple realities constructed through social processes of negotiation and contestation (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). Consequently, discursive approaches to leadership tend to focus on how leadership as a process is

accomplished through discourse, how it emerges through the process of managing meaning and how it is co-constructed, negotiated and shared among participants (Clifton, 2012; Fairhurst, 2007, p. 5; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Holmes & Marra, 2004; Schnurr & Schroeder, 2019).

Having outlined and explained the two schools of thought with regards to approaching leadership, the next section elaborates on the second major concept of the study, followership.

## 2.2 Followership

Followership is a concept which researchers relate with leadership, and thus, the two notions have been studied comparatively and in open discussion with each other, yet with the emphasis on leadership (Heller & Van Til, 1982; Hollander, 1992). From their inception in the mid-1950s, the terms follower and followership were used to refer to the traditional interpretation of what constitutes followership, which was considered to be the acceptance of the influence of a leader (Herold, 1977; Hodgkinson, 1983). This mainstream conceptualisation of followership depends on the passive role of the followers and the acceptance that one person (most often the highest in the ranking) can be the only leader of a team. On one hand, beginning 1980s some studies tend to associate the term “follower” with the term “subordinate” (as explained in Crossman & Crossman, 2011; Northouse, 2019), which results in a dichotomy between “active leaders” and “passive followers” who accept the influence of “the” leader (Hannah et al., 2014). On the other hand, Heller and Van Til (1982, p. 405) highlight that the two concepts are “not only closely related, but also important to study in interaction with each other”. This close link is also emphasised by previous studies which point out that the act of leadership lies in the ability of leaders to persuade followers to the fulfilment of certain goals based on the norms, the culture and the values of their community (Burns, 1978, p. 19; Van Til, 1973).

In spite of these early conceptualisations of followership, recent studies tend to overlook notional roles and assigned titles and focus on the interaction and the

discursive processes between leaders and followers (Agho, 2009; Baker, 2007; Benson et al., 2015). These studies have challenged the binary opposition which emphasises “the ability of individuals to completely and proactively follow the instructions and support the efforts of their superior to achieve organisational goals” (Agho, 2009, p. 159). Moreover, current scholarship in the area of followership points out that followers have rather a proactive role in the leadership process, which leads to attempts to redefine and conceptualise what is “new” about followership (Baker, 2007; Benson et al., 2015; Crossman & Crossman, 2011).

The active role of followers within leadership practice has twofold consequences. On the one hand, the dynamic relationship between the leaders and followers results in a more active role for the leaders during the leadership performance, whereas on the other hand, followership behaviours often emerge without instruction or permission by the leader (Benson et al., 2015; Haslam & Platow, 2016). Therefore, one realises not only how blurred the lines between the two notions are, but also how the active and dynamic enactment of the roles of leaders and followers result in what is called “effective leadership” (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Thus, Baker (2007, p. 50), highlights that “leadership could no longer be studied in isolation or with only a small nod to followers”. Consequently, more empirical studies are needed to explore how the dynamic relationship between leadership and followership is conceptualised through discourse and this is what the current study aims to address.

Despite various scholars’ call for more emphasis on the study of followership from a follower-centric perspective (Brown & Thornborrow, 1996), the notion of followership remains overlooked in many studies. Agho (2009) lists and explains four core interrelated reasons as to why there is a lack of research purely focused on followership. According to him, the main reason for this lack is that followership is mostly associated with negative terms, such as “passive” or “low status” and seldom presented as being as important as leadership. Secondly, the traditional hierarchical relationship between leaders and followers which establishes a stereotypical leader-follower exchange relationship, when combined with the professional development opportunities, which are mainly tailored to leaders, results in the lack of studies on followership. This third reason is related with the final one, according to which,

academic business programmes tend to overlook how the attributes of effective followers are distinct from the less effective ones.

However, most studies tend to agree that the reason behind the lack of systematic and distinct research on followership is the connotations of the term “follower”, which is often a synonym for “subordinate” (Baker, 2007; Chaleff, 1995; Crossman & Crossman, 2011). Thus, the present case study which is based on a context of no officially assigned leader, namely of a coach offers the opportunity to study leadership and followership in relation to each other without considering any pre-existing roles within the team.

In their attempt to lay the foundations for more followership-centred studies, Crossman and Crossman (2011) provide a succinct literature review of overlapping categories of leadership and followership. According to their review, the two concepts can be classified along a spectrum of four overlapping categories which encompass **(i)** individualised or leader-centric theories, **(ii)** leader-centred theories which rely on follower perspectives, **(iii)** shared, distributed or collective leadership, and finally, **(iv)** followership literature itself (Crossman & Crossman, 2011, p. 484). As previously explained, the first category refers to person-based leadership where “top-level” or “exceptional” leaders (Burns, 1978; Mumford et al., 2008; Sashkin, 2004) employ their vision and mission statements to influence followers (Crossman & Crossman, 2011). However, since the 1980s, such studies with a heroic leadership approach have been challenged; Meindl et al. (1985) provided a study which places followers in the foreground of leadership enactment.

Recent studies place leadership and followership in close relation to each other and do not reinforce the dichotomies of the past. Doing a post-structuralist analysis, D. Collinson (2006) concludes that “leaders should motivate followers by shaping their identities” (p. 186); he adds that leaders’ impact on followers’ identities may be more nuanced than previously thought and concludes that leaders’ and followers’ identities are “inextricably linked, mutually reinforcing and shifting within specific contexts” (p. 187). Thus, he makes a call for more leadership studies with a broader focus on followers’ identities and the ways followers interact with leaders (D.

Collinson, 2006). A similar finding is highlighted by Avolio and Reichard (2008) in their attempt to contribute to the theory of authentic leadership development. Their study examines how leadership constellations are developed in dynamic interactions between leaders and followers. This opens the way for more bottom-up approaches where multiple individuals can emerge as leaders from group interactions regardless of a formally appointed leader role. Lastly, purely follower-centred approaches acknowledge the shift from “hierarchical systems to more fluid roles in team-based environments” which rely on the combination of both formally and informally appointed individuals performing leadership (Crossman & Crossman, 2011, p. 485).

Following these developments in the study of followership, Baker (2007) presents the theoretical foundations of the phenomenon and points out that although followership first appeared in the literature during the 1930s, it was only after the post-war era and the emergence of behavioural theories that the interest in the followers’ behaviour increased (Hollander & Webb, 1955; Zaleznik, 1965). The term gained popularity again in the 1990s owing to the works of Kelley (1992) and Chaleff (1995), who contributed to the development of “followership” as an independent term. However, as Crossman and Crossman (2011) notice, their studies are rather descriptive; although they create a new model of followership, the “courageous follower” which incorporates the role of followers (Chaleff, 1995), their model reflects ideal behaviours and is not based on empirical data, and thus, has been criticised. As a consequence, the need for a new, in-depth conceptualisation of followership has emerged, one that would not overlook leadership and followership practices, but rather, explore how these processes take place in situ.

Therefore, in line with the gradual shift in leadership literature from heroic notions to more distributed leadership constellations, followership understandings have also evolved. According to new conceptualisations of the leader-follower relation, followers are actively involved in the leadership process rather than passively. Indeed, in his enquiry into the origin of followership, Baker (2007) draws on Hollander (1974), who was one of the first researchers who attempted to conceptualise followership and its relation to leadership. During his inquiry, Baker (2007, p. 51) notices that “the fixed leader role was idealised, and its idealisation led

to making sharp and distinct difference between leader and follower". The socially constructed relationship between leaders and followers is also emphasised by DeRue and Ashford (2010) who question the equation of those holding supervisory positions as "leaders" and the ones reporting to them as "followers", because it "underplays the socially constructed and reciprocal relationship between leaders and followers" (p. 628). Contrary to previous static conceptualisations of the two contexts, they propose that "leader and follower identities can shift among group members through a social construction process" (p. 628). This line of argument is adopted in the current study.

Taking this as a reference point, more and more researchers in the field of leadership studies highlight the crucial role of asymmetrical power relations and discursive approaches to leadership and followership and invite other researchers to participate in a more critical engagement with these concepts (Fairhurst, 2011; D. Collinson, 2011, 2017; M. Collinson, 2018; Schnurr & Schroeder, 2019). D. Collinson's (2011, p. 182) observations about the power dynamics and shifting asymmetrical interrelations between leaders, followers and contexts align with Critical Leadership Studies which "emphasise that leadership dynamics can emerge informally in more subordinated and dispersed relationships, positions and locations". To put it simply, followers have a key role in the leadership process: they have a rather proactive role and their role is of equal importance to that of leaders as very often it is the followers' response to the leaders' instructions which somewhat determines the outcome of the leadership process (Agho, 2009; Baker, 2007; Benson, 2015; D. Collinson, 2011, p. 184; Hannah et al., 2014).

Consequently, more empirical studies which rely on the discursive strategies through which leadership dynamics emerge are needed to explore this dynamic relationship between leaders and followers. By focusing on such strategies which occur on a turn-by-turn basis, not only does one understand how dynamic leadership and followership are, but also how the participants discursively construct themselves as leaders and followers. As DeRue and Ashford (2010) highlight, there has been little research exploring how leader and follower identities are collectively constructed. Though they do identify a few verbal as well as non-verbal processes through which

individuals claim or grant leader and follower identities (DeRue & Ashford, 2010, p. 632 onwards). These claims may happen either directly or indirectly and although DeRue and Ashford (2010, p. 631-632) have identified several verbal and non-verbal acts which are used to claim a follower identity (explicitly presented in Section 3.8), their work still remains at a theoretical level.

Therefore, D. Collinson (2017) points out the need for further empirical studies on the leadership dynamics and the dialectical asymmetries and not the reinforcement of dichotomies in terminology, as previously done by Learmonth and Morrell (2017). In fact, Critical Leadership Studies can benefit from the emphasis on the language of leadership, which can “facilitate a deeper understanding of how power and control are typically centralised and enacted in contemporary organisations” (D. Collinson, 2017, p. 276). Based on empirical data derived from team time-outs, my study aims to unpack the concept of followership, explore what the relationship between leadership and followership is, and finally, discuss what these understandings mean for current debates about leadership studies, especially in sports contexts. This is done through the analysis of examples in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

### 2.3 Expanding the leadership landscape: from traditional to contemporary leadership constellations

This section elaborates on the development of leadership constellations. Starting with the traditional hierarchical leadership models applied by organisational behaviour and leadership studies, the section proceeds to consider current leadership constellations, such as co-leadership and shared leadership. It explains how top-down leadership models which were dominant during the previous decades have gradually given more space to collaborative leadership constellations. As the storyline narrates how leadership is realised and enacted by one, two or multiple players, it is important to acknowledge these key concepts here.

Based on previous studies, the structural changes of contemporary organisations have resulted in flatter, laterally integrated workplace dynamics (Clifton, 2017; Jackson & Parry, 2008), with a consequent impact on the patterns of communication,

too (Schnurr, 2009, p. 157). A major strand of the traditional leadership constellations are the person-based approaches to leadership, which, as outlined in Section 2.1, are based on the personal characteristics of an individual. Thus, the constellations resonate with the traditional traits approach (Alvesson & Billing, 1997; Grint, 2010, p. 7; Parry, 2001; Sinclair, 1998). According to this constellation, leadership results from the traits of “a charismatic [leader] to whom followers are attracted because of the charismatic person’s ‘magnetism’” (Grint, 2010, p. 7), or, from someone “who possesses certain qualities or characteristics”, as Jackson and Parry frame it (2018, p. 19). Such notions to leadership are traced back to Zelenzick’s (1977) concept of the “Great man”, according to which leaders are in positions of hierarchy and are dynamic agents who can influence, and therefore, change passive followers. Thus, leadership is defined as a top-down process of influence through which leaders change the way followers envision themselves; hence the term “transformational leadership”. Leaders are seen as “super-humans” or “the men at the top” who make decisions based on their authority and notional roles. Consequently, in such leadership constellations, followers are those who passively accept the influence of the charismatic leader and have no involvement in the enactment of leadership practice (Hollander, 1992). Therefore, the binary opposition between active leaders and passive followers, which is encouraged by this heroic conceptualisation of leadership, is unavoidable.

Following this perspective, traditional leadership approaches also specify the five vital characteristics that one should possess in order to lead effectively. According to Jackson and Parry (2018, p. 19) these include confidence, integrity, connection, resilience, and aspiration. Hence, leadership is conceptualised as a heroic notion, deriving from the ‘leader – follower – goal’ tripod (Drath et al., 2008), in which leaders are linked with hierarchical positions, are vigilant, and able to act immediately judging from the emotional strengths and weaknesses of their followers, while also expected to enjoy “leading” others (Dries & Pepermans, 2012; Jackson & Parry, 2018).

According to behavioural studies, these essential characteristics of heroic leaders are related to two fundamental dimensions of effective leadership behaviour, namely

the “task behaviours” and the “relational behaviours” (Yukl, 2002; Yukl et al., 2002). Task behaviours entail behaviours oriented to accomplishing goals and getting things done, therefore leaders are expected to “lead by example” and direct others towards task completion (Yukl et al., 2020; Yukl et al., 2002). On the contrary, relational behaviours refer to the behaviours which indicate emotional concern about people, include interpersonal aspects of communication and aim at establishing and maintaining rapport among the members of a group (Yukl et al., 2020, p. 54-56). These dimensions are similar to the transactional and relational aspects of leadership discourse as called in sociolinguistic terms and are discussed in Section 3.8. Chapter 4 adopts this traditional approach to leadership and focuses on examples where leadership is performed by one player.

Yet, with rapid changes in the workplaces at a global level, these dominant theories have been questioned by rather collaborative leadership constellations, which consider all interacting individuals, not only those in leadership roles. Such approaches are highly favoured by (socio)linguistic studies. One of these perspectives is co-leadership, a term first introduced by Heenan and Bennis (1999, p. 6), which describes those instances where two leaders at superordinate-subordinate positions [...] share leadership responsibilities – they are “truly exceptional deputies – extremely talented men and women, often more capable than their more highly acclaimed superiors”. Such pairs which co-lead may include the CEO – CFO; president – vice-president; chancellor – vice-chancellor; prime minister – deputy prime minister.

Jackson and Parry’s (2008, p. 55-56) spectrum places leadership constellations along a continuum which visually represents leadership constellations from the solo to the distributed ones. Along this continuum, solo (heroic) leadership and co-leadership are at the left-hand side, with shared and distributed leadership constellations being at the right-hand side of the spectrum. Considering this spectrum, Holmes et al (2011, p. 108) examined the case of co-leadership by looking at how the co-leaders of four different organisations collaborate and enact leadership successfully. Following a discourse analytical perspective, they concluded that leadership was co-constructed

by both co-leaders, one of whom was setting the goals while the other was motivating and inspiring the employees.

Likewise, Schnurr & Chan (2011) also explore how co-leadership is understood as a dynamic process when the interacting members position themselves as well as each other as leaders and co-leaders. In this study, co-leadership was also realised through the identity construction and the face-work of the interlocutors' workplace talk. Similar observations were made by Vine et al. (2008) who illustrated how co-leadership was achieved through the shared leadership responsibilities between the co-leaders. These responsibilities include transactional and relational aspects of leadership discourse and refer to goals which are either work-related (transactional), or to goals with a focus on maintaining and fostering relationships (relational) (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Schnurr, 2013). Transactional and relational aspects, which are usually intertwined with each other (Schnurr, 2013, p. 11), are the tools to analyse leadership and followership actions embodied in the language.

When it comes to the context of this study, previous studies on leadership in sports teams have indicated that more democratic and participative ways of co-leadership (Filley & House, 1969, p. 399-400) appear to be more effective even when there is an officially assigned coach (for instance, Pratt and Eitzen's quantitative study on male basketball teams, 1989). As Fransen et al. (2015a) highlight, co-leadership between coaches and athletes is a quite frequent phenomenon in sports teams. Their study shows how athlete-leaders were perceived as better motivational leaders than their coaches due to their shared social identities with the team.

Similarly, Wilson's (2017) ethnographic study on a New Zealand rugby team reveals that despite the presence of two coaches and additional leading figures – such as the two team captains, the vice-captain and several emerging leaders among the players – leadership practices are still shared among various individuals who can be involved in the leadership processes provided that this is in line with the culture and the repertoire of their CofP. While Wilson's (2017) study pays particular attention to the role of the discourse used when making leadership claims, the aforementioned studies employ quantitative research methods in search of co-leadership. Drawing

on examples of co-leadership, Chapter 5 explores how leadership is co-constructed between two players and advance our understanding of it by paying attention to followership practices which are also shared. Nonetheless, leadership and followership activities are not always straightforward or co-constructed between two individuals.

According to the leadership continuum proposed by Jackson and Parry (2008, p. 61), shared leadership constellations are placed towards the right end of the spectrum. The notion of shared leadership refers to those activities in which several members of a team are involved and thus “responsibility for guiding a group can rotate among its members, depending on the demands of the situation and the particular skills and resources required at that moment” (Jackson and Parry, 2008, p. 61). As they further explain, any member of the group can take over leadership responsibilities before passing these responsibilities to someone else. In fact, there is a need for the establishment of environments where all members feel empowered to be involved in leadership activities (Jackson & Parry, 2008, p. 61; Raelin, 2003, p. xi). Additionally, leadership studies in organisational contexts have found that the inclusion of more members of a team in the enactment of leadership results in a higher degree of effectiveness due to the collaboration of various individuals (Crevani et al., 2007).

More recent and critical leadership constellations place shared leadership under the umbrella of distributed leadership perspectives (Clifton, 2017, p. 46). By contrast to vertical, top-down approaches to leadership, shared approaches to leadership question the individual level perspective and emphasise leadership as a group-level practice (Fletcher & Käufer, 2002; Northouse, 2019, p. 371, Pearce & Sims, 2000; Raelin, 2003, p. 27-28; Yukl, 1998). As Fletcher & Käufer (2002, p. 23) explain, shared leadership is understood “as a dynamic, multidirectional, collective activity” where social interactions of the group are placed in the core of the practice. Following a similar line of thought, Raelin (2003) explains that shared leadership encompasses these practices where leadership responsibilities are shared among the members of a group. Despite the acknowledgement of the importance of both leaders and followers in shared leadership constellations, all these studies have leadership as their primary focus, with followership only appearing as a secondary concept. Hence,

critical approaches to leadership tend to espouse the perception that leadership is not restricted to a coach, but rather it can be shared between coaches and players or among players themselves as leadership activities unfold (Leo et al., 2019).

In spite of the shift to more critical approaches to the study of leadership, followership as a concept remains underresearched. Therefore, Chapter 6 critically analyses and discusses how notions of shared leadership and followership are discursively constructed and what their enactment means for current conceptualisations of leadership and followership. The following section introduces and elaborates on critical perspectives to leadership at a more sufficient level.

#### 2.4 Critical Leadership Studies (CLS)

As previously mentioned, the conceptual cluster of the Literature Review begins with existing literature on traditional understandings of leadership and followership and gradually leads to Critical Leadership Studies, within which the present study is situated as it critically examines the construction of leadership and followership through discourse.

The role of followership has been of particular interest to relatively recent, critical approaches to the study of leadership which can be classified under the umbrella of CLS. CLS comprise broad, diverse and heterogeneous perspectives to leadership studies which question traditional leadership theorisations deriving from top-down power relations (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; D. Collinson, 2011, 2014, 2017). Hence, CLS challenge mainstream leadership conceptualisations which tend to underestimate the complexity of leadership dynamics and base their theories on traditional understandings where leadership is associated with the notional roles of the leaders (D. Collinson, 2011, 2014). Drawing on a variety of approaches and on the more established field of Critical Management Studies (CMS), a field that focuses more on management and less on leadership (Fournier & Grey, 2000), CLS have a different focal point. CLS emphasise the power dynamics among interacting individuals and highlight the ways in which workplace power and identity dynamics are constructed through shifting, intersecting and contradictory forms (D. Collinson, 2017).

Consequently, CLS seek to find new paths of thinking which critique the rhetoric and the traditional authorities of leadership phenomena (Mingers, 2000).

In their attempt to question mainstream leadership understandings and to consider the importance of the context and of the leadership dynamics, aspects which are overlooked by CMS, CLS seek to promote critical dialogue around leadership phenomena and to encourage innovative approaches to the study of leadership. Thus, by combining the approaches of various disciplines (Bryman, 2011; D. Collinson, 2011), CLS have an advantage in comparison to CMS. By drawing on a range of intellectual traditions (from structuralism to critical realism and deconstruction, D. Collinson, 2011, p. 181), CLS incorporate the processes through which leadership is socially and discursively constructed and emphasise the interwoven relation between leadership and management (D. Collinson, 2011). Therefore, CLS acknowledge the significance of power relations, asymmetries, and followership for the study of leadership. Contrary to mainstream leadership conceptualisations which are leader-oriented around a charismatic leader (Conger, 1999; House, 1976) and intend to question what makes an effective leader and what qualities an effective leader should have (Jackson and Parry, 2008; Northouse, 2009), CLS approach leadership as a social construct accomplished through meaningful negotiation (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010).

Thus, discursive approaches have increased significantly in recent years and they reveal how reality can be different from theory. According to several studies in workplaces that employ naturally occurring data (e.g., Choi & Schnurr, 2014; Holmes & Marra, 2004; Schnurr & Chan, 2011), reality is more complex than existing studies present. In fact, in such traditional approaches, leaders are considered as heroes who transform or inspire followers to greater commitment due to their charismatic skills, profound values and motivation (Antonakis, 2011; Burns, 1978; Conger, 2011). By inspiring the identities of their followers, charismatic leaders achieve the accomplishment of their goals (Conger, 1999; Lord & Brown, 2003). This explains why such top-down approaches perceive leadership as a process of influence where followers reflect the vision of their leaders and are only passive subordinates (Gronn, 2002; Northouse, 2009, p. 24-25). As Goffee and Jones (2001, p. 148) frame it, such

approaches portray followers as “an empty vessel waiting to be led, or even transformed, by the leader”. It is exactly this gap between leaders and followers proposed by traditional leadership conceptualisations that CLS address by adopting a social-constructivist lens which emphasises the crucial role of followers for the enactment of leadership (D. Collinson, 2006, Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Ospina & Sorenson, 2007).

Concluding, critical perspectives emphasise the shifting asymmetrical relations between leaders, followers, and contexts and examine the complex dynamics between interacting parts (D. Collinson, 2011). Therefore, CLS critique the doctrine according to which leaders equal those in hierarchy positions and, by contrast, acknowledge the fluidity of leader emergence (D. Collinson, 2011, 2014). For CLS, leadership dynamics stem from the interaction between those in hierarchical and subordinate positions and not from pre-determined or assigned titles (D. Collinson, 2011; Knowles, 2007). This interaction is reflected through the discursive strategies of the interlocutors. More about this discursive perspective to the study of leadership follows in the next section.

## 2.5 Discursive leadership: the tradition followed in this study

Building on the brief presentation of the main controversies between leadership psychology and discursive leadership, this section provides a deeper elaboration on the latter. Discursive leadership, first introduced by Fairhurst (2007), is heavily oriented towards discourse and communication and signals a linguistic turn in the study of leadership performance. Fairhurst’s work traces back to Mintzberg’s call (1970, 1973, 1975, as cited in Fairhurst, 2007, p. 2) for a shift in the focus of leadership studies from what individual leaders do to the nature of the work itself. As Fairhurst (2007, p. 4) highlights, discursive leadership is able to encapsulate complex social phenomena due to the fact that it takes into consideration all the various parts of the process that interact with each other and define one another in order to form an intertwined whole.

Precisely, discursive approaches are inclined to focus on the processes of leadership performance, namely, on *how* leadership is accomplished (Fairhurst, 2007, p. 5). In order to explore this, leadership is regarded as *a process* which is constantly enacted and negotiated between all members of a team (Biggart & Hamilton, 1987). Essential elements of this on-going process are the language use and its central and performative role in interactions (Shotter, 1993, p. 8). Therefore, Robinson (2001, p. 93) points out the significance of viewing leadership as a discursive process because leadership is exercised every time that “ideas expressed in talk or interaction are recognised by others as capable of progressing tasks or problems which are important to them”.

Even though all aforementioned researchers underline the pivotal role of discourse, it is worth distinguishing the two conceptualisations of discourse. On the one hand, little “d” discourse refers to language and social interaction, whereas the big “D” Discourse refers to critically signified constellations of talk patterns, ideas and logics (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). In other words, the former, little “d” discourse focuses on the study of talk and text in social practices within specific local contexts (Gee, 1989). Based on this angle, discourse is seen as a linguistic mechanism to which cultural meanings are attached and expressed through interaction (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Sociolinguistics, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, speech act theory, interaction analysis and semiotics are the techniques proposed by Fairhurst (2007) to study language in interactional processes. The latter, big “D” Discourse, stands for the general knowledge systems that determine the formulation and articulation of ideas (Gee, 1989). As Fairhurst (2007, p. 6) clarifies, discursive approaches, such as sociolinguistics or conversation analysis, analyse discourse, as they focus on language use in interactional processes, whereas critical and postmodern discourse analyses pay attention to deeper systems of thought, thus analysing the big “D” Discourse.

The two strands are complementary to each other and the scholars using them seek a thick description of the context alongside cultural and political aspects (Fairhurst, 2008). Thus, while discourse analysts are interested in exploring how leadership is pragmatically situated in social interactions, and how this phenomenon functions in

a local context, Discourse analysts are concerned with the cultural forces or the power relations which determine leadership practices, and what the social setting at a particular historical moment is (Biggart & Hamilton, 1987; Du Gay et al., 1996).

Having explained the background as to how discursive leadership has been established, sociolinguists tend to focus on questions with regards to how leadership is a joint construction performed discursively rather than a solo performance. how people interact with each other thereby constructing leadership, and what the role of language is (Clifton, 2017, p. 47; Holm & Fairhurst, 2018; Holmes & Marra, 2004). In other words, discursive leadership places communication in the core of the leadership process rather than a subsidiary aspect of it; it is concerned with *how* people perform leadership in action and not with how they think they do leadership (Schnurr, 2013, p. 170). Several scholars tend to study leadership as a discursive construct because such perspectives can capture and reflect actual cases of leadership performance rather than rely on the participants' recollections of specific incidents (Baxter, 2010; Choi & Schnurr, 2014; Ilie & Schnurr, 2017, p. 5). In fact, adopting a discourse-based approach to leadership provides a more comprehensive understanding of this multifaceted phenomenon as research has shown that reality is far too complex to assume that leadership depends only on a charismatic leader (Holmes & Marra, 2004; Schnurr & Zayts, 2017, p. 83; Van De Mieroop & Schnurr, 2014). Such strictly hierarchical structures to leadership are often criticised and challenged by scholars (for instance, in Schnurr et al., 2017, p. 112) who reject the attempts to establish "grand theories of leadership" (Alvesson, 1996; Clifton, 2006; Clifton, 2017, p. 46). By contrast, linguists propose discursive approaches to understanding leadership processes which can reflect the more horizontal structures of contemporary organisation through their methodological tools (Clifton, 2017).

Scholars who question these received theories of hero leaders are inclined to pay attention to discourse and communication which constitute the core elements which co-construct discursive leadership. Many discourse analysts outline the key role of language in leadership performance and highlight the methodological and conceptual benefits of using discursive perspectives for the study of it (see for instance, among others, Clifton, 2006, 2012 and 2017; Fairhurst, 2007, 2008, 2009;

Holmes & Marra, 2004; Holmes et al., 2007; Ilie & Schnurr, 2017; Schnurr et al., 2017). Thus, by looking at the discourse of the leadership processes and focusing on the micro-level of interactions, scholars claim that “the discursive, sequential and multimodal layers can capture the complexities of leadership, both verbal and non-verbal” (Clifton et al., 2020), with the aim of gaining a breadth of the everyday practices which constitute leadership practices.

Theorisation about the role of language in the practices of leadership originates in Fairclough (1995, p. 28-29) who explains how language can be perceived as a discourse practice that links textual to sociocultural analysis. Before that, Van Dijk (1988a, 1988b, 1991) had already emphasised how processes of social cognition – here the activities of problem-solving or strategic planning – can be accomplished through everyday practices. Finally, the power of language in relation to leadership is also stressed by Fairhurst (2007, p. 87) who based their approach on the functional rather than the representational role of language, namely on the social artefacts embedded in interactions, and explained how language contributes to a social reality.

Taking this paradigm as a reference point, considering that sports teams are “powerful cultural institutions” (Kinkema & Harris, 1998) as rich in data as professional workplaces (Wilson, 2009), and acknowledging that communication is at the heart of leadership processes (Tourish & Jackson, 2008), my study also follows the discursive leadership tradition. As Tourish (2007, p. 1733) contends, discursive leadership emerges “as a co-constructed and an interactive phenomenon, socially accomplished through linguistic interaction”. Likewise, Clifton (2006, p. 203) argues that discursive leadership can provide a better understanding of leadership as a practice, since it focuses on everyday phenomena rather than generalised theories about leadership, as in the cases of organisational and business studies.

In order to gain a thorough understanding of everyday practice, though, Clifton (2017, p. 46-47) argues that scholars should pay attention to the group dynamics and leadership as a group process through which leader identity is co-constructed rather than existing as an a priori characteristic of an individual. This perspective aligns with “the social constructionist approaches to leadership whereby leadership is seen as a

social process, rather than an individual act” (Clifton, 2017, p. 47). Clifton (2017, p.47) also asserts that in order to study leadership as a process, the linguistic space among the group members should be considered as they communicatively constitute the organisation. Before elaborating on the importance of the team dynamic when discussing leadership in Section 2.8, the following section outlines the various leadership constellations which are found and examined in my study.

### ***The contextual cluster***

This section moves to the specific context of the study, namely the world of sports, and discusses previous research of leadership discourse in sports. Relevant leadership literature in sports still favours traditional perceptions of leadership and often provides anecdotal evidence which reinforce unidirectional leadership structures. By contrast, sociolinguistic studies which acknowledge the importance of unpacking leadership in the micro-level of the interaction and critically discuss leadership performance are still limited. Taking these studies as a reference point, the study aims to address what and how leadership and followership conceptualisations are co-constructed on a turn-by-turn basis.

### **2.6 Leadership Discourse in sports**

As Wilson (2009) points out, there has been limited sociolinguistic research on sports discourse. While several quantitative studies have been conducted from a psychological angle on the factors related to the effectiveness of a coach’s leadership style (Shields et al., 1995; Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986) or on the leadership behaviour and team cohesion (Light Shields et al., 1997), the field still lacks linguistic studies which explore the relation of discourse and sports. However, sociolinguistic studies on the discourse in sports teams have recently received an increased interest among researchers. In fact, Wilson (2009) has noticed that sporting contexts should be in the microscope of sociolinguistics because they provide the opportunity to record authentic interactions within a CofP and study them on a turn-by-turn basis in order to explore wider social phenomena; in this case study, the notions of leadership and followership.

Existing studies in the field of leadership in team sports tend to focus on the correlation between leadership and racial identity, masculinity, and finally, gender. Particularly, Buffington and Fraley (2011) analyse the discursively negotiated perceptions of race in a sample of college students. The authors explain how the language used by respondents on topics of race and competence in sports alludes to contemporary perceptions of race and racism. More recently, Wolfers' (2020) PhD thesis examines the various functions of (racial) humour among the players of a professional football team and how it impacts team cohesion. This study illustrates not only the correlation between (team) identity and team cohesion, realised through humorous instances, but also offers empirical data, analysed qualitatively, on the link between communication and team cohesion.

Apart from these studies, sports teams are research sites that have attracted scholarly attention because notions of masculinity and gender can be studied from a discourse analytical lens. Harris (2007) explores how the notions of toughness, manliness, and hegemonic masculinity – notions embedded in football – affect the ways in which female football players perform gender in England. Hovden (2010) also follows the same perspective to discourse and investigates the issue of gender in sports by adopting a feminist perspective. Particularly, they employ feminist leadership research, a neo-liberal leadership approach, and conclude that particular forms of masculine identity and stereotypical notions of gender are salient features of the dominant leadership discourses in sport organisations (Hovden, 2010). These findings allude to gender segregation in the sporting context which results in considering women as “prisoners” of gender because female leadership discourses in sports contexts indicate that “stereotyped notions of gender are an integral part of the dominant leadership discourses” (Hovden, 2010). Burke and Hallinan (2006) also come to a similar conclusion and claim that gendered discourse is an integral part of the coaching discourse used by non-professional coaches and leads to better income-generating positions for male coaches.

It appears that the majority of these studies focus on and allude to the capital “D” Discourse, as defined by Gee (1989), as their conclusions draw on the connotations of Discourse with issues of gender and power. As a consequence, it seems that there

is not many discourse analytical studies which examine the discursive construction of leadership phenomena in sports teams. However, this gap has been bridged in recent years with some studies conducted in New Zealand and the UK. Specifically, Wilson's (2011) PhD thesis on a New Zealand rugby team examines the relation between the discursive construction of leadership and team identity by looking at the discourse strategies employed by the players. File and Wilson's (2017) study adopts a bottom-up analysis of the linguistic behaviour of rugby coaches and demonstrates how coaches construct and negotiate their identities discursively depending on the interactional settings (private-facing huddles and public-facing media interviews) and the leadership tasks performed. Wolfers' (2020) aforementioned ethnographic study contributes to the same area by examining the various functions of humour in relation to team cohesion. Lastly, researchers from the Sports Culture and Communication Research Collective (SCCRC, Department of Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick) apply discourse analysis in order to explore the processes of emergent leadership in a netball team (Schnurr et al., 2021). Therefore, they outline the complexities of understanding emergent leadership but simultaneously, they illustrate the benefits of adopting a discourse analytical approach to leadership.

Despite the different approaches to discourse, they may adopt (little "d" or big "D"), all studies indicate the key role of communication in relation to the issues under research, for instance, leadership, team cohesion or gender. In the case of leadership in particular, decisions in team sports are often made in moments where the pressure is high. Hence, the role of a coach and the language used to communicate with the players in these moments are particularly important (Wilson, 2009). Bearing in mind that the present study is conducted in a team with no officially assigned coach, it is even more intriguing to explore how leadership is collaboratively enacted among the players themselves and how leadership practices are realised through discursive strategies when the pressure is high. In fact, many of these linguistic features are commonly used in sports discourses and therefore, they are discussed in more detail in the section below.

### ***The conceptual frames of the study cluster***

The sections that follow delve into aspects of the basketball team under study and discuss conceptual frames which are relevant to understanding how leadership and followership practices unfold in the analytical chapters. Such concepts are identity, and particularly leadership identity, the CofP framework, as well as features of the sports genre.

## 2.7 Theorising identity

As highlighted in previous sections, the complex and dynamic relation between leadership and followership is realised through the discursive construction of participants' identities. Hence, this section elaborates on the concept of identity construction, a central and multifaceted concept in social sciences (De Fina, 2010, p. 205-206; Schnurr, 2013, p. 120) since it involves insights from various disciplines (for instance, psychology, sociology, anthropology, gender studies). Yet, the majority of research has identified two different approaches, an essentialist and a constructionist one. This dualism derives from the essentialist and constructivist schools of thought (Angouri, 2016, p. 37). Based on Benwell and Stokoe (2006, p. 9), the essentialist perspective locates identity as "inside persons, as a product of minds, cognition, the psyche, or socialization practices". Rooted in the work of Plato and Aristotle, the essentialist perspective claims that identity is stable and determined based on one's cultural and/or biological characteristics (Bucholtz, 2003).

Contrary to essentialism, the social-constructivist approach to identity, which is the approach followed in my study, links identity with social practice, discourse, and communication. In this paradigm, identity is seen "as a socially constructed category: it is whatever people agree to be in any given historical and cultural context" (Benwell & Stoke, 2006, p. 9). Moving away from the essentialist approach, which considered identity as a property of an individual that resides in their minds, social-constructivist perspectives view identity as a construct which is portrayed through social interaction, and especially, through discourse (Bamberg et al., 2011; Benwell & Stoke, 2006; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Identity is therefore seen as a discursive performance; a dynamic attribute of individuals which is co-constructed through discourse, social interaction, and constant negotiation, and not as a static and fixed

characteristic (Benwell & Stoke, 2006; De Fina, 2010). This perspective is followed by many sociolinguists who have redefined the concept of identity. For instance, De Fina (2010, p. 205) claims that identity is “highly negotiable in interaction, emergent and largely co-constructed”, which is the focal point of the paradigm. Thus, Angouri (2016, p. 44) acknowledges that identities cannot exist in a vacuum and highlights the unbreakable bond between identity and social structure. This understanding of identity as a performance that one does through discourse, rather than as a characteristic that one has inherited (Butler, 1990), presents similarities with the conceptualisation of discursive leadership *and* followership in my study.

Taking these concepts into consideration, this study is influenced by social constructivism which was initially developed as a theory for the study of discourse and interaction in general (Berger & Luchmann, 1967; Fairclough et al., 2007; Hall, 2000; Kroskrity, 2000). However, it was also applied to the study of identity because identity is produced and negotiated in everyday social interactions. The foundations of this theory stem from Ochs’ (1992) work on identity and speech acts that interlocutors do when constructing their identities. This perspective becomes particularly relevant to the present study, where – as the analytical chapters show – the discourse strategies of the participants are analysed in order to explain how the interlocutors construct their leader or follower identities.

Therefore, identity can be studied through the analysis of spoken interaction using the methodological tools of discourse analysis. Following such an approach, De Fina (2010) also argues that identity is a process – and not a concept – which is formulated and reformulated in interactional occasions and entails “discursive work” (Zimmerman & Wiedler, 1970). Hence, the study illustrates how sport is not only a physical activity, but also a social one; how language determines social activities and how leadership and followership practices become visible through language. The following subsection links more clearly identity construction with leadership and followership and discusses how leader and follower identities are formulated and negotiated discursively.

### 2.7.1 Constructing and negotiating leader identities

In line with the social-constructivist paradigm, leader identity in this study is viewed as a discursively constructed and negotiated process which means that pre-determined leader roles are questioned as they do not always reflect actual practices. In fact, this assumption lies at the heart of CLS which “critique the power relations and identity constructions through which leadership dynamics are often reproduced, frequently rationalised, sometimes resisted and occasionally transformed” (D. Collinson, 2011, p. 181). Taking this critique as a reference point, Clifton et al. (2019) employ a range of approaches to discourse analysis, from Positioning Analysis and Conversation Analysis to Membership Categorisations Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, in order to explain how the storytellers in their data shift identities within their local context. In other words, Clifton et al. (2019) explain how the storytellers construct different leader identities when performing “typical” leadership practices along with a range of relational ones. As they conclude, it is exactly these leadership positions within their local CofP that lead the storytellers to construct alternative identities which question mainstream conceptualisations of leadership (Clifton et al., 2019, p. 168).

Considering these observations and responding to the call of CLS for more critical approaches to the study of leadership phenomena, this thesis provides empirical data to further support how participants constantly co-create and negotiate their leader identities within their local environments during the examples analysed. However, while the players perform leadership responsibilities, they also engage in followership activities. This shift between leader and follower identities becomes clearer in Chapters 5 and 6 when leadership responsibilities are shared between two or more players. Importantly, the use of Interactional Sociolinguistics as an analytical framework facilitates the understanding of how interlocutors portray their various leader and follower identities because it combines micro-level discourse analysis with insights of the macro-level context of the interaction (Clifton et al. 2019; Schnurr & Mohd Omar, 2021). To better understand the construction of leader and follower identities by the players, it is crucial to consider the context of the university-level

basketball team, namely the community of the players. This is discussed in more detail in Section 2.8 below.

## 2.8 Leadership dynamics and Communities of Practice (CofP)

Communities of Practice (CofP) is a concept initially introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991) who defined it as a collective that “simply impl[ies] participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings covering what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities”. The concept was later developed by Wenger (1998) in order to account for the processes involved when becoming a member of a group. Building on the original description of the concept by Lave and Wenger (1991), Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992, p. 464) describe a CofP as an aggregate of people who share ways of interacting with each other, beliefs, values and power relations and work in close collaboration in order to achieve their goals. Wenger (1998) succinctly summarises joint enterprise, mutual engagement and shared repertoire as the core of the concept, and he calls them “the basic building blocks of a social learning system because they are the social ‘containers’ of the competences that make up such a system” (Wenger, 2000, p. 229), where competence is the capability of the member to combine these three features. The joint enterprise comes as a result of the agreed community commitment and by being able to contribute to it by interacting with each other using mutually established norms. Members of a CofP employ their shared repertoire which includes, among others, language, routines, stories, tools, and styles (Wenger, 2000; Wenger et al., 2002, p. 4-5).

Despite the fact that all these notions have been introduced in organisational studies, various studies on leadership discourse (such as Choi & Schnurr, 2014; Holmes & Marra, 2006; Schnurr et al., 2017; Wilson, 2017) employ CofP as a framework in order to describe “the internal movements and the different degrees of alignment in a group” (Wilson, 2017, p. 151). Thus, Wilson (2017, p. 151) underlines that sometimes it is the individual’s journey, the trajectory they take until the leadership practice is acquired that defines them as “a leader with the right to ‘make meaning’ in an organisation” (Clifton 2012, p. 153). In the case of my study, this concept applies

because leadership is considered as a socially constructed practice which is shared among various players as they interact with each other.

Most importantly though, CofP is a model which allows us to identify certain discourse analytical tools within the CofP under research and interpret them respectively (Wilson, 2011, p. 33). Therefore, CofP provide the opportunity for group members to participate directly in processes of negotiation of meaning (Schnurr & Van De Mieroop, 2017, p. 4; Wenger, 2000; Wilson, 2011, p. 33), and thus, “to contribute to the understanding of dynamics of the group involved” (Meyerhoff, 2001, p. 528). As Eckert and Wenger (2005) point out, besides the ability to participate actively in the joint enterprise, members contribute to a collective identity construction which is influenced by and also influences the interactional styles of the speakers.

Another crucial aspect of a CofP is the diverse organisations formed by employees of a company – or, in this study, by team players – who have the functional expertise to handle a new situation, or a change in the organisation (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). As a consequence, researchers explain that CofP are informal groups with open membership which set their own agendas and establish their own leadership based on an emergent situation (Wenger, 2000; Wenger & Snyder, 2000).

Despite its structural flexibility, the CofP model has a methodological weakness: the criteria and the degree that certain practices are adopted and followed by members are criticised (Davies, 2005). According to Davies (2005) the CofP model needs further developments in order to overcome its relatively restricted focus on the micro-level of the ethnographic research and to explain how issues of internal structure, hierarchy and legitimation are addressed. Following Davies’s (2005) call for more in-depth analysis in the nature of hierarchy and leadership in a CofP and Wilson’s (2011) PhD thesis which criticised the role of one particular leader in a CofP, my study aims to question superficial conceptualisation of leadership as a performance of a clearly identifiable individual and show how leadership can be achieved collaboratively by various players of a team without having any notional roles.

In conclusion, the three criteria of the concept, namely, joint enterprise, mutual engagement, and shared repertoire, apply to my study and the team in research. The players have a common goal (to play well and win as many games as possible during the season) which all are involved in (but not to the same degree), and also frequently share the same discursive strategies when negotiating and making decisions during time-outs. Shared linguistic repertoire, frequently encountered among athletes, such as the address term “mate” or the term “team” during huddles. Hence, Wilson (2009, p. 76) highlights that sports teams offer the premises of a research site with rich resources of interactional data and concludes that existing workplace discourse studies can be applied when analysing the discourse of sports teams too. Nevertheless, and despite the community norms, contestation over the floor still occurs when players perform leadership, hence questioning the assigned role of the team captain or the student-coach. CLS, which problematise hierarchical team dynamics and the exercise of power and control, are a critical approach which pays more attention to the role of followership for the enactment of leadership than the other frameworks previously discussed. Although the CofP model is not the main framework used for the analysis of data, some parts of the analysis draw on its aspects when unpacking leadership and followership phenomena.

## 2.9 Features of sports discourse

This final section of the Literature Review draws on features of sports discourse which are distinctive to sports communities, are frequently found across the data and facilitate the understanding of leadership and followership practices. These features often occur during the team time-outs. This section in particular explains why discursive as well as contextual features of sporting context should be considered when the players construct their leader and/or follower identities. This thesis, being an explanatory case study on a basketball team, analyses the discourse in the micro-level of the interactions in order to unpack the leadership and followership practices taking place during time-out discussions. However, the analysis suggests that the features of basketball, such as the brief time-outs, the

momentum in the game and the number of players present are some of the factors which affect how leadership and followership are conceptualised.

The absence of an officially assigned coach needs to be added to these. As a result, the data deriving from time-out interactions and used for the study presents many similarities with some of the features of sports announcer talks (SAT), which have been detailed by Ferguson's (1983) seminal work on the language of sportscasting. According to his study, sportscasting is an identifiable discourse genre because it entails particular syntactic characteristics which make it distinctive from other radio talks or occasional conversations. Some of these characteristics include sentence simplifications, inversions, heavy modifiers, or routines, among others (Ferguson, 1983). Likewise, some of these discursive features are found in my study, too, and are discussed in more detail in the following analytical chapters where the links between the features, and leadership and followership are explained. Nevertheless, it is worth addressing the importance of some discursive features of basketball in particular and explaining their importance in relation to the two concepts.

Directives, a common discursive feature of sports discourse in general, are associated with transactional aspects of leadership discourse (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Schnurr, 2009, 2013). The time constraints of time-outs (each time-out lasts up to 30 seconds) alongside the high pressure during the games are contextual details which create the ideal conditions for rapid and succinct utterances, such as directives because the instructions are clearly expressed (Jary & Kissine, 2016). Directives are commonly and frequently used features of coach-like talk (Lyle, 2002) thus, also alluding to leader identity. Besides directives, which are the assumed discursive tool that one would expect to hear in time-outs during a basketball game, additional – and less common – linguistic tools which also contribute to particular and unique language of time-outs are found in the empirical data.

These additional linguistic resources often signal leadership practices implicitly. Based on previous studies, the inclusive “we” pronoun marks inclusivity among the members of a group (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Huisman, 2001), while at the same time conveying a “pseudo-inclusive” nuance (Wilson, 2019). This practically means

that the addresser excludes the addressee from the expression uttered. Thus, while solidarity and inclusivity are fostered, a leadership practice is also expressed implicitly. Looking only at this feature, namely the inclusive “we” pronoun, one understands how complex and multifaceted leadership discourses can be and why discursive approaches can benefit the study of leadership.

Another very frequently used linguistic feature of sports discourse are the address terms. Address terms, also called “familiarisers” according to Leech (1999, p. 112), are predominantly markers of a familiar relationship between the speaker and the addressee and enhance solidarity and teamwork among the members of a group (Ervin-Tripp, 1972, p. 223-225; Leech, 1999, p. 112). By using such terms, not only do the players create rapport, solidarity and trust among themselves, but they also mitigate the illocutionary force of an otherwise directive speech act, features related to relational and transactional aspects of leadership discourse (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Schnurr, 2009, 2013).

In conclusion, this subsection focused on linguistic features of sports discourse which are associated with leadership performance but there was no particular reference to linguistic features related to followership. This is mainly due to the limited number of studies that approach followership from a discourse analytical lens. Hence, it follows within the scope of this study to examine what discursive strategies the players use when they portray their follower identities.

## 2.10 Research Questions

The research questions (RQs) have evolved during the course of my studies and have been constantly changing as the study navigated through different strands (Agee, 2009). Developing and formulating research questions is one of the most crucial aspects of communicating research effectively (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013, p. 1; Lipowski, 2008), and to some extent, can be even more valuable than the answers they elicit because good research questions can trigger intellectual activity and encourage further research (Abbott, 2004). Thus, gap-spotting in the existing literature of an overlooked area is the prevalent way of constructing and developing

research questions (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013, p. 5). This is projected on the ways that research questions are framed, which may include formulations such as “no other studies have examined the associations between X and Y” or “to address this major gap in the literature...”, as Alvesson and Sandberg (2011, 2013) describe.

However, identifying the gaps in the literature often leads to under-problematisation of existing assumptions instead of challenging them (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013, p. 6). This orientation has shifted, though, as a result of the methodological turn in more critical approaches in studies of social constructivism, postmodernism, feminism and critical theory. Hence, problematisation of underlying assumptions of existing theories is also pertinent when constructing and formulating research questions (Abbot, 2004; Lock & Golden-Biddle, 1997). Following this line of thought, the research questions have been reframed over the course of my studies from questions which were rather descriptive at the initial stages, to questions which aim to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about leadership and followership in the sporting world and beyond. Therefore, the research questions that guided my research are the following:

RQ1: How are leadership and followership accomplished among the players of the basketball team in study?

- Who participates in leadership and followership practices during the team’s time-outs?
- What linguistic resources do the players employ when participating in them?

RQ2: What do we learn about leadership and followership and what do all these observations mean for current conceptualisations of leadership and followership?

### 3. Research Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodology and the study design of my thesis. The first four sections present important, overarching considerations in the framing and design of this study. Firstly, 3.1 presents the research approach and the methodology, followed by 3.2, which explains why a qualitative design is selected for the study of leadership. Following the basics of the study design, 3.3 elaborates on the benefits of conducting an ethnographically informed study to explore leadership, and 3.4 focuses on the framework employed to analyse the data, Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS), as well as on its particular advantages for the study of discursive leadership (3.4.1).

The chapter then moves on to cover issues specific to the study context and the data collected. Section 3.5 explains the initial stages of gaining access to the team and getting to know the players, before focusing more specifically on the basketball team under research in 3.6. In this latter section, detailed information about the team structure and the overall context of the research site is also provided. Then, section 3.7 looks closely at the methods of data collection (observations, video-recordings and follow-up interviews), and discusses the advantages of using each method in 3.7.1, 3.7.2 and 3.7.3 respectively.

The last sections draw attention to the linguistic resources which guide my analysis of leadership and followership performance (3.8), my role as a researcher (3.9) alongside the potential limitations and ethical considerations of the study (3.10).

#### 3.1 Research approach and methodology

The study is explanatory and explores the processes through which leadership and followership identities are constructed, questioned or negotiated discursively among the players of a basketball team. Thus, it draws particular attention to the importance of communication for leadership practices rather than reiterating or even generating grand theories about leaders and leadership styles. The focus is on the complex question of understanding *how* leadership and followership are collaboratively

accomplished. Thus, a qualitative approach is most appropriate, as it better aligns with the social constructivist perspective followed in this study (Crevani et al., 2010). As Bryman (2016, p. 30) points out, constructionism – achieved through interaction – encourages the researcher to treat social reality and social phenomena as an ongoing accomplishment of the social actors. As discussed in 2.1, this consideration aligns with the perspective on leadership performance adopted in the current study.

A qualitative approach uses written or spoken language (and images, if necessary) – rather than numbers – as the type of primary data collected and analysed. Subjectivity is identified as a contingency in the research methodology, and thus, researchers often reflect on their role with a critical approach to reality (Angouri, 2018, p. 77; Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 4). Moreover, qualitative analysis seeks to understand and interpret meanings situated in the particular context where data is gathered, and only sometimes does it aim to contribute towards a more general understanding (Angouri, 2018, p. 77; Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 4; Richards, 2009). In most of the cases, data derives from interviews, observations, or text, and is related to the coding process, which can be conducted either manually or electronically through the use of a software (Angouri, 2018, p. 77; Richards, 2009). These methods of data collection provide detailed explanations for participants, thus resulting in rich data with “thick” descriptions, able to analyse and interpret social phenomena (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 4).

Taking these considerations as a reference point, scholars claim that qualitative research provides a rich understanding of the data and is the most capable tool for uncovering the exciting and challenging realities of workplaces (Angouri, 2018, p. 77-78; Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 10; Schnurr & Schroeder, 2019). This stems from the nature of the data, which captures the complexity, messiness, and contradictions of the real world while at the same time allows space for understanding patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 10; Clifton, 2017, p. 45). Therefore, Auerbach and Silverstein (2013, p. 28) claim that qualitative research, despite its nature – which entails involvement and subjective experience, should not be perceived as an unreliable method. On the contrary, conscious or unconscious experience is highly valued, as it offers meaningful hypotheses and interpretations apart from only

measurable variables (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 29). This traces back to the origins of the scientific traditions; on the one hand, quantitative research studies social phenomena by converting them into measurable variables, whereas, on the other hand, qualitative research studies subjective experience by interpreting textual data (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 29). This assumption aligns with my study which explores how players accomplish leadership and followership discursively and how several players construct their leader or follower identities at different times despite the presence of the captain. As a consequence, I am in search of an in-depth understanding and conceptualisation of the various team member's leadership or followership performance.

Building on these methodological concerns, it does not come as a surprise that qualitative research does not provide a single, unilateral answer; rather, it offers the space for multiple interpretations and ways of generating meaning from data (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 20). This is related to the ways in which data derives, namely from observation, description, and natural occurrences. Out of these, naturalistic observation is the starting point for qualitative research (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 30-31; Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 20). By doing so, lived experiences of the individuals are identified and understood in relevant social contexts. Indeed, context is highly valued in qualitative research as the interpretation of a particular attitude is reflected in the context in which it occurs (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 21). As such, qualitative research captures a range of differences spotted in participants' attitudes, because it values these differences over uniformity of behaviour as a norm (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 30). This consideration leads to what Auerbach and Silverstein (2003, p. 31) outline about the tools that qualitative research offers to the study of a non-universal truth to be discovered, which is also endorsed by quantitative methodologies (see for instance, questionnaires and surveys). Such assumptions are debatable and open to challenge.

In spite of these methodological concerns surrounding the use of qualitative research, several sociolinguistic studies employ qualitative tools to describe and interpret leadership constellations (Choi & Schnurr, 2014; Holmes & Marra, 2006; Schnurr & Chan, 2011; Vine et al., 2008). All these studies highlight the importance

of qualitative methods to unpack discrete or underlying factors affecting leadership performance. As Clifton (2012) claims, leadership is currently one of the most researched phenomena, yet there is still a lot to be discovered in order to capture the complexities of this social phenomenon. Thus, he suggests that a shift from quantitative to qualitative research is essential to unfold the multi-layered considerations of the phenomenon. As discussed in 2.1.1, discursive leadership is an approach that emerged from the qualitative tradition and as a linguistic alternative can cover the various angles of leadership performance (Fairhurst, 2007, p. 7-8).

### 3.2 Qualitative research design: a case study

This research project constitutes a case study as it “explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) [...] over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information [...] and reports a case description and case themes” (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). Despite the various definitions proposed with regards to what constitutes a case study (Brandy & Collier, 2004; George & Bennett, 2004; Yin, 1994), researchers tend to agree that a case study entails an in-depth study of a person or a group (or unit) of people because of their particular characteristics and uniqueness. These unique characteristics of the group help the researcher to identify “features of a larger class of similar phenomena” (Gerring, 2004) after the thorough understanding of the case under research (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2007, p. 73; Stake, 1995, p. 4; Yin, 2014, p. 17). This in-depth understanding comes as a result of the exploration of the multiple perspectives and complexities of the particular research study (Gustafsson, 2017; Simmons, 2009, p. 21; Yin, 2014, p. 10-11). The following paragraphs elaborate on the advantages of conducting a qualitative case study.

Based on the social constructivist paradigm, Yin (2014, p. 16-17) proposes a frequently encountered twofold definition of the case study as a research method, which begins with the scope and expands to the features of case study research:

“A case study is an empirical inquiry that **(i)** investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-

world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident, and **(ii)** copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result, relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result, benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis”.

In other words, a case study is an empirical inquiry that explores a contemporary phenomenon situated in its real-world context, which constitutes the distinction between a case study and an experiment or a survey, for instance. Thus, the real-life context in which the research takes place has a pivotal role in exploring and unfolding the complexities of the social system (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, p. 257; Schwandt & Gates, 2018, p. 343; Yin, 2014, p. 16). As seen from the social constructivist paradigm, individuals construct their view of reality and the social context they are embedded in through social interaction, which results in a pluralism that offers a better understanding to the researcher (Robottom & Hart, 2011).

Yin’s definition also elaborates on the methodological characteristics of a case study. A case study focuses on a “technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points” (Yin, 2014, p. 17); as a consequence, data is collected from a range of sources in order to align with the triangulating fashion. According to several studies, the methodological features of case studies constitute one of the benefits of conducting them; they provide a holistic view and multiple perspectives on the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Gustafson, 2017; Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Yin, 2014, p. 4). Following that, case study research is an “all-encompassing method” which acknowledges the existence of multiple realities with multiple meanings across the participants (Stake, 1995, p. 101; Yin, 2014, p. 17). Therefore, case study research is associated with the philosophical premises of the constructivist paradigm, where the acceptance of having multiple truths and perspectives is the fundamental basis of the paradigm (Miller & Crabtree, 1999, p. 10; Stake, 1995, p. 100-101; Yin, 2014, p. 17). Having laid out the foundations of a

case study, the following section discusses the case of the qualitative case study in more detail.

### 3.2.1 The qualitative case study

Case study research is not necessarily qualitative (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 2005, p. 443). The fundamental distinctive features of the two research designs include **(i)** the purpose of the case study, **(ii)** the level of involvement of the researcher, and **(iii)** the nature of knowledge being sought. The latter can be either discovered or constructed (Stake, 1995, p. 37). As it is outside the scope of this section to explain and contrast the characteristics of qualitative and quantitative case study research, this section only elaborates on the qualitative case study.

Building on the explanatory nature of qualitative research, in the qualitative case study the researcher functions as a facilitator who promotes the understanding of human experiences rather than the cause and effects of a phenomenon (Stake, 1995, p. 39). Thus, it is relatively noncomparative and empirical because the purpose of the researcher is to unfold the complexities occurring among the participants rather than to understand how the case differs from others (Stake, 1995, p. 47). In my case, the purpose of this study is to understand how leadership performance is collaboratively constructed and how followership unfolds as an interactive practice amongst the players of a basketball team through the discursive strategies the players employ.

When it comes to the second distinctive feature, interpretation of data is the key to every piece of research. In contrast to standard quantitative designs where the personal interpretation of the researcher is limited to the period between the research design and the data collected, in qualitative case studies interpretations are made when “being in the field, making observations, exercising subjective judgement, analysing and synthesising” (Stake, 1995, p. 41). As Stake (1995, p. 47) further explains, a qualitative case study acknowledges the fact that research depends on the researcher-participant interaction. Thus, in qualitative case studies, data is continuously interpreted and revised so that it reflects what is going on as the researcher spends extended time in the field (Stake, 2005, p. 450). In this study, the

interpretation of data derives from the triangulation of methods used for data gathering, involving data deriving from observations, video-recordings and follow-up interviews with the participants. The advantages of combining all these are elaborated in Section 3.8.

Despite the methodological strengths of qualitative case studies, a few scholars proclaim some disadvantages, most of which are related to the general concerns about qualitative methodologies, such as subjectivity, the slow and tendentious contribution to the research community and the substantial ethical risks (Schwandt & Gates, 2018, p. 345; Stake, 1995, p. 45). The section below elaborates more on the concerns of conducting case study research.

### 3.2.2 Limitations of case study research

Although case studies constitute a distinctive empirical inquiry with strong methodological tools, scholars have expressed concerns and concluded that sometimes it is less preferred compared to other types of enquiries (Yin, 2014, p. 19). The most profound concern is around its validity, a limitation linked with the critique that qualitative research is subjective, and thus, less credible (Stake, 1995, p. 45; Yin, 2014, p. 19). The advocates of quantitative methods claim that the systematic and continuous involvement of the researcher with the participants leads to personalistic studies with ambiguous evidence and directed, biased, findings and conclusions (Stake, 1995, p. 46; Yin, 2014, p. 20). Nonetheless, the question of subjectivity should not be seen as a fault, but rather as an essential element of understanding, something also achieved through the triangulation of research design (Stake, 1995, p. 45). In fact, what is considered as a disadvantage of qualitative methodologies is essentially an advantage for the study of leadership through discourse. The involvement of the researcher with the participants, and the hours of fieldwork allows them to understand, interpret and analyse important contextual features and subtle nuances – necessary when unpacking leadership phenomena.

An additional concern is expressed with regards to the inability of case studies to generalise conclusions, as generalising presupposes a multiple set of experiments

with the same outcomes under different conditions (Yin, 2014, p. 20). The counterargument is that case studies, as experiments, can be useful in promoting analytical generalisations, namely, theories, and not statistical generalisations, namely, probabilities (Yin, 2014, p. 21).

Finally, researchers are concerned with the time and the level of effort required to conduct a case study research. This is one of the prominent arguments against qualitative studies because they may require observation across long periods of time. Nevertheless, as researchers explain, case studies should not be confused with those methods of data collection they use in a particular instance, such as ethnography or participant observation, which usually require long periods of fieldwork (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011; O' Reilly, 2005).

### 3.3 Ethnography and leadership

As my study follows a qualitative approach and adopts an ethnographic design, this section focuses on leadership studies which have been conducted within this qualitative paradigm. According to Klenke (2016, p. 3-4), leadership had been explored by quantitative studies in the field of social psychology by examining the phenomenon through (laboratory) surveys, and field experiments before qualitative methods started exploring the phenomenon. The incentive that triggered a shift towards a qualitative approach to the study of leadership was the inefficiency of dealing with the information provided by the quantitative techniques (Klenke, 2016, p. 4). Cepeda and Martin (2005, p. 851) highlight that this dissatisfaction derives from the way that quantitative studies are designed; from the complexity of multivariate research methods, the large sample sizes and the difficulties in understanding and interpreting the results of studies. Although quantitative methods to the study of leadership might be able to test hypotheses, especially with large samples, and consequently, generate leadership descriptions, these generalisations often fail to realise the deeper and complex structures of the phenomenon (Klenke 2016, p. 4). Following that, they seem unable to capture the subtle details that leaders and followers ascribe to important events in their organisation (Klenke, 2016, p. 4).

Bryman (2004) presents a number of arguments which distinguish qualitative from quantitative research on leadership. Firstly, he identifies that leadership is an enduring process, and that leaders, along with leadership style, change in response to particular circumstances. As such, the researcher is able to consider and compare the kinds of impact that leaders make on their organisation, and how they respond to issues they face. Therefore, qualitative methods can keep track of a diachronic range of changes made in an organisation. In this sense, context plays an important role as it provides all the background, yet necessary, information to understand the contribution of leaders or to interpret decisions made over the course of time. This is why scholars (Bryman, 2004, Klenke, 2016, p. 4) value the implications of context as highly significant when discussing leadership issues. They acknowledge that the study of leadership is context-dependent and that qualitative methods offer the analytical tools to redress the imbalance by providing contextual information, which, in turn, results in understanding leadership phenomena (Bryman, 2004; Klenke, 2016, p. 4).

Even though quantitative methods were prominent ways of examining leadership phenomena for decades, concerns have been expressed as to how they are reflective of the complex leadership practices. According to Klenke (2016, p. 5), qualitative leadership studies provide a deeper understanding of the complexities of the phenomenon, and very often, the significance senior leaders have with regards to the leadership style enacted in a team (Bryman, 2004). Although finding out what leadership styles (e.g., motivational, transactional, or authentic leadership) are adopted by the players, let alone testing" their effectiveness is not the aim of this study research has revealed that leadership can emerge as a joint enterprise from the collaboration of the members of the entire team (Schnurr & Chan, 2011; Vine et al., 2008). Bryman (2004) also acknowledges the essential role of the various forms of leader behaviours which can be captured by the tools of qualitative research. In contrast to quantitative research on leadership which emphasises the vision of the charismatic leaders, qualitative methods highlight the crucial role of communication on the part of the leader, alongside the leader's integrity and trust developed among the team.

This is to a large extent due to the strengths of using ethnography for the study of leadership and followership. Scholars highlight that ethnographic evidence can provide rich information about leader-follower dynamics (Gronn & Robbins, 1996; Tshabangu, 2012). Extended ethnographic observation of leaders-followers as they operate in their natural environment facilitates the understanding of how leadership and followership are constructed among various interacting individuals (Gronn & Robbins, 1996). It is exactly this bottom-up approach and the discovery of “the new” which ethnography emphasises that questions established leadership conceptualisations. Thus, theoretical models are challenged by local contexts and meanings in which leadership is constructed (Agar, 1994). Therefore, by adopting an ethnographic design, my study delves into the complexities of leadership and followership and captures the discursive nuances of the two practices in order to provide an understanding of how they are shaped.

Given these advantages, qualitative research methods are employed for this study. Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) in particular is the framework used to analyse the data gathered. This framework is chosen because it provides the methodological tools to unpack the salient linguistic and pragmatic features which contribute to leadership practice. Details about the comprehensive basis and the tools of the framework are provided in the following section.

### 3.4 Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS)

As mentioned above, Interactional Sociolinguistics is the framework employed for the purposes of the current study. Interactional Sociolinguistics is one of the commonly used theoretical approaches to describe language phenomena in naturally occurring contexts and it is under the umbrella of discourse analysis (Angouri, 2018, p. 71; Holmes, 2014, p. 177; Jaspers, 2012, p. 135). As Jaspers (2012, p. 135) clarifies, interlocutors are not always able to utter explicitly enough what they mean; in sum, IS suggests that meaning cannot be inferred solely by relying on the linguistic choice, but rather, it depends on the background knowledge and the relevant context in which an utterance is situated. The following paragraphs elaborate on IS in more detail and explain how IS accomplishes this twofold meaning-making achievement.

Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) is a theoretical framework deriving from the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, and linguistics (Schiffrin, 1996, p. 307). As such, it shares the concerns of these fields with respect to culture, society, and language respectively (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 97). The major contributions were made by the linguistic anthropologist John Gumperz and the sociologist Erving Goffman.

Gumperz (1982a, p. 12, 1982b, p. 3, 2001, p. 215) claims that IS is an approach to discourse analysis which “account[s] for our ability to interpret what participants intend to convey in everyday communication” (2001, p. 215). In other words, Gumperz explains how speakers may share grammatical knowledge of a language but perceive what is said differently (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 97). This is associated with the concept of linguistic relativity, which denotes that the nature of meaning depends on semantic concepts or distinctions specific to each language (Gumperz & Levinson, 1996, p. 7). As such, interpretive sociolinguistic approaches can describe and analyse actual face-to-face communication encounters (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 98).

On the other hand, Goffman (1963, 1974) situates language in the social and interpersonal contexts provided by the presuppositions, which are essential for unpacking the meaning of an utterance. While Gumperz focuses on situated inference, Goffman highlights the understanding of “the forms and meanings of those contexts that allow us to more fully identify and appreciate the contextual presuppositions that figure in the hearer’s inferences of the speaker’s meaning” (Schiffrin, 1996, p. 102). Goffman’s theorisation between interpersonal meanings and social structure is balanced by drawing attention to both the symbolic values of what is said and done, and the abstract forms of social life (Goffman, 1971).

The result of the contributions of these scholars provides a fertile textured view of the contexts in which presuppositions about speakers’ meaning are placed. In other words, IS is a study of discourse situated in the wider sociocultural context which is also dependent on the researcher’s knowledge of the community and its norms of interpreting what is happening in an interaction (Angouri, 2018, p. 72; Jaspers, 2012, p. 135; Vine et al., 2008). The works of Gumperz and Goffman provide a unity to IS, as they combine the interaction between self and other with the (wider) context

(Schiffrin, 1994, p. 105). This is achieved through Gumperz's analysis on how people may share grammatical knowledge of a language but contextualise it differently, and through Goffman's contribution on how linguistic choices of particular circumstances of social life observed in face-to-face interactions reflect the meaning and the structure of these circumstances (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 105; 1995, p. 307). Having explained the foundations of IS, the section below elaborates on the benefits of using IS as an analytical framework for the interpretation and understanding of leadership phenomena.

#### 3.4.1 Interactional Sociolinguistics as a framework for discursive leadership

According to Vine et al. (2008) IS is particularly useful for unfolding the underlying inferences of meaning due to the contextual information and the analytic tools it employs. IS examines what interlocutors say and how they express it by focusing on authentic everyday workplace interactions (Vine et al., 2008). Thus, it employs some features of Conversation Analysis (CA), such as turn-taking, discourse markers, pauses or hesitations. Yet, it differs from the latter in the sense that CA emphasises solely what connotations emerge and are observable in the data rather than accounting for the ideological framing of an encounter (Angouri, 2018, p. 75; Gumperz, 2001, p. 223).

This distinction implies that IS offers an approach to discourse which focuses upon situated meaning (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 133) – not formed in isolation from the social “here and now” – while providing a way to analyse social context and incorporating these contexts into the processes of creating meaning (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 370). This is achieved by the combination of Gumperz's focus on contextualisation cues (1982a), contextual presuppositions and situated inferences, along with Goffman's focus on social occasions, situations, and encounters (Schiffrin, 1994, p. 133, 370). According to Jaspers (2012, p. 136) certain meanings are attached to words and it is the interactants' responsibility to bring this meaning into the conversation. This notion is associated with the conceptualisation that utterances are indexical of contextual meanings, namely that interlocutors need to consider the indexical

meanings implied by the words in a certain context in order to achieve meaningful communication (Gumperz, 2001, p. 221; Jaspers, 2012, p. 136).

Similarly to the essential role of the wider sociocultural context highlighted above, Gumperz (2001, p. 221) elaborates on the notion of “contextualisation cues”, which are defined as the verbal signs which enable the interlocutors to create the contextual ground for situated interpretation when analysed with symbolic grammatical and lexical signs. Consequently, these cues affect the ways in which messages are understood (Gumperz, 2001, p. 221-222; Jaspers, 2012, p. 137-138). In this line of thinking, language use is deemed as a resource for language users “to shape and re-shape their social surroundings actively and creatively” (Jaspers, 2012, p. 140). Therefore, these interactions do not take place in a vacuum, but rather, are the outcome of larger-scale interactions among the interlocutors (Jaspers, 2012, p. 141).

This entails that interlocutors’ identities lie at the heart of social interactions, where they are maintained and negotiated, and constantly affect larger-scale social patterns (Jaspers, 2012, p. 141). Nonetheless, according to Jaspers (2012, p.141), social interactions should be explored neither by grammatical rules per se, nor by a macro-level point of view. By contrast, Jaspers suggests that social interactions should be examined on a small-scale, turn-by-turn basis in order to zoom in on the micro-level and offer an insider’s point of view on larger social processes that depend on small-scale actions.

Therefore, Vine et al. (2008) declare that the ways in which relationships are maintained and negotiated through discourse are inevitably linked with the IS research. Likewise, Schnurr and Mohd Omar (2021) claim that IS is a suitable framework for the research of leadership, gender, or humour, as it offers the discursive tools to identify and describe particular discursive processes of the micro-world, while relating them to macro-level concepts, such as leadership. Consequently, it constitutes an appropriate framework to analyse, unpack and interpret leadership practices occurring in actual workplace settings as well as in a

sports context (Schnurr & Mohd Omar, 2021). More detail about the methods of data collection follows in the next sections.

The above sections have provided details of the overarching framing of this study. Situating my study in the qualitative paradigm, I emphasise the complex aspects of leadership and followership, exploring how they are accomplished. I draw on ethnography to help approach this study and collect insights about how leadership and followership are enacted in my context, drawing, similar to previous research, on the tools of IS, to unpack the recorded interactions collected during my ethnographic observations. In the next sections, I move on to introduce the specifics of my research site and the data I collected to carry out a detailed discursive analysis of leadership and followership in action.

### 3.5 The research site: the basketball club

This section provides a detailed description of the basketball site, the reason the research is conducted on this particular basketball team, how the team was approached and, finally, how the players responded to the researcher's invitation. Having watched a few games of the team, I realised that there is no officially assigned coach who gives instructions during the time-outs. Rather, different players were involved in leadership activities, something which I found intriguing and thus, I decided to focus my study on this basketball team.

#### 3.5.1 The initial stages

At first, I expressed my interest in exploring how leadership is collaboratively constructed within the players of this basketball team to my supervisors, and following their advice, I sent a simple and informative email to the player who I had recognised as the captain of the team. By doing so, I intended to establish a preliminary relationship with this player and have him act as a gatekeeper to introduce me to the rest of the team players (Bryman, 2016; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010; Wilson, 2011). As such, I sent an email to this player, Richard<sup>2</sup>, the day before I was

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<sup>2</sup> All names have been replaced by pseudonyms. A detailed team sheet with all names, positions as well as other relevant player information is available in Appendix 1.

planning to watch their next game, and after receiving a positive response, I initially met him after the game.

During this quick and informal chat with my gatekeeper Richard we arranged to meet up again so that I could explain in more detail what my research was about and what I wanted to explore within their team. The following day, I met with him again and he seemed very interested in my study. He reassured me that he would talk to the rest of the team about my research idea and that he would vouch for me, something useful and pivotal before entering the research site (Hamdani, 2003).

During this first meeting, which took place in early December 2018, I was informed by Richard that he was not the captain of the team, but rather a student coach who has decided to coach while also playing for the team. Finding out that he was both a player and a coach to the team, while a range of other players used to take action during time-outs made researching the team even more interesting.

I also got in touch with the club president explaining what the purpose of my study was and mentioning my meeting with Richard in order to get his permission to approach the team and conduct my research with them before meeting the players themselves.

### 3.5.2 Getting to know the players

As soon as the new term had started and the training sessions had resumed (January 2019), I met Adam, the club president, in order to explain in-person the purpose of my study and start building rapport with him. Adam was entirely supportive of my research and gave me the go ahead to meet the team, introduce myself and the purpose of my study and ask them to participate. Having received an ethical approval for the new research site, I asked Richard when it would be best for me to meet with the team. He suggested that I could attend their upcoming training session on 24 January 2019 just to watch and meet with the team. That was the first time I met and introduced myself to the players of the team.

The first encounter with the players was short; I attended the training towards the end of it and briefly introduced myself, explaining why I decided to focus my research on their team and what my research aims were. Finally, I asked the players if everything was clear or if they had any further questions, before asking for their consent to my research, which happened during their next training session.

Every player was provided with a Participant Information Leaflet (see Appendix 6) before signing the Consent form (Appendix 7). These forms were structured based on the requirements of the department's handbook for PhD students (Department of Applied Linguistics, 2018).

### ***Basketball club structure***

At this point, some necessary information about the club structure should be provided. The university's basketball club consists of three teams, namely men's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> team and the women's team. The two men's teams practice together whereas the women's team has separate training hours.

Focusing on the women's team was not an option, as the team had an assigned student coach who did not play, and thus this structure did not fall within the scope of this PhD. The games of the men's teams overlapped. Thus, it would have been impossible for me to collect data from both teams since the games took place on the same day in different cities, and thus, I would have had to commute. As such, I had to decide on which of the two men's teams I would concentrate on. I decided to focus on the men's 1<sup>st</sup> team, the "Tigers" because of the roster<sup>3</sup> of the team, as the majority (six out of ten players) were final year undergraduate students. By contrast, the majority of the 2<sup>nd</sup> team, which comprises twelve players, were first year undergraduate students (8 players) with one being in his second year and three in their final year, including the club president, Adam.

Having watched some of the games of both teams before approaching the club, I decided to concentrate my study on the 1<sup>st</sup> team because I was interested in the

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<sup>3</sup> All basketball terms are explained in Appendix 3.

leadership performed by the players themselves, a feature which was not evident in the 2<sup>nd</sup> team. This relied on the fact that the 2<sup>nd</sup> team had distinctive roles in terms of leadership practices, with Adam being the player with the most predominant role and only a lower degree of involvement of the rest of the players.

### 3.6 The “Tigers”: team and context

When I first entered the research site, the team consisted of ten players, none of whom was a first-year undergraduate. The majority were final year students, two were second-year undergraduates and two were postgraduates.

During the course of my research, though, a few changes happened in the roster of the team. Firstly, after Alex, a postgraduate, resigned from the team, a first-year undergraduate Nathan, took his place in the team. Secondly, Richard, my gatekeeper, stepped down as coach and player of the team towards the end of the data collection period. As he explained to me during a follow-up interview<sup>4</sup>, he reached this decision due to the team’s bad performance (three lost games in a row) and, as a result, his personal disappointment. When it comes to the rest of the team, Owen, the team captain, was a second-year undergraduate student, while the rest were final year undergraduates who had been playing for the team throughout their studies, and almost all of them had previously held – to different extents – notional roles, e.g., team captain or club president.

### 3.7 Data Collection

The data collection took place in the two basketball courts of the university’s sports centre and in the various courts of the opponent teams during the away games. During the training sessions I used to sit and set my recording equipment on a bench located at the sides of the court in order to capture their interactions. However, due to the constant dribbling of the balls, the echo of the bouncing balls as well as the occasional chatter among players, data gathered during the training sessions is quite indistinct to transcribe and analyse. Consequently, it was excluded from the analysis.

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<sup>4</sup> Interview transcripts are provided in Appendix 2.

When it comes to the data collected during the games, where my focus is, I was always sitting on the coaching bench with the rest of the players in order to be in close proximity with the team and video-record their interactions. To avoid ethical implications, the camera was set in such a way that non-participants in the study were not captured in the recordings. Finally, the travel time to away games was always an opportunity for me to gain a better understanding of their CofP.

During travel times I gained valuable insights on the team cohesion, how and to what extent the players interact with each other outside the court; I was also able to build rapport with them. Although I could not (video)record any of these interactions – the participants were not comfortable with that – I was able to observe and make notes. These observations made during the away games alongside my observations during the training sessions helped me shape a holistic view of the players and how they interact with each other. While Interactional Sociolinguistics is the analytical framework employed to analyse and interpret the data, the methods for data collection refer to an ethnographic design and they are the following three: observations (3.7.1), video-recordings (3.7.2) and then, follow-up interviews with participants (3.7.3). The following subsections present the rationale and the advantages of the ethnographic methods chosen.

### 3.7.1 Observations

Observations constitute a substantial type of data collected for my research. From the point I received the team's consent, I attended every training which took place on a regular basis twice per week. This constitutes a data set of twelve training sessions between mid-January (21.01.2019) and mid-March 2019 (13.03.2019). Most crucially though, data derives from my notes of the team's games between the same period, which were seven in total.

Even if participant observation is considered a "complementary method of data collection", often used as a supplement to interviews or recordings (Feagin, 2002, p. 33), interviews offered valuable insights on the team cohesion and the power relations among the players. Scholars have identified and categorised various types

of observers based on the level of involvement of the researcher (Bhattacharya, 2017, p. 140; Bryman, 2016, p. 434-437, Ruane, 2015, p. 212-215). Among these types, I would classify myself as a “non-participating observer with interaction” (Bryman, 2016, p. 437). This is justified because I was not involved in the team’s actions and training routine, but I was physically present, and sometimes interacting with some players. This type of observation appears in the literature as having “peripheral membership” (Bhattacharya, 2017, p. 140) or “complete observer” (Ruane, 2015, p. 213). As a non-participating observer with interaction, the researcher is minimally involved in the group’s core activities; yet, they are acquainted with the group’s cultural insiders. In such a type of participation, interaction with the group members is mostly maintained through interviews. Moreover, regular observations of the team’s training sessions were proven to be a valuable source of understanding the team’s cohesion, their community of practice and the associations created among the players.

Despite the rich source of information that observations provide about the CofP, observations are alleged to be rather supplementary material to interviews or other types of data gathered (Faegin, 2002, p. 33). Yet, they offer a range of advantages. According to Dayton (1996), who spent a considerable number of years in an African American working-class community in Philadelphia, participant observations allow the researcher to write down and report immediately what they hear/observe. While the researcher becomes an insider of the group, thus overcoming the ‘observer’s paradox’ (Labov, 1972), the observations are able to incorporate the more general, social as well as linguistic context (Brett Davies, 2007, p. 172; Dufon, 2006; Feagin, 2002, p. 34, Foster, 2006, p. 59). Furthermore, scholars claim that the prolonged fieldwork with the community allows the researcher to become a member of the community and develop trust with the participants (Dufon, 2006; Erickson, 1986). This appears to also be the case with Wilson’s (2010) ethnographic research, where the regular observation of the training sessions of a rugby club enabled him to unpack the different behaviours of two sets of players, the forwards and the backs. Moreover, participant observation and rapport building with the team facilitates the comprehension of communicative norms and social ties among the participants; the

researcher is able to identify hierarchical relations within the players, an index of the wider social context in which any particular interaction is situated (Feagin, 2002, p. 34; Wilson, 2010; Wilson, 2011, p. 51-52).

In addition to the advantages described above, observations frequently offer the researcher the opportunity to conceive “what participants cannot” (Foster, 2006, p. 59). Participants are often unconscious of the regularities and patterns of their social context because these are taken for granted. Thus, the researcher as an observer is able to capture important features of the social environment. Furthermore, participant observation provides an overview of the interaction and the participants, even for those who do not contribute to the same extent as others do (Foster, 2016, p. 59). Bearing in mind that the basketball team comprises a range of players (not only age-wise but also experience-wise), field observation reveals how leadership practices emerge and clarifies the underlying power relations among the participants.

Despite these methodological advantages that observation provides as a form of ethnographic research, scholars highlight some limitations of this method. Firstly, observations might not be feasible due to social norms that appear in certain environments (Foster, 2016, p. 59). However, this restriction does not apply to the current research, where participants were willing to participate. Most importantly, though, a social limitation arises which is linked with the role of the researcher in the social environment of the participants. According to Foster (2016, p. 59), participants might alter – either consciously or unconsciously – their behaviour or their positioning in relation to others due to the presence of the researcher. More about this factor is explained in Section 3.9, where my role as a researcher is described.

### 3.7.2 Video-recordings

The second method of data collection I used is video-recordings of the team’s training sessions and games. Data derived from the video-recordings constitute the basis of my data analysis. Thus, it can be argued that video-recordings are the primary source of data.

The main advantage of video-recordings aligns with the basic feature of ethnographic research, which is to study how people act in real situations, thus providing unique, naturally occurring data (DuFon, 2006). The density and the range of the data enable the researcher to comprehend how participants react and behave while doing real activities (DuFon, 2006; Grimshaw, 1982) – in the current research while performing leadership and claiming leader identities. Another distinctive feature of video-recordings is the concreteness of the data; the data is more clear, certain and contextual than an audio-recording (Gass & Houck, 1999; Iino, 1998). In that sense, data provides a more complete representation of the acts and the setting in which the recording is situated (DuFon, 2006).

In addition to the aforementioned advantages, video-recordings offer a denser linguistic representation of the data in comparison to field notes (DuFon, 2006). This particularly applies in situations where turn-taking among participants is rapid and unexpected, as in the current study. Video-recordings are able to capture all the subtle and indistinct utterances among the interlocutors in comparison to the notes of a researcher, which are normally brief and able to capture only a few turns of an interaction (Beebe & Takahashi, 1989; DuFon, 2006).

Reflecting on my experience with this method, video-recordings were chosen because they allowed a better understanding of the setting and the structure of the court. It was particularly useful during the initial stages of the data transcription where I was not familiar with the voice of the players yet, and thus, helped me identify who was participating in each interaction. Following Sack's (1992) developments of Conversation Analysis in order to investigate social actions through the systemic study of everyday practices, the data is meticulously transcribed and include verbal, and whenever possible, non-verbal aspects of communication (such as body movements, gaze and gestures). This is done to capture both linguistic and paralinguistic aspects that indicate leadership performance. Non-verbal aspects are only included when they were captured by the recording device or when noticed and noted down by the researcher in the fieldnotes. The transcriptions of all data extracts follow Liddicoat's (2021) transcription conventions, listed in Appendix 5.

Given the conditions of the sport it was challenging for me to transcribe the data. Firstly, sound tends to echo within the court during the training sessions, a phenomenon that worsened the quality of the recording, too. Secondly, background noise or spectators' voices impeded a clear recording. Although the acquisition of consent can often be difficult to obtain for video-recordings, especially when working with large groups, highlighting the advantages of video-recording over voice-recording for transcription purposes, I managed to obtain the players' consent from the onset. Lastly, the players were ensured that the camera lens would in most cases not capture their faces as the tripod used was short and the recording was taking place in close proximity to them. Hence, their identities would be protected in that aspect.

### 3.7.3 Follow-up interviews

Finally, data was collected from follow-up interviews conducted with the players of the team. Interviews are probably the most widely used method in qualitative research, mainly due to the flexibility of the method when compared with the extensive ethnographic observations (Bryman, 2016, p. 466). Moreover, interviews constitute a way of collecting empirical data about the social world, even if the type of the interview may vary from highly structured, standardised, quantitatively oriented survey questions to free-flowing informal exchanges (Klenke, 2008, p. 120). They are interactional, and thus provide rich and detailed data about the participant's perspective and experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 80; Holstein & Gubrium, 2004, p. 141). Interviewing has a crucial role in qualitative research as it promotes the active engagement with the participant in a way that restricts the gap between the interviewer and the interviewee (Klenke, 2008, p. 120). Minimising the power distance between the two interlocutors is significant, as interviewing goes beyond typical data gathering and seeks to construct the meaning and the interpretation in the context where the conversation is placed (Kvale, 1996).

Based on this assumption, interviews intend "to generate data which give an authentic insight into people's experience" (Silverman, 2001, p. 87). Meaning is co-created through the discursive exchanges between the two sides of the interview,

something that elicits narratives which can be more meaningful and valuable than a strict question-answer format (Holloway & Jefferson, 1997). Therefore, interviews are treated as a collaborative and bilateral process that generates meaning rather than a simple exposition of knowledge (Alasuutari, 1995; Holstein & Gubrium, 2004, p. 140-141). In the same line of thought, interviews are a reality-constructing and “search-and-discovery” mission rather than “a pipeline for transmitting knowledge” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004, p. 2). All these scholars are inclined to adopt a “discursive perspective” on qualitative interviews meaning that interviews are conceived explicitly as a socially-situated speech event (Mishler, 1986), where meaning is co-constructed through social practices (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 141). Consequently, researchers claim that interviews should be handled as a dialogical conversation rather than a one-way information gathering (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1994).

On this basis, the interviewee can lead the conversation to a certain direction, something that may also affect and, thus, adjust the focus of the research (Bryman, 2016, p. 467). This is the case with the participants of my study, as semi-structured follow-up interviews were conducted with them. Although I had some interview questions prepared, most of the questions I asked were based on the participants’ responses. The benefits of using semi-structured interviewing as a method of collecting data is elaborated below.

#### *3.7.3.1 Semi-structured interviewing*

Semi-structured interviews are one of the two major types of interviewing in qualitative research. This type of interviewing constitutes a combination of close-ended and open-ended questions (Klenke, 2008, p. 126); the researcher addresses a list of questions on a broad topic – leadership, team-cohesion, and decision-making in this case – often referred to as an interview guide (Bryman, 2016, p. 468). This is linked with one of the main advantages of semi-structured interviewing, the degree of flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 79; Bryman, 2016, p. 468; Klenke, 2008, p. 126-127; Talmy & Richards, 2011). Based on this degree of flexibility, the flow of the

interview depends on the interviewee's sayings, thus, it can also be described as a responsive construct (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 79).

Furthermore, scholars claim that the aim of the researcher in a semi-structured interview is to capture a range of the responses from the participants and not to receive black or white answers (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 3, 29; Roulston, 2010, p. 14-15). As a consequence, questions frequently encourage interviewees to provide in-depth and elaborative responses, and to respond to additional inquiries stimulated by the initial question asked (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 79; Klenke, 2008, p. 126-127). According to Taylor and Bogdan (1984, p. 77), in-depth qualitative interviewing entails "a repeated face-to-face encounter between the researcher and the informants directed toward understanding informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations as expressed in their own words".

Having this collaborative and egalitarian relationship between the two interlocutors the meaning is co-constructed between them, an implication that mitigates the power imbalance between interviewer and interviewee (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 79; Klenke, 2008, p. 126-127). Therefore, the researcher reflects on the interviewee's responses and guides the interview accordingly. By doing so, the interview "moves from the interrogative stance of a structured interview towards a more conversational exchange" (Klenke, 2008, p. 128).

Considering the advantages of semi-structured interviewing, I decided to conduct this type of interviews as I wanted to ensure that the participants were comfortable to open up and share background information which would be helpful for me to understand at a more sufficient level the interactions recorded – specifically with data derived from games. Thus, to ensure their anonymity and the confidentiality of their answers, the interviews were held at an office in the department with only the interviewee and myself present. Moreover, the participants were reminded that everything they would say would remain confidential; any references made to other team players would be pseudonymised. They also had the option to refuse to answer a question or pause the interview should they feel uncomfortable. By doing so, I also

intended to mitigate any potential feelings of nervousness they could feel because of being interviewed as part of a PhD study (Braun & Klenke, 2013).

#### 3.7.4 Data set and triangulation considerations

The table in the following page summarises the data collected and the length of each type.

Table 1: Data overview

Type of data	Number of times on the research site		Length	Total
Observations	19	12 training sessions	~48h	~69h
		7 games	~21h	
Video-recordings	19	12 training sessions	~18h	~38h
		7 games	~20h	
Follow-up interviews	6	6 interviews	~6h	~6h
<b>Total</b>				<b>~113h</b>

The combination of these three ethnographic methods offers a triangulation in the process of gathering and interpreting data (Dufon, 2002). Following that, the data is organised in various levels, something that allows “a thicker description and increased credibility or validity” (Goldman-Segall, 1995, 1998). As Wilson (2011, p. 45) points out, ethnographic design has the potential to overcome the “observer’s paradox<sup>5</sup>” (Labov, 1972) because of the CofP perspective that the researcher gradually gains over the course of data collection. This relies on the methodological mechanisms of ethnography; the researcher is enabled to ask questions to the participants with an insider status about certain events, a tool particularly useful while collecting and analysing the data (Angouri, 2018, p. 85; Wilson, 2011, p. 45).

Research in the field of sociology of sport has shown that ethnography is particularly useful for detailing athletic communities, as sociological knowledge can be broadened (Clayton & Humberstone, 2006). This comes as a result of the group dynamic, where social practices (in this case, leadership and followership) can be applied, ratified or challenged, and thus, reconstructed in such a sporting group (Clayton & Humberstone, 2006). As such, ethnography offers a holistic awareness of the practices that the members of the CofP take for granted while performing tasks or behaving in an appropriate manner in a given context (Angouri, 2018, p. 85). Developing this awareness is particularly useful for the researcher, as they can reflect

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<sup>5</sup> As Labov (1972, p. 113) explains, in order to “obtain the data most important for linguistic theory, [the researcher] ha[s] to observe how people speak when they are not being observed. The various solutions to this paradox define the methodology for the study of language in context”.

on the insights gained during the data gathering and thus, “interpret events as a member of the CofP” (Wilson, 2011, p. 45). Nevertheless, it should be clarified that my case study is not ethnography *per se*, rather, it only follows an ethnographic design. This is because the data collection period lasted for a relatively short period of time (nearly three months) and includes only data gathered during training sessions and games.

### 3.8 Data analysis: identifying examples of leadership in the data

As explained in Section 2.5 of the Literature Review, discursive leadership is the adopted leadership approach in this study. Emphasis is put on discourse analytical tools which allow researchers to identify and unpack leadership practice, but a framework is also used to help determine what leadership is and how it is operationalised in the dataset. Hence, in my thesis, I follow Holm and Fairhurst’s (2018) concept of *authoring* to understand where and how leadership emerges as a practice among the participants during their social interactions (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Holm & Fairhurst, 2018).

Early studies (Heifetz, 1994) associated *authoring* with authority and hierarchical leadership. According to Heifetz (1994), the exercise of leadership is rooted in dominance and deference, which over time result in authorisation. For Taylor and van Every (2014) leadership is also related with *authoring*, which they deem lies at the heart of leadership. Hence, being a leader entails: **(i)** commitment to the project, **(ii)** experience, **(iii)** accessibility and **(iv)** ability to set clear and attainable objectives (Taylor & van Every, 2014, p. 103).

Although Holm and Fairhurst (2018) follow a similar perspective where *authoring* and leadership are interrelated, they follow a rather interactional perspective, where *authoring* is rooted in leadership talk-in-interaction and the individuals’ micro-level practices (Langley et al., 2013). In more detail, one’s right to influence and determine organisational tasks is not necessarily dependent on one’s hierarchical position or notional titles, but on who “authentically translates the purposes of the organisation” (Holm & Fairhurst, p. 696). To quote Holm and Fairhurst (2018, p. 696)

“[a]uthoring is thus not just interactional, but transactional, as parties orient around a common object or purpose [...]. Authoring communication materialises itself, first, through the conversations that negotiate the terms of the transaction and rules of association”.

It is therefore understood that *authoring* is not a static ascription of authority to someone in a hierarchical position, but rather it refers to the fluidity of the sequences between leaders’ and followers’ micro-level interactions. Thus, I follow this perspective to authoring when interpreting the data and identifying instances of leadership.

According to Holm and Fairhurst (2018, p. 707), authoring may take different forms and may derive either from one’s **(i)** hierarchical position, **(ii)** expertise, or **(iii)** involvement in a situation to advance a task. When applying these criteria to the present case study, Owen is the current team captain while Mark and Jackson have held the same hierarchical position in the past. With regards to the second criterion, Derek is new to the team (he joined the club a few months before the data collection), but due to his “experience and good knowledge of the sport”, his instructions were respected by his teammates (see Appendix 2.2 for the exact interview excerpt with Mark). Lastly, having identified the instances where authoring, and, by extension, leadership occur based on the above two criteria, the last one applies in every example where players are involved in leadership in order to accomplish their leadership tasks, be it transactional or relational oriented.

Beyond the above criteria which indicate the forms where authoring may derive, Holm and Fairhurst (2018) also provide an elaborative table with several sub-categories of authoring claims, grants and resistances based on one’s hierarchical position or expertise. Using ethnographic methods to examine how newly appointed leaders establish their authority after departmental merger and considering previous research about workplace culture (Boden, 1994; Angouri & Marra, 2012), Holm and Fairhurst (2018) collate a number of authoring claims, grants and resistances which reoccurred in their data. These sub-categories allude to discursive strategies that index or are somehow linked to leadership, have guided my understanding of

leadership and will be applied to each example to indicate how leadership is (co-)constructed among the players. The strategies are summarised in the adjusted table below.

*Table 2: Selected sub-categories of authoring claims, grants and resistances, adjusted from Holm & Fairhurst (2018, p. 699-702)*

### **Authoring claims using hierarchical positions**

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Opening and closing meetings	Authoring through convening a collective or dismissing it
Agenda control	Authoring through directing the progression of a meeting, e.g., through presentation of the agenda, ad hoc introduction of topics to be discussed, or imposing a structure through physical and temporal manifestations of the agenda
Topic closure	Authoring through ending a topic of discussion, e.g., by drawing conclusions or summing up

### **Authoring claims using expertise**

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Prioritising	Authoring through ordering, ranking or otherwise arranging multiple goals vis-à-vis their importance
Updates	Authoring by providing state-of-the-project information
Inside knowledge	Authoring by providing hard-to-attain specialist information
Informed projections	Authoring through predictions of the future, based on exclusive information or 'exclusive guesses'

### **Authoring claims to advance the task**

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Presumptive "we"	Authoring through presuming the capacity to speak on behalf of a collective of people already present in the meeting, regarding actions that must be taken by this collective
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### **Authoring grants and resistances**

Contested	Authoring that expresses disagreement, disapproval or, in general, nonacceptance (e.g.,
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topic shifts or lack of acknowledgement) of a prior authored act

Interruptions

Talkovers that may express (dis)agreement, (dis)approval or (non)acceptance in an attempt to gain control of the floor

These categories are used to explicitly identify where and how leadership practices occur when analysing the examples of the three chapters of the analysis. Having these authoring criteria as a guidance for identifying leadership examples, I also follow DeRue and Ashford's (2010) framework of claiming and granting tactics which are adopted by individuals when constructing their leader and follower identities. Drawing on existing literature on identity construction, DeRue and Ashford (2010) theorise how leader and follower identities are constructed verbally or non-verbally, and directly or indirectly; these are collated in the following tables.

*Table 3: Claiming or granting leadership tactics according to DeRue and Ashford (2010)*

<b>Direct verbal acts</b>	claiming leader identity	making statements that one is a leader
		making statements consistent with being leader-like
	granting leader identity	referring to another person as leader
		offering the head of a meeting table to another person
<b>Direct nonverbal acts</b>	claiming leader identity	manipulating physical artifacts associated with leadership or followership, such as looking part or sitting at the head of a meeting table
<b>Indirect verbal acts</b>	claiming leader identity	invoking relational ties that communicate and highlight closeness with recognised authorities or other leaders (e.g., naming an influential leader or acknowledging a person's relationship with other notable leaders in the organisation)

Table 4: Claiming follower identity according to DeRue and Ashford (2010)

<b>Direct verbal acts</b>	claiming identity	follower	stating that one simply follows the direction of another person
			stating that one is expected to follow the lead of others in a particular situation
			choosing to speak in a meeting only when called on
	granting identity	follower	including a person to an important (direction-setting) conversation
<b>Indirect verbal acts</b>	claiming identity	follower	actively refraining from taking initiative within groups

These summarised tactics are used to determine an act as a claim or grant of follower identity and they are “applied” in practice when analysing and interpreting the data. In order to be able to identify the aforementioned tactics in my dataset, further steps were taken which are explicitly presented below:

- i. **Step 1:** initial explorative coding of the data. During this stage, data both from training sessions and match days was watched in repeat in order to identify instances of leadership and how these were operationalised. After gaining a clearer idea of the corpus during Step 1, it was decided to focus on data deriving from match days.
- ii. **Step 2:** second coding process to identify how leadership claims were responded to; if they were accepted, negotiated or resisted. During this round, the theme of followership emerged and the decision to focus on it as well as on leadership was made.
- iii. **Step 3:** incorporation of secondary sources of data in the analysis. Following the first stages of analysis, it was realised that the analysis of examples could not rely solely on the video-recorded interactions *per se*. Thus, whenever necessary, the analysis draws on my fieldnotes or the follow-up interviews with the players.

Lastly, there are a few other factors which also informed the final choice of examples, which are related to the context of the case study. These are **(i)** the (number of) participant(s) in each video-recording; **(ii)** the content of the video-recording – what is discussed and what is the purpose of the discussion (for instance, a discussion about a strategic plan to be followed, a resolution of a disagreement, or the reasons why a plan has not been successful); and **(iii)** the audio quality – due to background noise coming either from the court or the audience, some video-recordings did not provide much information.

### 3.9 My role as a researcher

This part of the methodology section describes my thoughts with regards to my role as a researcher in a male basketball team. Despite the fact that I am a female researcher entering a male-dominated sport, the experience of being a researcher in this team has been pleasant and absent of any gender bias. The players were initially surprised when I expressed my interest in focusing on their team as a research site, but as soon as I explained the purpose of my study, they were happy to participate. They got used to my regular presence during their training sessions and they were very comfortable with me being around.

Nonetheless, a participant admitted to me during an informal discussion that a few players had adjusted their degree of involvement in the team's discussions during the first times I was present during their training sessions, a behaviour that shifted back to the normal degree after the first game I attended as a researcher<sup>6</sup>. Although this constitutes one of the limitations of participant observation as a method of data collection, as outlined by Foster (2016, p. 59), the fact that I was there as an outsider and did not have any pre-existing relationships with any of them, mitigates any potential implications.

This observation made by a player aligns with those who claim that “an objective reality can never be captured”, but rather a small part of it can be understood

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<sup>6</sup> This informal exchange took place during an informal chat with a player during a training session at a time when we were standing not in close proximity to the camera.

through the interpretations of reality (Creswell, 2009a; Denzin, 2012). Despite the attempts made by researchers to limit their influence at minimum levels and be unobtrusive, their natural presence affects the events occurring during fieldwork (Fetterman, 1998). Admittedly, the analysis of the data is influenced by my own background, perceptions, and researcher identity (Alverson & Sköldberg, 2000; Creswell, 2009b, p. 176; Ergun & Edemir, 2010). The relationship status between researcher and participants can be quite fluid and this explains why previous ethnographic studies argue that the ethnographic field “is an arena for intersubjective interaction” (Paerregaad, 2002) where no predetermined relationship between the researcher and the participants can be designated (Kusow, 2003).

By contrast, the identity of the researcher can be described as “fluid” and in constant negotiation, as it cannot be determined a priori, but rather a shift between the insider and outsider status of the researcher is frequently noticed (Ergun & Erdemir, 2010; Kusow, 2003; Naples, 1996). As Kusow (2003) observes, this shift between the insider-outsider status of the researcher is rather situational and depends on the “prevailing social, political, and cultural values of a given social context” (p. 592), alongside the relationship constructed between the researcher and the participants (Ergun & Erdemir, 2010). This “fluid, non-static, permeable, and dialectic” nature of the insider-outsider status of the researcher is noticeable in my research, too.

As predicted by Ergun and Erdemir (2010), I gradually developed a (semi)insider status with the team after continuous interaction and negotiation with the participants. Starting with the player/gatekeeper, I met with the club president and then the basketball club as a whole. Although everyone in the club was willing to participate in my study and I received their consent during the second training I attended, I can admit that it was challenging enough to gain some players’ trust. This was particularly the case when asking questions during training sessions on the team cohesion or the planning of a session; yet this was not the case during the face-to-face interviews with the participants where all responded to such questions without any hesitation. According to previous ethnographic studies, researchers report that constraints often occur while conducting their study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

Thus, they seek to connect with key participants who are central for their research (Fetterman, 1998; Pawluch et al., 2005, p. 3), with whom they can establish sufficient rapport and trust (Bosworth et al., 2005). Following this, the use of multiple methods of data collection – in this case, participant observation, video-recordings and interviews – is an attempt to gain a holistic overview of the research site (Denzin, 2012) and minimise ethical implications.

Finally, it is worth reflecting further on my role as a female researcher in a male-dominated research site. According to MacPhail (2004), ethnographic research is a person-based project, whose success is highly dependent on the trusting relationship developed with the participants, and the social skills and the personality of the researcher (Barry et al., 1999; Tedlock, 2000). Gender, ethnicity, age, and social class have also been identified as factors which shape the perception that the participants may construct of the researcher (Creese et al., 2008). In fact, previous studies have reported that female researchers often become targets of “sexist treatment” or “sexual hustling” (Arendell, 1997; Easterday et al., 1977; Gurney, 1985; Hutheesing, 1993; Wolfers, 2020). This means that they either experience flirtatious behaviour or sexually suggestive remarks due to the stereotyped view of women as vulnerable or in an inferior position (Gurney, 1985, p. 12; Wolfers, 2020, p. 75-76). Reflecting on my case as ethnographer in a male-dominated environment, I have not experienced episodes of misconduct or inappropriate attitude from the players that would in any way embarrass me or compromise the research.

### 3.10 Limitations and ethical considerations of the present study

The final part of the methodology section describes the limitations and the ethical considerations of the study that are mainly related to the qualitative research methods, which are criticised for being too subjective (Bryman, 2016, p. 392-393). According to Bryman (2016, p. 392), subjectivity and reliability are the major characteristics of qualitative research, which stem from the distinctive and contrastive notions towards what constitutes acceptable knowledge. Schutz (1962, as cited in Bryman, 2016, p. 393) claims that in qualitative research people are capable of attributing meaning to their environment, and thus, many researchers

who follow this tradition tend to be committed “to viewing events and [interpreting] the social world through the eyes of the people that they study”. Following this, it is outside the scope of this study to create generalised and widely applicable theories about leadership performance, but rather to offer a context specific (Apten, 1987) understanding of the collaborative construction of leadership among players with no officially assigned leader positions through the linguistic choices of the participants.

Finally, in order to mitigate any ethical considerations, a series of actions has been taken. At first, the ethics form was filled in and approved prior to the fieldwork commencing (Appendix 6). Then, all participants were given the participant information sheet (Appendix 7) and a consent form to sign (Appendix 8). All these are in line with the ethical standards indicated in the Department of Applied Linguistics 2018-2019 Research Students’ Handbook (Department of Applied Linguistics, 2018). Following these standards, all names of the participants, alongside any other indices that may allude to or reveal any identification of the basketball team under research are pseudonymised in order to preserve anonymity. No other significant ethical considerations, such as working with vulnerable groups etc., or controversial opinions or sensitive personal data, were found to be applicable.

Drawing on the interactional and social aspects of leadership, this thesis aims to question mainstream understandings of leadership and followership by examining how various players claim leadership responsibilities and construct their leader and/or follower identities. In order to explore how leadership and followership practices are realised, video-recorded data is analysed in three different chapters. In Chapter 4, the focus is on occasions where leadership is performed by one individual only, firstly by the team captain and then by two other players. Chapter 5 focuses on examples which describe how leadership and followership are achieved as shared practices of two individuals, while Chapter 6 draws attention to cases where leadership and followership emerge as a collaborative accomplishment of several players as a result of true team effort. In Chapter 4, followership is understood as the mainstream perspective of accepting the influence of others, as previously elaborated in 2.2. However, Chapters 5 and 6 problematise this understanding of followership, which also emerges when leadership is performed collaboratively.



## 4. First attempts of unpacking leadership: examples of one-person leadership performance

### 4.1 Introduction

In this first analysis chapter, I focus on examples where leadership is performed by one player. Taking as a starting point the fact that the team does not have an officially assigned coach, one would expect the team captain to step up and act as a leader (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Fransen et al., 2015a; Grandzol et al., 2010). Interestingly though, as this chapter illustrates, a range of players step up and perform leadership, each of them in different ways and at different occasions. Data shows that while some of them are somehow associated with positions which could explain their leadership role, others are not. Thus, 4.1 discusses how Owen, the team captain during the academic year in which the data was collected (2018-2019), performs leadership. Section 4.2 elaborates on the different ways that Jackson, the former team captain (academic year 2017-2018), does leadership. Finally, 4.3 explains how Derek, a new player to the team but with experience and good knowledge of the sport<sup>7</sup>, adopts a leader role.

Therefore, leadership in this chapter is conceptualised through the authoring claims that players use based on their hierarchical position or their expertise, as well as the followership tactics that the players employ when constructing their follower identities. Both practices are discursively understood and are presented in Tables 2 and 4, Section 3.8 respectively. As the interactions unfold, the analysis will show exactly *where* and *how* leadership and followership practices occur based on Holm and Fairhurst's (2018), and DeRue and Ashford's (2010) understandings.

As shown in the examples below, besides Owen, the team captain, Jackson, and Derek are also involved in leadership performance. Thus, following the Discursive Leadership paradigm (Fairhurst, 2007, 2008) and applying the aforementioned frameworks to the examples, the chapter shows how leadership is performed by one

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<sup>7</sup> See interview excerpts 2.1 and 2.3 with Mark and Richard respectively in Appendix 2.

person, and thus, how is presents similarities with stereotypical understandings of coaching, a specific aspect of leadership in the sports genre which has significant impact on the team's performance (Fransen et al., 2015a). In spite of the association of leadership with coaching, the chapter does not follow the position-based approach, a more traditional viewpoint in sports literature, (Bennis, 1984; Posner & Kouzes, 1990; Fairholm, 2004; Grint, 2010, Grint et al., 2016) because other players than the team captain perform leadership as well. The chapter also explains what happens with followership practices when leadership is performed by one person.

Starting with the team captain, Owen, the chapter focuses on examples where leadership claims are made by Jackson and Derek, thus questioning traditional position-based approaches to leadership in sports. Although the chapter acknowledges this mainstream conceptualisation of leadership where leadership is performed only by one person, at the same time it questions this understanding as the individuals involved in leadership practices do not necessarily hold notional positions.

#### 4.2 When the team captain does leadership

The examples provided in Subsection 4.2 show and explain how Owen performs leadership because of his position as team captain. Hence, the examples show how authoring claims due to one's hierarchical position are employed to perform leadership. As the analysis illustrates, these claims are associated with transactional and relational aspects of leadership discourse, which many times, are intertwined in the same example.

##### *Example 1*

**Context:** This excerpt is recorded during an away game and it occurs before a time out; instructions are given by Owen while he is on the bench. There are more players on the bench, yet Owen is the only one who gives directions. The score is 18-10 to the home team. Here, Owen performs leadership when he sets goals expressed by the directives given to his teammates (lines 1, 2, 8, 12, 13, 14). This way, he controls the agenda and delegates responsibility to his teammates by assigning tasks to them,

which constitutes a form of authoring leadership claims based on one's hierarchical position (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). At the same time, Owen acts as an inspirational motivation and encourages his teammates (lines 3, 9, 10, 11, 15, 17, 23, 25), an activity also associated with leadership (Bass, 1985; Kotter, 1990; Kouzes and Posner, 1987).

<b>Lines</b>	<b>Player</b>	<b>Transcript</b>
01 →	Owen:	Let's go let's go defence (.) no shot
02 →		(5.0) control ↑Andrew control
03 →		(.) Jackson Jackson you can take him
04		(5.0) mismatch, mismatch
05 →		(10.0) let's go guys
06		(.) Mark, new guy
07		(6.0) hey two screens two screens
08 →		(.) put your full screens
09 →		(6.0) good job ↑Richard
10 →		(11.0) yeah (Jay) ((clapping))
11 →		(4.0) good job ↑Jay keep going
12 →		(3.0) watch the second screen watch the second screen
13 →		(2.0) watch this Jay
14 →		(83.0) help him
15 →		(20.0) good job ↑Richard ((clapping)) (2.0) move
16		(2.0) ((cough)) come on guys
17 →		(2.0) good job ↑Richard ((cough))
22 →		((claps))

23 → (14.0) yeah ↑Jay ((clapping))  
 24 (5.0) hey ↑14 seconds ↑14 seconds (.)↑10 seconds  
 25 → hey let's go let's go

This excerpt is a relatively clear example of leadership performance by Owen, who monopolises these few minutes before the time-out. Owen's leadership performance is arguably realised through the clear directives he gives to his teammates by setting the agenda and delegating tasks to them. Directives are aspects of communication which are given so that the transactional goals are met (Vine, 2020, p. 54), which in this example are intertwined with encouraging or positive comments. This is the case even from the beginning (line 1), where Owen encourages the players ("let's go let's go defence"), while also setting the agenda by saying what the players should avoid ("no shot"). After a pause of 5 seconds, he continues by expressing a clear directive to Andrew with verbs in imperative mode, that is, to control the ball and to not perform any other action, such as passing or shooting. The rising intonation when calling Andrew in combination with the imperative mode and the reiteration of the verbs highlight the importance of his instruction.

Right after that, Owen switches to rather positive and encouraging comments addressed to several players with respect to their performance (lines 3, 5, 9, 10, 11). In line 3, in particular, using the modal "can" instead of the directive "take him", Owen assigns a task, hence performing leadership because he articulates an expectation for Jackson (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). While doing so, the use of the modal verb mitigates the illocutionary force of his speech act. Indeed, as Holmes identifies (1983, p. 100), the use of modal verbs conveys "the speaker's attitude to the content of the utterance", in this case Owen's assumption that Jackson is able to handle the opponent player (see also Ehrman, 1996, p. 13; Palmer, 1974, p. 115 for the function of modal verb "can"). Likewise, Palmer (2014, p. 72) claims that "'can' always expresses dynamic possibility", and as he further explains, "can" is often used to suggest what one can do, to give an implication of what is possible, or, to give a

suggestion of an action to be taken, as in this example (Palmer, 2014, p. 86). Consequently, Owen constructs himself as a motivational leader here (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Fransen et al., 2015b; Grandzol et al., 2010; Janssen, 2003). Similarly, in line 5, the “let’s” expression is used in order to encourage the players who are defending at that time. The fact that this phrase is uttered after a ten second pause from the previous one (line 4: “mismatch, mismatch” which constitutes an evaluative act) underlines the interpersonal function of the utterance. Then, Owen continues with supportive evaluative acts in lines 6 (“Mark, new guy”) and 7 (“hey two screens two screens”), acts which reflect a leader role, with the authority to encourage, support and warn players when needed (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Fransen et al., 2015b; Grandzol et al., 2010; Janssen, 2003).

However, with just a pause of a second, Owen switches back to his agenda setting role when giving clear directives to the players, thus portraying himself as a coach (line 8: “put your full screens”). This interplay between positive and encouraging comments on the one hand and clear directives on the other continues in the following lines. Particularly, in lines 9-11, there is a series of encouraging comments to players (line 9: “good job ↑Richard”; line 11: “good job ↑Jay”), which are associated with a rather typical captain behaviour (Fransen et al., 2014; Lyle, 2002, p. 166). These relational aspects of leadership discourse are followed by a few directives to the players (lines 12, 13, 14), which, again, allude to responsibility delegation and task assignment as Owen assigns specific tasks to Jay. The interchange between agenda setting and task assignment on the one hand and encouragement on the other hand reflects the complexity and elusiveness of the phenomenon even when leadership is performed by one individual (Holmes & Marra, 2004; Schnurr, 2009, p. 131-132; Schnurr, 2013, p. 9-10).

As these studies explain, combining task-oriented aspects of leadership, such as setting goals and duties or giving directives, with relationship-oriented aspects is frequent and many leaders opt for both in their attempt to accomplish their goals. This is reflected in this example as well when Owen uses transactional and relational aspects of leadership discourse interchangeably.

In addition to the linguistic aspects, Owen employs some paralinguistic features which signal leadership performance and help him further construct his leader identity given these features are associated with coaching (Lyle, 2002). Clapping as an act of encouragement (lines 10, 15, 23) and rising intonation (lines 2, 9, 11, 15, 24) are features which are often used by coaches when giving advice and are linked with leadership performance (Lyle, 2002). Hand gestures and voice intonation are non-linguistic features which are captured through the video-recordings and give a holistic picture of the phenomenon. The combination of both linguistic and paralinguistic aspects creates a rich source for conceptualising and analysing linguistic aspects of leadership in more depth when leaders reinforce their powerful position (Holmes et al., 2007; Schnurr, 2013, p. 173). As a result, Owen emphasises his directions and his encouraging comments to the players when he raises his voice tone and when he claps respectively. Finally, contrary to potential claims that the rising intonation is the result of a noisy and busy research site (i.e., a basketball court), the video-recording reveals that Owen raised his voice pitch only in particular cases when there was a crucial moment in the game.

Overall, throughout this example Owen follows a rather typical coach-like behaviour which combines the role of setting the agenda, delegating responsibility, and encouraging the team members (Dupuis et al., 2006; Holmes et al., 2010; Fransen et al., 2014; Lyle, 2002). Motivating and inspiring the players of a team in order to achieve excellence by boosting their confidence, encouraging their efforts and providing supportive feedback is usual among coaches (Chelladurai, 2011). It seems that due to the lack of an official coach, Owen takes this role and adopts these coach-like characteristics, as activating the players' involvement, supporting them, and enhancing players' satisfaction fall also under the umbrella of a coach's responsibilities (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Lyle, 2002, p. 284). While Owen constructs his leader identity, there is no other involvement by the other players during this extract. This is because Owen's instructions are given to his team players while he is on the bench and the game is taking place. In this example no other player on the bench intervenes and Owen is the only one performing leadership. As explained in the analysis, Owen's leadership is accepted by the other players as they align with his

instructions, something realised by Owen's rewarding comments to their good performance.

Hence, this example aligns with mainstream views in sports literature which claim that the coach – the team captain in this case – is the one performing leadership (Fransen et al., 2014; Lyle, 2002). The same mainstream understanding applies to followership, which is not performed in this example due to the primary role of the team captain. According to DeRue and Ashford (2010), followership can be performed by refraining from taking initiative within a group, as is the case here, as none of the players on the bench intervenes while Owen performs leadership. Similar observations are made in the next example where Owen is also the one performing leadership when he encourages his teammates during the last game of the season.

### *Example 2*

**Context:** After Example 1, which was recorded during my first time as a researcher with the team, this example is taken from the team's last game for the 2018-2019 academic year. It is an away game and the Tigers have only 6 players on their roster. Therefore, the player who was out, while the other five were playing, was the one giving instructions. The excerpt here takes place towards the end of the game, during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, when the score is 77-68 to the home team. Owen is the only one on the bench at the moment and he constantly encourages and gives instructions to his teammates. This case constitutes another case of leadership, as Owen constantly motivates his teammates (lines 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11), while also using his hierarchical position to make authoring claims by delegating responsibility to his teammates when assigning tasks to them (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018).

<b>Lines</b>	<b>Player</b>	<b>Transcript</b>
1	-	((indistinct chatter among spectators in the background))
2 →	Owen:	↑let's go Mark ((clapping))
3 →		(3.0) YEAH keep up keep up

4 → (68.0) †let's go let's go

5 Derek: (3.0) †Mark come on

6 → Owen (21.0) †go Mark ((clapping))

7 → (35.0) yeah Ma::rk ((clapping))

8 - ((whistle))<sup>8</sup>

9 Owen: three seconds

10 → (6.0) >come on come on< ((clapping))

11 → (26.0) let's go guys (.) ((clapping)) let's stop it  
stop it

12 (14.0) hey one >dribble one dribble<

13 → (8.0) ((clapping)) >push him push him<

14 (16.0) time-out

This is another case of relatively clear leadership performance by the team captain. Owen, being the only player on the bench and despite the fact that the game is close to an end and Tigers are behind in the score, continues to give instructions and, mostly, encourage the other players. In line 2, Owen encourages Mark after a successful final attempt. Such an action is widely used in sports contexts and commonly used by individuals in leadership positions, such as coaches or team captains, who intend to encourage and support the players (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016). Apart from the “let’s” formulation, the vocative (“Mark”) also indicates the same. The use of vocative in particular expresses Owen’s reward and encouragement to Mark, a practice which is associated with coach behaviour (Chelladurai, 2011). Outside academic contexts “let’s” expressions can be used as “evasive polite directives” (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 350), or with the purpose of reinforcing

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<sup>8</sup> This whistle did not signify a time-out, but rather a short pause in the game, as the referee checked something on the score table. The time-out follows a bit later and in line 14 Owen announces it to the players.

inclusiveness and empathy (Wales, 1996, p. 67). Therefore, Owen portrays himself as a motivational leader for the team (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Grandzol et al., 2010; Janssen, 2003).

Following a similar style, he continues in the next line (line 3) where he rewards – cf. the exclamative use of “yeah” – and encourages (“keep up keep up”) a player after a successful final attempt. Despite the grammatical category of imperative (“keep up”), functionally, the communicative purpose of the utterance is to express support to the players. As a consequence, Owen portrays himself as a motivational leader, as he continues to uphold and embolden the players. Similarly, line 4 (“let’s go let’s go”) reinforces the previous argument and illustrates how Owen positions himself as a motivational leader for his teammates, considering that this is the very last game of the season for the team and for the majority of the players who graduate in a few months.

In lines 6 and 7, Owen encourages Mark one more time (line 6: “↑go Mark”; line 7: “yeah Ma::rk”); his comment is combined with clapping in both cases. As in line 3, the utterance “↑go Mark” is grammatically an imperative, however, the function is not only to give a directive to Mark, but also to encourage and uphold him. Thus, this expression can be seen as an “indirect speech act” (Searle, 1979, p. viii-ix) because the meaning of the utterance is distinguished from the literal meaning of the expression; the meaning of the utterance of the speaker implies something more beyond the literal meaning of his utterance. Precisely, in this example, Owen intends to motivate and encourage Mark rather than to set a directive to him<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, Owen performs an activity here which is associated with coaches’ motivational role, and thus, portrays an identity of a motivational leader (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Fransen et al., 2015a; Lyle, 2002).

Owen’s supportive comments continue in line 10 as realised through the encouraging comment “>come on come on<” while he claps. As highlighted previously, this

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<sup>9</sup> Based on Searl’s (1979, p. 31-32) explanation that the hearer of an Indirect speech act relies “on the mutually shared background information [...] together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer” and on my uptake while transcribing the data, the utterance is treated as an Indirect speech act.

utterance constitutes an encouraging comment to the players – despite the imperative – because clapping reveals the communicative purpose of it. As Searle (1979, p. 15) explains, expressive sentences aim to convey the psychological state of the person making a proposition, in this case to encourage and motivate the rest of the players here. The line which follows after 26 seconds of no talking, is part of Owen’s leadership performance (line 11: “let’s go guys (.) ((clapping)) let’s stop it stop it”). Here, Owen’s authoring due to his notional role is understood through assigning a task to his teammates while also encouraging them. This is understood from the use of “let’s” formulations, the hand gesture, namely, clapping, and the use of the address term “guys”. Despite the fact that expressions such as this one are widely used in sports contexts, and thus someone would expect the team captain to use it frequently as well, literature on Speech Act Theory explains that “let’s” constructions often create and reinforce inclusiveness and empathy between the speaker and the addressees (Wales, 1996, p. 67). The address term<sup>10</sup> used here not only emphasises Owen’s effort to encourage and uphold the players until the very last minute, but also, is according to Wilson (2010)<sup>11</sup>, an attribute of the players’ CofP.

In his study about the function of a range of address terms used among the members of a rugby team in New Zealand, Wilson (2010) found that the address term “guys” was only used by the head coach. Based on his interpretation, the term highlights “the status difference that is caused both by the club hierarchy and the age difference between players and coaches” (Wilson, 2010, p. 8). However, he still points out that the use of address terms does not only mitigate the illocutionary force of a directive, but also reinforces solidarity among the team (Wilson, 2010). Wilson’s (2010) findings seem to apply to this context, too, because Owen is standing away from the bench when giving these directives, hence, he has a physical distance from the rest of the team. This physical distance also creates a social distance from the team, which helps him perform leadership. Likewise, the address term and the “let’s” formulation function as the illocutionary force of the directive given is mitigated

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<sup>10</sup> According to Leech (1999), such address terms can be also called “familiarisers”.

<sup>11</sup> The Communities of Practice (CofP) model, introduced by Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (1992) and Lave & Wenger (1991), has been discussed in detail in Section 2.8 of the Literature Review.

while solidarity and collaborative effort are reinforced (line 11: “let’s stop it stop it”). Consequently, Owen adopts a coach-like rhetoric (Chelladurai, 2011), and thus he performs leadership.

Finally, line 13 is another instance where Owen constructs his leader identity based on his hierarchical position. Here, Owen utters another directive (“>push him push him<”) which is a clear task assignment activity to the player who possesses the ball (which is not understood from the transcript) and is classified as a form of responsibility delegation according to Holm and Fairhurst (2018). While delegating responsibility, Owen also claps the performance of one player. By contrast to previous instances, clapping here functions as a means of grabbing a player’s attention and thus, emphasising the meaning of the simultaneously uttered directive. Therefore, by employing authoring claims and providing encouragement to his teammates, Owen portrays his leader identity because he uses discursive tools associated with coaches’ conversational style. As with the case of Example 1, Owen monopolises the leadership performance with the exception of Derek’s intervention in line 5 (“↑Mark come on”) which is merely a comment, or even a complaint about Mark’s performance, rather than a performance of leadership or followership. This understanding is due to Derek’s voice tone, which according to the researcher’s uptake, conveyed his disappointment for Mark’s mistake. Consequently, this example illustrates that, in line with previous studies of leadership in the sporting world, followership does not need to be performed when leadership is enacted by one individual.

Having described the discourse analytical tools employed by the team captain to perform leadership, the next section illustrates how Jackson, the former team captain performs leadership on three different occasions.

#### 4.3 When the former captain takes action

This section focuses on examples where the former team captain, Jackson, steps up and performs leadership. Jackson used to be the team captain during the 2017-2018 academic year; however, as the evidence in my data suggests he still seems to hold

an important role in the team, and based on the follow-up interviews, his word still count<sup>12</sup>. Hence, his authoring claims also derive from his previous hierarchical position, although in the previous year. Sports literature explains that the role of the team captain is very crucial not only for ensuring the accomplishment of the shared goals, but also creating and fostering a social identity within the group<sup>13</sup> (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016). The extracts explored in this section illustrate how Jackson performs leadership by authoring claims when setting the team’s strategic planning.

*Example 3*

**Context:** This excerpt takes place at a later stage during a home game which happens four days before an important game for the team. The following example was recorded during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter when the score between the two teams is very close and before a time-out. As seen from the extract below, Jackson is the one on the bench constantly performing leadership through assigning tasks to his teammates (lines 2, 5 and 9) or by motivating them (lines 3, 4, 6, 8). Hence, Jackson constructs his leader identity using his previous hierarchical position.

Lines	Player	Transcript
1	-	((no talking))
2 →	Jackson:	>go Nathan< be aggressive Nathan
3 →		(.) that’s okay (.) hey Nathan that’s okay
4 →		((clapping)) we got to stop now
5 →		(.) let’s go Nathan ((clapping)) (.) that’s
6 →		all right

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<sup>12</sup> See interview excerpts with Mark and Derek in Appendix 2.

<sup>13</sup> Based on the notion of Social Identity Approach to Leadership (Haslam et al., 2011) collective efficacy has been associated with motivational leadership not only as a result of personal skills (i.e., identity as “I” and “me”), but also as a result of team capacity (i.e., shared identity as “we” and “us”) (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Fransen et al., 2015b). Therefore, the role of the leader is particularly emphasised, as he is the one to lay the foundations for the shared identity which leads to high team confidence and increased team performance (Fransen et al., 2015b).

7 →                               (.) play hard ((clapping)) we need to stop  
8                                       now  
9 →                               (6.0) let's go Richard ((clapping)) good  
10                                      job  
11       Andrew:           (16.0) hands up hands up  
12 →       Jackson:       (2.0) yeah good d<sup>14</sup> good d going nowhere  
13 →                               >good job< hands up hands up (.) no::w we  
14 →                               look so much better in the ( )  
15 →                               (.) ↑don't fall asleep

In this relatively short example Jackson is the one who clearly performs leadership through a variety of discursive strategies related to responsibility delegation and team motivation. To begin with, Jackson gives a clear directive to Nathan (line 2), a first-year undergraduate student who used to play for the 2<sup>nd</sup> team but was called to the 1<sup>st</sup> team in term 2 in order to help with the offensive needs of the team. This imperative expression has a dual function: on the one hand it communicates an order and a demand from the addresser, whereas on the other, it encourages Nathan to continue his effective game. In fact, some of the most common uses of imperatives include orders, commands, requests, warnings, requirements and permissions (Huntley, 1984; Portner, 2004). As Huntley (1984) points out, the interpretation of the illocutionary force of an imperative depends on the semantic structure and the context of the utterance – the wider context where this example takes place along with Jackson's reassuring statement in the next line, are what make the imperative in line 2 have this dual function. As a result, this reveals how linguistic choices reflect both transactional and relational aspects of leadership discourse simultaneously (Holmes & Marra, 2004; Schnurr, 2009; Schnurr, 2013). Similarly, the predicator "be aggressive Nathan" completes the previous order given to Nathan and encourages him to be more competitive in his game. The predicator – expressed through an

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<sup>14</sup> "d" is short for defence.

imperative – emphasises the meaning of the directive given, and clearly reveals the illocutionary force of the speech act, namely, to play aggressively (Huntley, 1984).

In line with Owen's examples before, the interplay between transactional and relational aspects of leadership discourse is also evident in this example. In the following line, Jackson provides an encouraging and supportive comment to Nathan after his unsuccessful final attempt (lines 3-4: "that's okay (.) hey Nathan that's okay ((clapping)) we got to stop now"). Besides the encouragement, Jackson also performs leadership by claiming authority deriving from "the presuming capacity to speak on behalf of [the team] regarding actions that must be taken by the collective" [of the players present] (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018, p. 701). This authoring claim of presumptive "we" is related with the need to advance a task – here with the need to explain the team's strategy. By doing so, Jackson portrays himself as a leader here as he does an action which mirrors a coach or even captain behaviour (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016). According to sports literature, ensuring team satisfaction and keeping players motivated is a common practice of coaches (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016).

Another linguistic aspect which indicates that Jackson adopts a leader role is the use of inclusive "we". Inclusive "we" emphasises the importance of team spirit and solidarity, promotes the concept of mutual achievement and stresses the concept of success as an outcome of collective effort (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Huisman, 2001). The supportive comments to Nathan continue in the next line (line 5), where Jackson encourages ("let's go Nathan ((clapping))") and rewards him ("that's all right"). While doing these relational acts, though, Jackson performs leadership as he appears in charge and responsible for encouraging, motivating and emotionally supporting the players, aspects which allude to the role of a motivational leader in a sports team (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Fransen et al., 2015a; Lyle, 2002, p. 183, 284). At the same time, though, "we" may also have a presumptive function and convey one's capacity to speak on behalf of a collective (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018), thus portraying one's leader identity.

The next lines (lines 7-9) illustrate why and how Jackson makes a leadership claim in this excerpt. On the one hand, he claims authoring through assigning a task through a clear directive (line 7: “play hard”) followed by an encouraging act to the team, that is, clapping and enhancement of the collective goal (lines 7-8: “we need to stop now”). As explained above, Jackson makes an authoring claim in order to advance the task through the use of presuming “we” (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). According to Holm and Fairhurst (2018), through such claims the speaker speaks on behalf of the team for actions that must be taken by the team. In this case, Jackson’s claim sets a directive (line 5) while at the same time enhances solidarity, expresses group membership, and mitigates the illocutionary force of the speech act (Rendle-Short, 2010; Schnurr, 2009, p. 43; Wilson, 2011, p. 128-129).

On the other hand, in line 9 Jackson reiterates an encouraging comment, to Richard this time, and congratulates him for his successful final attempt (“let’s go Richard ((clapping)) good job”). Despite the fact that the “let’s” expression here has a motivating and supportive function, and thus, is associated with motivational leadership and a common coach practice (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Fransen et al., 2015; Lyle, 2002, p. 183, 284), Jackson does not actually include himself in the action proposed (which is the literal use of “let’s” according to Cole, 1975, p. 259). By contrast, as Cole (1975, p. 259, 261-262) explains, the action is expressed by a person in authority, in this case, Jackson, who does not intend to participate in the meaning of the action described. As a result, Jackson excludes himself from the rest of the players and portrays himself as a leader.

Finally, in the last few lines (lines 12-15), Jackson makes leadership claims and further constructs his role as a leader. In lines 12-14, he constructs a leader identity when rewarding the players for their good (“good d good d [...] good job”) and improved performance (“we look so much better in the ( )”), both of which reflect relational aspects of leadership discourse. The use of inclusive “we” reinforces the team spirit and identity (Cotterill et al., 2016), and highlights the importance of teamwork and collaboration for the accomplishment of their common goal, that is, winning the game. Once again, here Jackson performs motivational leadership, a common characteristic of a leader role (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Dupuis et al., 2006; Fransen

et al., 2015a). By contrast, in line 15, and with just a pause of a second from the previous one, Jackson constructs his leader identity by authoring a claim based on his expertise, and particularly by making a prediction for the future (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018) – here for the next few minutes of the game – using a clear directive to the players (“↑don’t fall asleep”). Listening carefully to the video-recording, this is said in rising intonation, something which is indicative of the role of a coach or a captain who is responsible for giving instructions to the players (Fransen et al., 2014; Grandzol et al., 2010).

*Example 4*

**Context:** This excerpt takes place during a home game of the Tigers around two minutes before half-time. The score is 38-41 to the Tigers. Jackson gives instructions and encourages the team after a successful final attempt while being on the bench. As seen from the transcript, he is not alone on the bench, as he talks sporadically with Derek, another player. However, their small talk was inaudible due to their lower voice tone. Once again, this example constitutes a case of leadership, as Jackson delegates responsibility to his teammates (lines 9, 17-20), while he rewards them when the final attempt is successful (lines15).

Lines	Player	Transcript
1	Jackson:	((small talk on the bench (with Derek or
2		George) ))
3		oh come on Andrew ((sounds annoyed))
4		(8.0) ((asks a question, which seems more
5		like a complaint, to the other players on
6		the bench))
7		((small talk with Derek))
8		(6.0) ((small talk with Derek))

9 → (9.0) ↑come on Owen no hassle

10 → (8.0) ↑let's go Andrew (.)↑where's our

11 → defence?

12 (2.0) °Jesus Christ°

13 (2.0) °oh my god why°?

14 - ((no talking))

15 → yeah ((clapping)) good boy

16 Jackson ((sporadic talk between Jackson and Derek))  
and  
Derek:

17 → Jackson: (26.0) push push push

18 → (40.0) you just have to run to join the

19 → player

20 → (30.0) swi::ng

21 (.) no:: ((sounds disappointed))

22 → (4.0) ↑Nathan just shoot if you get that

23 close

The following example constitutes another case where Jackson steps up and claims a leader role during some moments when Owen, the team captain, plays. Based on my fieldnotes, Jackson had just returned to the bench and Mark substituted him. As seen in the transcript, he engages in small talk with one of the other players on the bench and after a while, he steps up and adopts a leader role through various discursive tools.

To begin with Jackson enters the floor in line 9. Having previously discussing Owen and Mark, Jackson interrupts their previous conversation and comes in line 9, where he expresses his disappointment to Nathan. Here, Jackson constructs his leader

identity because he makes an authoring claim to express his disappointment (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). Starting with an utterance in rising intonation, Jackson gives a directive “no hassle” to him in order to stop giving to the opponent team more opportunities to score. By stepping up and giving a directive to Owen, Jackson immediately claims a leader identity as someone who is in charge or responsible for the team (Fransen et al., 2014; Voelker et al., 2011). In the next line, Jackson adopts once again a leader role when making an encouraging comment to Andrew (line 10: ↑let’s go Andrew) in rising intonation. In the same line, though, Jackson expresses a directive realised through interrogative syntax (lines 10-11: ↑where’s our defence?). Through this interrogative, which also functions as a rhetorical question, Jackson does not expect an answer, but rather, he makes the addressee consider the defensive operation of the team. In that way, this rhetorical question can be seen as an indirect speech act (Frank, 1990; Schmidt-Radefeld, 1997; Searl, 1975, p. 60), as the meaning conveyed is more than just what the speaker actually says; the interpretation of the meaning of this question is highly dependent on the context in which it is uttered. As the speaker is the authority to manage the conversation and the flow (Schmidt-Radefeld, 1977), Jackson constructs a leader identity, as he takes over and adopts a behaviour which is associated with a person in authority.

Jackson’s leader identity also becomes evident through relational aspects of leadership discourse. In line 15, in particular, he encourages a player after his successful final attempt (line 15: “yeah ((clapping)) good boy”). In this line, not only does Jackson encourage the player and make a positive comment – realised both verbally and non-verbally – but he also rewards the player by calling him “good boy”. Unfortunately, my fieldnotes do not provide more detail in order to understand to whom this utterance is addressed, but the communicative purpose of it illustrates that Jackson makes another leadership claim, as he uses an address term to refer to one of his teammates.

Furthermore, the use of this address term “boys” is found to be relatively popular among sports teams. As Wilson (2010) explains, the address term “boys” can “be interpreted as infantilising the addressee, thus emphasising the power difference between them and the speaker” (Ervin-Tripp, 1967). According to his analysis,

though, the address term “boys” conveys a sense of solidarity among the players (Wilson, 2010). Taking into consideration how the interaction unfolds in the previous lines, with Jackson giving instructions about defence and then rewarding a player after scoring, it becomes clear how he constructs a leader identity. In this line of thought, the use of the address term reinforces Jackson’s construction of leader identity because it implies a hierarchical difference between the addresser and the addressee (Wilson, 2010). At the same time though, the phrase in which the address term is embedded functions as a reward and encouragement for a player, actions associated with coach-behaviour.

In the final lines of this excerpt, Jackson uses various directives when authoring claims to set the team’s plan and delegate responsibilities to the players, hence constructing his leader identity. Specifically, the repetition of the verb three times in line 17 (“push push push”) constitutes a clear directive given to the player(s). Similarly, in line 20 (“swing”), Jackson gives another directive to the players, that is to pass the ball among themselves until they find a better offensive way to the rim.

As explained above, directives are realised as aspects of communication through which one performs leadership. These cases constitute attempts “by the speaker to get the hearer to do something”, as explained by Searle (1979), or, more simply, to achieve the transactional goals (Vine, 2020, p. 54). The use of “just” is also noteworthy in the final lines of the excerpt. Jackson employs this attitudinal adverbial twice (lines 18-19: “you just have to run to join the player” and lines 22-23: “↑Nathan just shoot if you get that close”) as a way to express his attitude – a possible complaint – to the directive given to the players (Ifantidou-Trouki, 1993). Attitudinal adverbials are means of indicating the illocutionary force of an utterance, a directive in this case, as they do not add to the proposition expressed, but rather “they indicate what type of speech-act is being performed” (Bach & Harnish, 1979, as cited in Ifantidou-Trouki, 1993). As a result, verbs in imperative mode in combination with this adverbial not only make the instruction clearer, but also reveal his attitude – possibly disappointment or complaint – towards the way that his teammates play.

By contrast to this example, where a combination of linguistic tools associated with transactional and relational aspects of leadership discourse are used by Jackson when he constructs his leader identity, in the next example only relational aspects are used. As with the case of the previous examples, followership is understood as an indirect act of refraining from taking initiative within a group (DeRue & Ashford, 2010) when leadership is enacted by one individual.

*Example 5*

**Context:** The excerpt that follows comes from an away game of the team and this is part of a post-time-out recording, which takes place at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. Here, Jackson constructs his leader identity by delegating responsibility (lines 16, 18), but mainly by making the decision to get back to the court and play as soon as the difference in the score becomes 35-23 to the home team. Jackson stood up and got into the court right after line 20 of the transcript. His construction as the leader of the team continues in the following brief example where he portrays himself as a mainly motivational leader.

Lines	Player	Transcript
16 →	Jackson	(36.0) good job Richard(.) >Andrew< take the rim
17 →		(18.0) good job Richard ((clapping))
18 →		(14.0) † onto two screens
19		((no talking))
20 →	Jackson	(21.0) good job Richard

This short example illustrates how Jackson steps up and takes over the role of a coach despite the fact that Owen, the team captain, is on the bench with him (they both decide to play and substitute Andrew and Nathan when the difference in the score gets bigger). In this extract, Jackson performs relatively clear leadership through the rewarding and encouraging comments addressed to Richard (lines 16, 17 and 20). Making positive comments and acknowledging the team’s good performance is important to the players, as it encourages them and boosts their psychology (Cotterill

& Fransen, 2016; Dupuis et al., 2006). Even if this activity is not solely associated with the role of a coach or the team captain, as other players often encourage their teammates, in this case, Jackson appears to step up and adopt the role of a motivational leader. He encourages his teammates as much as possible while being on the bench in order to accomplish their goal and win the game. Additionally, the fact that Jackson decides to substitute another player without asking or being asked who plays at the moment, but solely stands up and says “I’m gonna get in” indicates that he has the “authority” to make important decisions for the game, and thus to perform leadership. As explained above, Jackson’s authority stems from his role as team captain in the previous year.

At the same time, though, Jackson also expresses a directive to Andrew (line 16: >Andrew take the rim<) which shows that Jackson sets an agenda and assigns tasks to his teammates. By employing these two discursive strategies with different communicative purposes, in the former case with the aim of rewarding and encouraging Richard, whereas in the latter with the purpose of giving an order to Andrew, Jackson portrays his leader identity. It is noteworthy that Owen is with him on the bench but not involved in the leadership practice, something that shows how an officially assigned leader role does not always reflect who performs leadership and how various players can emerge as leaders at different points (Schnurr et al., 2021). Thus, it can be said that Owen, as well as the others on the bench portray a follower identity by refraining to take initiative when one performs leadership (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). This aligns with traditional understanding of the term, according to which “followers comply with the directions and the wishes of the leaders” (Northouse, 2019, p. 295).

Having described and analysed the ways in which the captains – both the current and the former – perform leadership and portray their leader identities, the following section moves to another player who frequently steps up and undertakes leadership performance.

#### 4.4 When the experienced player takes over

This section focuses on another player who appears to step up and become involved in leadership performance quite often, Derek. Derek is a new player to the club (he first joined in the 2018-2019 academic year) but “with long experience and quite good knowledge of the sport”<sup>15</sup>, and this is why his fellow players respect his opinion and listen to him<sup>16</sup>. Hence, according to Holm and Fairhurst’s (2018) leadership framework, Derek performs leadership by authoring claims due to his expertise, something also echoed by his teammates’ interviews. The following excerpts focus on instances where Derek is on the bench and performs leadership when Owen, the team captain, plays.

##### *Example 6*

**Context:** This is a post-time-out part of a recording. Derek, while on the bench, gives instructions to the players, hence using his specialist knowledge of the sport to provide guidance to the team (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). Line 13 (“DROP DROP”) refers to a defensive instruction, whereas lines 14-17 are instructions given to the offense of the team to run the ball, to settle before shooting, and finally, to reset after the shot. This is a home game and the team has had three consecutive losses. Thus, for psychological reasons, the team needs this win before their varsity<sup>17</sup> game which is in 4 days. Currently, the score is 79-63 to the Tigers. Here, Derek performs leadership when he gives instructions to the team players (lines 13, 14, 16, 17) and when they follow these instructions (line 15), in this case when Jay follows Derek’s previously given instruction.

Lines	Player	Transcript
12	all	↑team <sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Direct quotation from Mark’s interview. See Appendix 2 for the relevant interview excerpt.

<sup>16</sup> See interview excerpts with Mark and Richard in Appendix 2.

<sup>17</sup> A varsity game is a fixture between two universities, particularly between the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge. In this context, it refers to the game between the “Tigers” and another local university team.

<sup>18</sup> This is said by all players at the end of the time-out.

13 → Derek (66.0) †DROP DROP

14 → (16.0) easy easy run the ball

15 → (30.0) yeah Jay

16 → (5.0) settle settle settle get a good shot get a  
good shot

17 → (120.0) †RESET RESET

This is a relatively clear example of Derek doing leadership by assigning tasks expressed through directives (lines 13, 14, 16, 17) and encouraging comments (line 15) given to the players during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of the game. At first, in line 13, Derek gives instructions regarding the defensive game of the team, and, in particular, he asks the players “to drop”, which translates that the “defender guarding the screener [to] greet the ball-handler at or below the level of the screen until the ball-handler’s defender gets back in front of his original man” (The Basketball Dictionary, 2017). This directive is expressed in rising intonation and also in an extremely loud voice, which indicates that the game is at a crucial point where the team has to be focused and avoid mistakes in their defence.

After that, the Tigers are in offence, thus the next two lines refer to tasks assigned to the team’s offensive instruction. As shown from the analysis below, Derek does leadership by authoring through directing the team’s progression (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018) by imposing a defensive as well as offensive structure for the team’s game. In line 14, Derek gives a directive addressed to the offensive system of the team. In particular, he asks the players to take time and think clearly (“easy easy”) and pass the ball among themselves until they find the best path to the basket (“run the ball”). These instructions are expressed as directives with verbs in imperative mode, which is a common way of giving directions in a sports team and alludes to coaches’ talk (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016).

In the following line, though, there is a shift from giving directives to the players to rewarding and encouraging them (line 15: “yeah Jay”), which also constitutes part of the leadership rhetoric of Derek. This comes after a successful final attempt which

results in Jay scoring. As highlighted in the previous examples, giving positive and encouraging comments to the players is a practice associated with coach behaviour and, also, has a crucial impact on the players' psychology (Cotterill & Fransen, 2014; Fransen et al., 2014). By doing so, Derek, due to his expertise, portrays himself as the one in charge of controlling the team's agenda and delegating responsibilities, and as the one responsible for emotionally motivating the players, that is he acts as a motivational leader (Dupuis et al., 2006; Cotterill & Fransen, 2014; Fransen et al., 2015a; Lyle, 2002, p. 183, 284), which is one of the roles of a coach (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Lyle, 2002).

Finally, in the last two lines of this extract, Derek gives clear directives to the players again – the former is an offensive instruction (line 16: “settle settle settle get a good shot get a good shot”) whereas the latter (line 17: “↑RESET RESET”) is a direction regarding the setting of the team after their offensive attempt. Directives are excessively mentioned in much of the leadership literature, which informs us that giving instructions in a direct way is one of the main characteristics of transactional leadership style (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Schnurr, 2009, p. 9-10; Vine, 2020). Through these speech acts, people in charge exercise power among others, establish their authority and portray themselves as leaders (Holmes, 2000; Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Schnurr, 2009). What is interesting with line 16, though, is that based on my field notes and the video recording, the directives are not addressed to all players in general, but to Owen, the team captain, in particular, who plays at that moment. Therefore, having a title that renders one as “the” (notional) leader, does not always presuppose that they are actually the one doing leadership. On the contrary, as the analysis has shown, various members of the team can emerge as leaders at different points and lead other leaders by making authoring claims using their expertise. In this particular example, it is Derek who steps up and takes over the leadership performance.

Aligning with Examples 3, 4 and 5, this example also questions traditional person- or position-based approaches to leadership. The analysis demonstrates how Derek, a player who joined the team during 2018-2019 academic year, discursively constructs his leader identity. Lastly, as with the previous examples of Owen and Jackson,

followership practices are not enacted when one player performs leadership. However, this is not the case in the next example where things are slightly modified.

*Example 7*

**Context:** This excerpt is recorded at the beginning of the game. It is a home game and quite crucial, as the team had two consecutive lost games. Derek – although not in a hierarchical position – employs some of these authoring claims identified by Holm and Fairhurst (2018). Precisely, while on the bench, Derek stands up and gives directives to the players while Mark is at the free-throw line. Owen’s encouraging contribution in line 10 is uttered while he’s in the court.

Lines	Player	Transcript
1		((no talking among the players on the
2		bench))
3 →	Derek:	let’s go guys run the floor (.) run the
4		floor (1.0)
5 →		(8.0) >better< ((clapping)) good let’s go
6		keep it up ↑ <u>set up</u> ↑ <u>triangle</u>
7 →		(73.0) fellas we’ve got to <u>re::</u> bound yeah?
8		we can’t just leave it to Jackson
9 →		(11.0) yeah George ((clapping))
10 →	Owen:	(2.0) let’s go
11 →	Derek:	(.) let’s go >get back get back<
12		((stands up and gives some advice to Owen
13		when George is on the FT line - inaudible
14		due to background noise))

15 → (36.0) that's right good shot man °good  
 16 shot° ((clapping))  
 17 → (.) get back Mark

This example illustrates, once again, how a lay player with no officially assigned position steps up and constructs a leader identity using his expertise in the sport. Derek performs authoring through convening the floor (line 3), as he is the one who initiates the team talk prior to the start of the game. Then, he sets the team's agenda through particular instructions, such as to run the floor (lines 3-4), to set up and to triangle (line 6) and to go for the rebounds (line 7). This last instruction is complemented by delegating responsibility to the players and encouraging them not to leave everything to Jackson (line 7). These instructions are expressed through a variety of discursive strategies, such as "let's" formulations (lines 3-4, 5, 10), directives (lines 3, 11), and the use of inclusive "we" (lines 7-8), as well as non-verbal features, such as clapping (lines 5, 9, 16). Overall, Derek appears very encouraging and supportive of his teammates; he provides emotional support and enhances the team spirit (use of the address term "fellas" in line 7), activities which are related to the roles of a person in charge in of a sports team (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Dupuis et al., 2006; Grandzol et al., 2010; Fransen et al., 2015b).

In more detail, Derek starts by encouraging the players (line 3: "let's go guys") before assigning tasks addressed to all of them (lines 3-6: "run the floor (.) run the floor (1.0) ↑set up ↑triangle"). Starting with the encouraging utterance before the directives, Derek motivates and supports his teammates. According to sports literature, motivational leadership is a type of leadership very often done by the person in charge of a team, as this person is respected by the players due to their power or authority (Cotterill & Cheetham, 2017; Fransen et al., 2014). Therefore, in these first lines, Derek uses discursive strategies which are associated with both transactional and relational aspects of leadership discourse when constructing his leader identity.

Moving on to the next lines, Derek appears very encouraging and supportive of the players, as realised by the rewarding and positive comments made in lines 5 to 16. In

these lines, Derek employs a range of discursive strategies to construct his leader identity. To begin with, in line 5, he uses his expertise in order to make an authoring claim by providing state-of-the-project (here: game) information when rewarding the players for their improvement (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). The fact that this update is realised both verbally and by clapping (“>better< ((clapping))) and that he then encourages them to continue with their good performance (lines 5-6: “good let’s go keep it up”) emphasises his authoring claim. By making these positive comments Derek portrays a leader identity of the one in charge of the team (Holmes & Marra, 2004; Schnurr, 2009; Schnurr, 2013) even though his authoring stems from his expertise and not his hierarchical position. What is particularly interesting, though, is the fact that Derek uses a combination of evaluative words (“better”, “good”), a non-verbal feature, – clapping, a “let’s” formulation (“let’s go”), and finally a directive (“keep it up”), all of which convey the same positive and encouraging meaning, when portraying himself as a motivational leader. As Vine (2004, p. 41) points out, “imperatives [...], although prototypically thought of as being directive in function, can have a range of meanings”. In addition, scholars highlight that what accounts for much of the meaning of an imperative sentence is the context in which a sentence is uttered, namely the pragmatics of the utterance (Davies, 1979, p. 18-25; Huntley, 1984, p. 103; Leech, 1983, p. 117). Thus, the linguistic form does not always coincide with non-linguistic factors and the interpretation of an imperative depends on contextual factors (Davies, 1979, p. 18). In this case, the directive “keep it up” is not intended to give an order per se (Vine, 2004, p. 41-42), but rather to encourage the players and ultimately to enhance their performance.

After a minute of no talking by any of the players on the bench, Derek continues giving instructions to the players in lines 7-9. Leadership is performed here through the use of the address term “fellas” and inclusive (or collective) “we” (“we’ve got to re::bound”, “we can’t just leave it to Jackson”). On the one hand, “fellas” as an address term is a discourse marker used to draw the players in together, an activity typically performed by leaders. Throughout the data, the address term “fellas” is used only by Derek, something which might be a unique linguistic variant of him. Wilson (2010, p. 7) observes that the address term “fellas” is only used by the head

coach in his corpus, something that might infer a “unique identity marker for him as the highest status person within the team hierarchy”. In my dataset, Derek is the only one who uses this address term. Although Derek is not the head coach, the functions of the address term are still fulfilled, and Derek accomplishes his goal as he is the one monopolising the time-out talk despite Owen’s presence. This reading of the address term aligns with what Holm and Fairhurst (2018) conclude about presumptive “we”, which indicates authoring through the speaker’s capacity to speak on behalf of the collective group of individuals. Hence, here, Derek constructs his leader identity by presuming actions which should be taken by his teammates and by using an address term which indicates someone in a higher position. All these helps raise the players’ attention to Derek’s role as a leader.

In general, address terms (or “familiarisers” according to Leech (1999)) fulfil three pragmatic functions: *(i)* to gain attention, *(ii)* to serve as an identification of an addressee, that is to distinguish “the intended recipient of your remarks from others who might otherwise consider themselves addressees”, and finally, *(iii)* to establish or nurture a social relationship between the speaker and the hearer (Leech, 1999, p. 108). These discourse markers designate a familiar relationship between the speaker and the addressee, and consequently, they establish and enhance solidarity among them (Ervin-Tripp, 1972, p. 223-225; Leech, 1999, p. 112). Taking these theorisations as a reference point, the function of the address term as utterance-initial in this case is bilateral: as a summoning term it catches the attention of the other players and also enhances the solidarity and the team spirit among the players because the term distinguishes them from other groups.

Apart from the address term, the use of the inclusive “we” pronoun also contributes to the reinforcement of solidarity and team spirit, for which the coach is responsible (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Grandzol et al., 2010; Janssen, 2003). Various studies in the field of sports psychology have pointed out that the use of the plural pronoun “we” reinforces group solidarity, team spirit and collective cohesion through emphasis on the mutual accomplishment of the shared goal as a result of the collective effort (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Fransen et al., 2012; Huisman, 2001). Precisely, Derek highlights the importance of “fighting” for rebounds (line 7: “we’ve

got to re:bound yeah?) and the use of the inclusive “we” pronoun mitigates the illocutionary force of the utterance because only Jackson jumps for rebounds (line 8: “we can’t just leave it to Jackson”). At the same time, Derek’s leadership performance here is realised through an authoring claim which shows task assignment to the other players when delegating responsibility of getting rebounds to them. While making this authoring claim, Derek uses the inclusive “we” pronoun, or, the presumptive “we” as Holm and Fairhurst (2018) call it. Although studies have found that a common use of inclusive “we” indicates the involvement of both the speaker and the addressee in a joint enterprise (Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990; Quirk et al., 1985, p. 16, 350), “we” may convey condescending implications as well (see Wales, 1996, p. 63). Here, these implications are related to Derek’s authoring claim.

After this comment, Derek continues his leadership performance mostly with encouraging and supportive comments to the players. In line 9, he encourages George after a successful final attempt (“yeah George ((clapping))”) which is combined with clapping, a gesture that illustrates reward and boosts the player (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Cotterill & Cheetham, 2017; Dupuis et al., 2016). This activity alludes to coach behaviour, because acting as a motivational leader is one of the main duties of a coach (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Grandzol et al., 2010; Janssen, 2003). Adopting Derek’s motivational style, Owen, the team captain, encourages his teammates while playing (line 10: “Let’s go”), which could be interpreted as a followership practice as Owen repeats a phrase which was previously said by Derek (line 3) hence Owen makes a direct followership claim by showing that he follows Derek’s direction (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Therefore, in this case followership is somewhat evident in the enactment of leadership performance as Derek’s leadership encourages Owen’s followership practice.

Nevertheless, Derek takes over again towards the end of the excerpt, and further constructs his leader identity. Using clear directives and “let’s” formulations Derek performs leadership dynamically by encouraging his teammates while at the same time setting the team’s agenda (line 11: “>get back get back<”). The line contributes to Derek’s overall agenda setting as he gives instructions at a fast pace right after a successful final attempt. His agenda now includes the set-up of the team and an

organised defensive plan, hence the fast pace in Derek's instructions. Therefore, this is another case where Derek performs leadership while the team captain is playing.

After some seconds when none of the players on the bench was talking, Derek steps up again and encourages a player after a successful final attempt (lines 15-16: "that's right good shot man ° good shot ° ((clapping))"). The evaluative act ("that's right good shot man ° good shot °") when combined with the hand gesture function as a measurement and reward for the player and assign a leader role to Derek. Furthermore, as highlighted above, the address term "man" is used by Derek in order to mark the familiar relationship among the players (Leech, 1983, p. 112). Additionally, Leech notices that address terms such as this one, are predominantly used among male addressees in their attempt to establish and maintain solidarity (Leech, 1983, p. 122). According to him, the semantic function of the use of an address term is threefold: summoning attention, identifying the addressee, and distinguishing the intended recipient from others (Leech, 1983, p. 108). In this case, all three functions are fulfilled, as Derek identifies and addresses the one specific player who took the good shot. Consequently, he distinguishes this particular player from the rest.

Aligning with the previous line where Derek's evaluative act was addressed to one player only, Derek's directive in line 10 is also addressed to one player, Mark in particular (line 17: "get back Mark"). With this brief instruction, which follows the previous encouraging comment in line 9, Derek delegates responsibility particularly to Mark, thus, constructing a leader identity. In line with previous literature which suggests that leadership may be done through authoring claiming (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018), Derek performs leadership here using his expertise to inform the team's agenda, assign tasks and provide state-of-the-game information.

In sum, as with the previous examples, this one shows how a player without a notional role overtakes the enactment of leadership despite the presence of the team captain and constructs his leader identity through authoring claim using his expertise. Nevertheless, contrary to the previous examples, followership practice takes place, too. Aligning with Derek's motivational instructions (lines 2-4), Owen

constructs his follower identity by encouraging his teammates in line 10, and, most importantly, by showing directly that he follows Derek's instructions (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Lastly, Derek takes over again and further constructs his leader identity by giving instructions to his teammates (line 11) before giving further advice to Owen (lines 11-14). This shift between players' leader and follower identities are explored in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

*Example 8*

**Context:** This example is taken from a home game of the team and it takes place during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, when the opponent team is slightly ahead with the score and the Tigers are putting in extra effort to win the game. This excerpt is what follows immediately after a time-out (line 1 is indicative of the team huddle which occurs at the end of each time-out). In particular, Derek calls the players while a player of the opponent team is at the free throws line and gives them some instructions (lines 2-7), which continue in the next lines as well (8, 9, 11-13) based on his expertise.

Lines	Player	Transcript
1	all:	TIGERS <sup>19</sup>
2 →	Derek:	(69.0) ↑ <u>Mark</u> 31 °won't° miss
3 →		(73.0) °come in come in come in (.) Mark
4		Mark ((indistinct chatter in decreased
5		volume)) °we are still on top° let's get
6		control °come on° ((clapping by another
7		player))
8 →		(23.0) let's go push push push
9 →		(82.0) push push push
10	referee:	(11.0) ((whistles for time-out))

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<sup>19</sup> This utterance is said by all player as it is the end of the time-out.

11 → Derek: (20.0) sit down Jay Jay Jay (.) sit down  
 12 everything's on guards all the importance 's  
 13 (.)>found< on guards  
 14 → Jay: (2.0) no- no I >trust them< (.) try and  
 15 steal the ball down >stream< go °down get  
 16 down°

This example illustrates how a player with no assigned role steps up and portrays himself as a coach. Overall, in this short excerpt, Derek gives instructions to the players while he is on the bench (lines 2-9, 11-13). After a team time-out, Derek starts by providing hard-to-attain specialist knowledge about the player wearing shirt #31 from the opponent team (lines 2-3). Specifically, having been on the bench for a while and using his expertise, Derek calls Mark to get closer to him and listen to his instructions. Derek's utterance "↑Mark 31 won't miss" constitutes a piece of advice to the latter, as well as an informed projection according to Holm and Fairhurst (2018), thus, Derek constructs his leader identity through this authoring claim. Indeed, in the transition which followed Derek's advice, the Tigers lost the attack and then the ball possession went to the opponent team. After that, one of the players fouled player #31, who, in line with Derek's warning, did not lose the shots. The fact that Derek pays attention to the performance of the rival team (in line 2 Derek appears to be certain about #31's performance) and advises the players accordingly, is a practice that indicates high degree of attention and dedication to the game, and is an activity performed by coaches (Lyle, 2002, p. 166; Popper & Lipshitz, 1992; Whitmore, 2010). Therefore, at this point Derek constructs his leader identity.

Following this advice, Derek calls everyone to the bench (lines 3-7) when the player from the opposing team is shooting free throws. The use of inclusive "we" (line 5: "°we are still on top°"), along with the "let's" formulation (lines 5-6: "let's get control") and the motivating comment "°come on°" are discourse analytical tools which build towards Derek's identity construction as motivational leader (Dupuis et al., 2006; Cotterill & Fransen, 2014; Fransen et al., 2015a; Lyle, 2002, p. 183, 284).

Despite his attempt to motivate through encouraging and positive comments, Derek still performs a control act (Labov, 1972, p. 121; Labov & Fanshel, 1977, p 77-78; Oka, 1981, p. 81; Hudson, 1990, p. 285; Huntley, 1984, p. 103) through the use of “let’s” when accompanied by the verb in imperative mode. In cases similar to this one, “the speaker intends the hearer to carry out an action” (Vine, 2004, p. 41), which in this example is to get control of the game and ultimately win it. This assumption aligns with Cole’s (1975, p. 259) classification of non-literal “let’s”, in which the speaker does not intend to participate in the proposition made to the addresser, which therefore, can be interpreted as an indirect speech act through which the speaker sets a direction and, in this case, performs leadership.

The use of “let’s” expressions continues in the next line, where the players are back in the court and Derek asks them to push, namely, to put pressure on the rival team and impede their offence. The reiteration of the same expression (line 8: “push push push”; line 9: “Push push push”), despite a pause of 82 seconds during which no one was talking, reveals that the main point of the team’s agenda is that they play aggressively and exercise more pressure to the opposing team. This is accomplished by exercising more pressure when on offence. By repeating the same direction multiple times, Derek follows a practice which alludes to a coach-related activity, and thus, portrays himself as leader who claims responsibility for the performance of the team (Lyle, 2002, p. 59-60; Popper & Lipshitz, 1992; Whitmore, 2010). By contrast to the previous line, the imperative mode of the verbs is associated with transactional aspects of leadership discourse, and thus, reinforces Derek’s attempt to step up, get his voice heard and portray a leader identity. Derek’s body posture – he stands all this time while giving instructions to the players – contributes to this leader identity construction.

Claiming responsibility for their performance and being in charge of the team’s agenda setting continues to the next line, when Derek calls all the players around him during a time-out (line 11: “sit down Jay Jay Jay (.) sit down”). In this case, the use of imperative and the direction given, namely, to sit on the bench and listen to him which is implied but can be seen in the video recording, shows that he adopts a coach-like behaviour where every player is expected to listen carefully to their coach

(Lyle, 2002, p. 59-60; Popper & Lipshitz, 1992; Whitmore, 2010). Finally, his admittance that it all depends on the guards (lines 12-13: “everything’s on guards all the importance ’s >found< on guards”) functions as reassurance to the players and delegates responsibility to these players (i.e., the point and shooting guards). By doing so, Derek aims to create trust and confidence in the players, a practice which is typical of a coach during, but not limited to, crucial moments of the games (Lyle, 2002, p. 59-60; Popper & Lipshitz, 1992; Whitmore, 2010). As a consequence, Derek constructs his leader identity as a motivational leader (Dupuis et al., 2006; Cotterill & Fransen, 2014; Fransen et al., 2015a; Lyle, 2002, p. 183, 284). Followership is indirectly performed by the rest of the team players who refrain from talking (DeRue & Ashford, 2010) while Derek performs leadership.

#### 4.5 Discussion

This chapter has illustrated and explained how three different individuals step up and take leadership roles at different points. In this chapter, leadership is conceptualised and identified through the authoring claims that the three players make. Taking as a reference point Holm and Fairhurst’s (2018) conceptualisation of leadership as an interactive process that individuals in hierarchical positions or with expertise may exercise, the chapter has illustrated how three different players who fulfil these criteria perform leadership through the authoring claims they make. Hence, authoring claims and the forms in which they are identified, such as through agenda setting, responsibility delegation, or provision of state-of-the-art information, were the vehicle to identify and unpack how leadership was performed (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). Following their framework, Owen and Jackson constructed their leader identities due to their hierarchical positions (current and former team captains respectively) and Derek due to his knowledge and expertise in the sport. As a result, leadership in this chapter is associated with coaching, a solo activity that one does.

Contrary to the majority of leadership studies in the sports field which take for granted the presence of a coach who leads while the players follow them – thus linking leadership with coaching, this chapter has presented how other players perform leadership at different occasions. As scholars explain, the notion of coaching

stems from sports and emphasises the training techniques employed by coaches (Popper & Lipshitz, 1992; Whitmore, 2010, p. 13). Whitmore (2010, p. 14) in particular notices that coaching aims to “unlock people’s potential [in order to] maximise their own performance”, otherwise, to stimulate the trainee. Improving the performance and establishing supportive relations between the coach and the trainee are key components of the coaching process (Popper & Lipshitz, 1992; Whitmore, 2010, p. 13-14). While the former intends to convey the skills and the knowledge of the coach to the trainee, the latter reinforces the empowerment of the trainee (Popper & Lipshitz, 1992).

Moreover, devotion and good knowledge of their profession to excel, commitment to their trainees, direct and honest interactional style, and finally, effective feedback are some of the qualities common to all effective coaches (Fransen et al., 2017; Orth et al., 1987). Stepping up and taking over a leader role, especially when there is no official coach for a team, is common in sports literature (Fransen et al., 2014). However, in a quantitative study conducted in nine different sports teams in Belgium, Fransen et al. (2014) found that almost half of the participants declared that they “did not perceive the captain as the principal leader role”, highlighting that, many times, the skills attributed to captains are overrated and that various leaders can take the lead both on and off the field. This is also shown in the present chapter, as many times, Jackson and Derek have filled in a coach position.

Despite the association of leadership with coaching, the chapter does not follow *per se* the traditional position-based approach to leadership, often encountered in sports literature (Chelladurai, 2007; Fransen et al., 2017). This is because players construct their leader identities by making authoring claims using either their hierarchical positions or their expertise. According to such literature, position-based leadership is understood as “the activity undertaken by someone [...] in a hierarchical position with the resources to lead” (Grint, 2010, p. 4; Grint et al., 2016, p. 7-8). However, in this chapter authority is understood through an interaction lens that emphasises the activities over the products, hence relating leadership to talk-in-interaction (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018; Langley et al., 2013). Therefore, authority is realised as *authoring*, an

activity done by analysing interactions in the micro-level and by observing discursive patterns that are repeated in individuals' leadership talk.

Interestingly, in this case study authoring claims are expressed by players due to their expertise or their hierarchical positions, past or present at the time of the study. This way the chapter challenges mainstream understandings of leadership and demonstrates how various players with or without notional roles portray their leader identities discursively. At the same time, the chapter illustrates how superficial traditional understandings of leadership are, as very often, they are not supported by empirical data. By contrast, the chapter offers naturally occurring data and zooms in the discursive strategies employed by the players when making authoring claims, which indicate leadership performance. The micro-analytic lens approach which is adopted in this chapter demonstrates how dynamically leader identities are constructed by drawing on discursive patterns of authoring, as classified by Holm and Fairhurst (2018).

Starting with Owen, the team captain, the chapter shows how he performs leadership in two different occasions (Section 4.2). After that, Section 4.3 examines three examples where Jackson, the former team captain, steps up at different occasions and constructs his leader identity, thus, illustrating how he performs leadership. Finally, Section 4.4 describes how Derek, an experienced but new to the club player, steps up and performs leadership on three different occasions.

Following a process-based approach to leadership, the analysis of the data has illustrated some interesting observations that can already begin to contribute to developing our understanding of leadership and followership in this team, and that start to challenge simplistic understandings of leadership-followership dynamics. Firstly, players with no officially assigned leader roles take action and do leadership. Jackson and Derek's data have shown how players who either had a notional role in the past (Jackson) or do not have such a role at all (Derek) step up and discursively construct their leader identities. Thus, in contrast to previous studies in sports psychology, the analysis questions the assumption that leadership in sports teams is associated with the notional role of a coach and that in light of the absence of a

coach, the team captain is expected to perform leadership (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Fransen et al., 2015b; Grandzol et al., 2010).

Starting from examples where the team captain performs leadership, the chapter moves on to examples where leadership practice is enacted by other players as well. Consequently, leadership is understood as a practice, a linguistic performance and not as a behavioural trait (Alvesson & Billing, 1997; Grint, 2010, p. 7; Parry, 2001; Sinclair, 1998) or an assigned characteristic (Zalenzik, 1977). Hence it is perhaps more accurate to refer to leader *identities* rather than leader *roles*. This particular observation is further explored and discussed in the analytical chapters that follow.

Additionally, the analysis of the excerpts has illustrated that in most of the examples the player who performs leadership often portrays himself as a motivational leader (see Examples 1, 2 and 5 for instance). By contrast to previous studies in the field of leadership psychology where motivational leadership is envisioned as a trait of a charismatic leader who empowers and influences followers (Choi, 2006; Shamir et al., 1993) or induces positive emotional experiences in their followers (Ilies et al., 2006), the chapter has illustrated how motivational leadership is done in action through the linguistic resources of the players who perform leadership. Thus, the chapter contributes to the body of literature on motivational leadership as a discursive activity and provides the empirical data to support this.

Lastly, although the chapter questions mainstream considerations of who performs leadership in a team with no officially assigned coach, and despite the variety of leadership performances we have identified in this chapter, followership practices have not been directly enacted. Although various studies have described the dynamic relationship between leadership and followership, in most examples of this chapter, followership is realised as an indirect act of refraining from taking initiative within a group (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Nevertheless, there were a few exceptions to this when players directly articulated that they follow the instructions given by the leader (DeRue & Ashford, 2010), as for instance in Example 7.

This observation aligns with previous studies in followership which tend to reinforce the dynamic enactment of it and its interplay with leadership performance (Baker, 2007; Crossman & Crossman, 2011). Therefore, it may be concluded that followership practices emerge where leadership processes are distributed among various interacting individuals, hence, creating a ground where leader and follower identities can be shaped. This relationship is explored in sufficient detail in the upcoming analytical chapters.

Nevertheless, as the following chapters show, leadership performance is neither always a solo performance, nor can it be a black-and-white practice as the examples in this chapter have illustrated. In the next chapter, I draw on examples of co-leadership which take place between Owen and another player, or two players themselves. Apart from the emphasis on the discursive enactment of co-leadership, the chapter also discusses the concept of followership as it emerges between two interacting players.

## 5. Problematising leadership and followership in examples of co-leadership

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to problematise mainstream conceptualisations of the single leader in charge by analysing and discussing examples where two players are involved in the enactment of leadership. While Chapter 4 examines how various individuals can perform leadership roles and construct their leader identities, this chapter moves beyond such mainstream constellations and illustrates how leadership practices are co-constructed and shared between two players who do not necessarily hold any officially assigned leader roles. Interestingly though, while unpacking these practices by applying a micro-analytic lens, leadership was not the only practice performed by the players; rather, players were involved in followership practices as well. The chapter uses examples where leadership and followership take place between two players and explores how the players actively contribute to these practices through the discursive strategies they employ. As with Chapter 4, leadership and followership activities are identified using the authoring claims framework by Holm and Fairhurst (2018) alongside DeRue and Ashford's (2010) verbal/nonverbal acts for followership. Building on the findings of the previous chapter about clearly identifiable leaders, this chapter challenges notional perceptions about leadership and followership, examines the relationship between these two, and focuses on what discursive strategies are used by the players involved in these instances.

Having set an introduction to the chapter, Section 5.2 deals with the micro-level analysis of the examples, while Section 5.3 provides a comprehensive discussion on the observations made throughout the chapter. The chapter concludes that despite pre-established straightforward ideas about leadership and followership, the two concepts are more complex and not clearly distinguishable from each other.

## 5.2 Questioning co-leadership and followership in action

Section 5.2 provides a range of examples of co-leadership and reveals how difficult a distinction between these two concepts is by focusing on examples where the two practices are performed by two players.

### 5.2.1 Examples of two players who emerge as co-leaders

The two examples in this subsection focus on instances where two players with no official titles emerge as co-leaders, firstly in order to mitigate a dispute (Example 9), and secondly during an underlying floor competition to set a directive (Example 10).

#### *Example 9*

**Context:** This example takes place during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of an away game and illustrates how Alex and Derek collaboratively emerge as co-leaders in order to resolve a dispute between the referee and Mark. In more detail, Mark has just returned to the bench while Alex, George and Richard had already been there. As shown in the excerpt, Alex claims to be the coach, and thus takes responsibility over Mark's angry reaction to a decision made by the referee.

<b>Lines</b>	<b>Player</b>	<b>Transcript</b>
1	Mark:	okay (.)new team
2 →	Alex:	(3.0) ↑Jackson (.)↑you got four (.)↑you
3 →		wanna stop? you wanna stop for just a bit?
4	Jackson:	(4.0) (replies something which is indistinct
5		due to loud background noise)
6	Alex:	(2.0) yeah yeah
7		(30.0) (sporadic chatter among Alex, Mark



one of the players. As a consequence, the referee turns to the bench and asks the players who the coach of the team is.

At this point and even though a few players were on the bench, Alex steps up and makes a clear leadership claim to the referee using the emphatic “I am the coach” (line 12). The use of first-person singular pronoun, which indicates that he confidently and assertively claims the coach role here, in combination with the fact that he decided to claim that he is the coach of the team illustrate how fluid the team structure is. Thus, it seems that various players can step up and emerge as leaders at different points. Studies in psychology and behavioural sciences (Raskin & Shaw, 1998; Weintraub, 1981) describe the use of personal pronouns, and particularly that of the first-person singular, as “an index of egocentrism indicating the relative extension of the self” (Raskin & Shaw, 1998). Indeed, literature in sports and coaching explains that one of the primary tasks of a coach is managing processes and mitigating situations which arise among players (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Lyle, 2002, p. 284-285). Here, the use of the first-person singular pronoun does not indicate egocentrism, but rather explains the personal involvement of the player in the role of a coach in order to mitigate the situation and avoid a potential conflict.

At the same time, though, Alex appears to agree with the remark of the referee, something which alludes to a coach-like behaviour during a game (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Whitmore, 2009). His compromise with the referee’s instructions continues in the next line when Alex agrees with the referee when nodding his head and literally dragging Mark, who was still in disagreement with the referee, from the shirt (line 14: “okay I got you ((nods))”). As Mark insists on his opinion, Alex makes a clear leadership claim by ordering him to sit down on the bench, an order which is said twice (lines 14-16: “sit down Mark ((drags him to sit back to the bench)) sit down yeah yeah,”). This behaviour alludes to coach-like characteristics as the coach is the one who claims responsibility over the players’ behaviour in the court and is the one to negotiate with the referee in case needed (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Lyle, 2002, p. 282-285). Previous studies in the field of sport psychology highlight that sports teams can be seen as formal organisations, and thus, the coach’s role may be similar to that of

management, as a variety of tasks beyond planning and leading are necessary (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Cotterill & Fransen, 2016).

In spite of Alex's order to Mark in lines 14-15, and after a pause of four seconds, Derek, who was playing at that time, takes over and participates in leadership performance (lines 17-18). Derek uses the address term "guys" to gain everyone's attention, and, based on the video-recording, he then makes a hand gesture which indicates "let it go"<sup>21</sup>. By doing so, Derek, who has been a follower while watching the interaction between Alex and the referee since he refrained to take initiative in the discussion all this time (DeRue & Ashford, 2010), contributes to the management of the interaction; his intervention (i.e., "saving" the team during an argument) is a task associated with leading a team as previous literature suggests (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003, p. 53; Holmes et al., 2011, p. 43; Schnurr, 2009, p. 27-28). Whereas Alex sets a direction in lines 14-15 ("Mark sit down"), Derek builds on this direction in line 17 and also constructs his identity as a leader. After Derek's intervention, Mark returns to the bench where he sits quietly, bringing the argument between himself and the referee to an end on Derek's direction. Therefore, Derek's verbal as well as non-verbal intervention (i.e., use of the address term and hand gesture) contributed to the resolution of the situation. While Derek takes over, though, Alex becomes a follower; he does not participate anymore and quietly sits on the bench along with the other team players and the game resumes.

This example illustrates how two players, who have been following the decisions made in the last time-out, now step up and collaboratively emerge as co-leaders in order to prevent a potential dispute between Mark and the referee. This example reveals how an individual can switch from being a follower to being a co-leader as certain circumstances unfold; Derek, who has been refraining from taking initiative and thus, indirectly performing followership (DeRue & Ashford, 2010) by watching how the interaction between Alex and the referee unfolded, takes over and contributes to the mitigation of the situation. In more detail, as the dispute between Mark and the referee was not getting resolved despite Alex's leadership performance

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<sup>21</sup> A blurred screenshot of this footage is available in Appendix 7.

(firstly, by claiming that he is the coach, and then by asking Mark to return to the bench), Alex stepped up and also participated in the resolution. Thus, Derek's involvement led to a successful resolution in that particular moment, although both interacting players contributed. This more clearly shows how Alex turned from being a leader to being a follower, because after Derek's intervention he returned to the bench where he remained quiet. Instances such as this one, when an individual refrains from taking initiative within a group are identified as indirect claims of followership according to DeRue & Ashford (2010).

Consequently, despite a few studies in which followers were seen as "passive subordinates" (Alcorn, 1992; Kelley, 1992), in this example Derek is quite active as he steps up and with his contribution, the argument between Mark and the referee is resolved. Hence, "the fixed role [between leaders and followers] was idealised, [something that] led to making a sharp and distinct difference between leader and follower" (Baker, 2007, p.51), and that there is no fine line between the two roles which seem to be interchangeable. Although this understanding derives from Derek's participation in this interaction, this may not be clear to Mark, who returned quietly to the bench after Alex's intervention, hence aligning here more with the mainstream definition of followership. The dynamic relationship between these two processes is further explored in the rest of this chapter and the following one.

*Example 10*

**Context:** This excerpt takes place during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of a home game. The two teams are close in the score and as seen in line 1, Jackson and Owen talk sporadically on the bench before they start performing leadership by authoring through assigning tasks to the players. A few other players are with them on the bench.

Lines	Player	Transcript
1	Jackson and Owen	((sporadic talk in decreased volume between Jackson and Owen on the bench))
2 →	Owen	(.)stop the <u>ba::ll</u>

- 3 → Owen (7.0) line here
- 4 → Jackson (2.0) help him Mark help him
- 5 → Jackson (5.0) watch your help boys ( )
- 6 → Owen (9.0) good job good job
- 7 → Jackson (.)now get back
- 8 → Jackson ((stands up from the bench and subs in for Richard))
- 9 → Owen (6.0) hey let's go guys defence
- 10 → Owen (38.0) come on box out guys

Following the previous example, this one shows how Owen and Jackson emerge as co-leaders through an underlying competition for the floor when both perform leadership through assigning tasks. The analysis shows that both players collaborate and build on each other while performing activities associated with leadership, such as setting goals (lines 2, 4, 7), warning their teammates (line 5) and rewarding their good effort (line 6) (Holmes, 2005; Holmes et al., 2011; Schnurr, 2009, p. 9-10).

This excerpt starts with a sporadic talk in low volume between Jackson and Owen on the bench. A few seconds after, Owen takes the lead and starts making an authoring claim by directing a player (line 2: “stop the ba::ll), realised through the verb in imperative mode. After a seven-seconds pause, Owen continues with another instruction (line 3: “line here”), which actually constitutes a speech act despite the fact that the verb is missing<sup>22</sup>. However, unfinished utterances like this one occur often in the sports jargon due to the pressure of the moment (Mahiri, 1991). This observation aligns with what Mahiri (1991) describes as the “discourse of basketball” meaning the specific discourse genre which encompasses all these “cognitive images and interactional speech modes”, along with “abstract concepts and feelings that are sometimes not perceived consciously [...] such as the sense that something exciting

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<sup>22</sup> A verb, for instance “watch”, would have indicated a clear directive.

is about to or just did happen and the sense of being in the game and being alive”. Likewise, in this case, the cognitive image of the side-line of the court functions as the direction given by Owen.

In the next lines though, and after a pause of two seconds (line 4: “help him Mark help him”), Jackson enters the floor by giving a clear direction to Mark. This directive is personally addressed to Mark, contrary to the one given in line 5, where Jackson repeats a similar order but, this time, addressed to all players (line 5: “Watch your help boys ( )”). Using an address term rather than the proper names of the players has a functional purpose as the directive is targeted to all the players. According to Holm and Fairhurst (2018), such uses of presumptive “we” are also ways of authoring through presuming the capacity to speak on behalf of a collective of people about actions that they shall take. At the same time, though, the address term emphasises and enhances the sense of solidarity and group collaboration among the team members (Wilson, 2010) during a crucial moment of the game. Overall, the use of the address term when giving a directive intends to mitigate the illocutionary force of the speech act which might have a negative impact on the addressee (Rendle-Short, 2010). As Rendle-Short (2010) notices, when address terms are used at the end of a speech act, they have a positive impact on the addressee, as whatever is uttered afterwards is perceived in the context of an open and friendly relationship.

The first lines of this example show that Jackson performs leadership by using linguistic resources associated with transactional aspects of leadership discourse<sup>23</sup> – (even when his directives are realised through relational aspects, as in the case of the address term (line 5). As sociolinguists point out, through these aspects, individuals in charge exercise power among their teams, establish their authority and portray themselves as leaders (Holmes, 2000; Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Schnurr, 2009).

Moving to Owen, he re-enters the floor in line 6 and makes a rewarding comment. This comment aims to cheer up and encourage the team which, at this point, is behind in the score. Sports literature highlights that one of the key responsibilities of

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<sup>23</sup> This is favoured by individuals in charge when performing leadership (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Vine, 2020).

a coach is to act as a motivational leader and to support the players at crucial moments (Chelladurai, 2011; Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Grandzol et al., 2010; Janssen, 2003). By making this encouraging comment, Owen adopts a coach-like behaviour while performing motivational leadership (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Lyle, 2002, p. 183, 284). Hence, by doing one of the main tasks of a coach, which is to provide encouragement and support to the players, Owen arguably performs leadership (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Fransen et al., 2015; Lyle, 2002).

Nevertheless, Jackson re-enters the floor right after Owen's encouraging comment (thus revealing some competition over the floor) and performs leadership by authoring a task to be done by the players in line 7 (“(.) now get back”). Based on the communicative purpose of the directive, which constitutes attempts “by the speaker to get the hearer to do something” (Searle, 1979) – in this case to run back to the other part of the court where the team has to play defence – Jackson achieves his goal. However, his purpose is realised not only by the use of the verb in imperative mode, but also by the excessively loud voice for “now” and by the fact that his directive follows a less-than-a-second pause after Owen's comment. This transactional aspect of leadership discourse emphasises the assumption that a competitive rather than a collaborative atmosphere exists between the two players. This understanding is further reinforced by Jackson's decision to return back to the court (line 8) without discussing or even announcing it to Owen who is also on the bench. Despite the lack of words, Jackson's decision was captured in the video-recording. At this point, Owen remains silent and does not question Jackson's decision, thus, he aligns with the former's decision and portrays a follower identity. Hence, Owen's silence in this example arguably illustrates his acceptance of Jackson's decision; although he is not a subordinate of Jackson, Owen aligns with him quietly. Refraining from taking initiative in a situation is described as an indirect form of followership (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Thus, followership can be understood as alignment with anyone's decision or suggestions and not necessarily of the superior in a team, as explained by other studies (Northouse, 2019).

Jackson's abrupt and spontaneous decision aligns with the observation made in the previous example about the fluid and non-hierarchical team structure. As in the case

of Alex in the previous example, Jackson makes a leadership claim and substitutes Richard without any prior discussion with Owen – or even Richard, the agreed student-coach – about his decision. Owen’s silence regarding Jackson’s decision is another example of him portraying a follower identity because he refrains from taking initiative and participating in team discussions (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Therefore, Owen aligns with studies which question the idealised and fixed leader role and the sharp and distinct difference between leaders and followers (Baker, 2007). Therefore, the analysis shows that, depending on the occasion, leader and follower positions can be adopted by various players in a team.

This observation becomes more relevant when Owen comments in lines 9 and 10 and concludes this short excerpt. In line 9, Owen makes an encouraging comment (“hey let’s go guys defence”), understood through the emphatic “hey” at the beginning of the utterance, the use of the “let’s go” and finally through the address term “guys”. “Let’s go” is a widely used expression by coaches and team captains in sports contexts with the aim of providing encouragement and support to the players (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016). Research beyond academic contexts, points out that “let’s” expressions reinforce inclusiveness and empathy (Wales, 1996, p. 68). Consequently, Owen once again portrays himself as a motivational leader for the team (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Grandzol et al., 2010; Janssen, 2003).

In addition, the address term “guys” is particularly meaningful for leadership performance because it retains the difference in the status quo and indicates the hierarchy in the team, while maintaining its function as a familiariser (Wilson, 2010). As explained in Chapter 4 (4.2, Example 2), familiarisers – another term for “address terms” – have three communicative functions (Leech, 1999, p. 108). All these purposes apply in this example, because Owen intends to get everyone’s attention – the utterance is addressed particularly to the Tigers – and finally to maintain solidarity among the players, something also realised through the “let’s” expression. As a result, these linguistic resources mitigate the illocutionary force of the incomplete speech act: instead of saying “[play] defence”, Owen opts for the short “defence” (line 9), a feature widely found in sports discourse due to the nature of sports (rapid change in the momentum and high pressure, Mahiri, 1991). As

highlighted in the previous chapter, transactional and relational aspects of leadership discourse are intertwined, and transactional aspects can be underlaid in relational ones.

The same pattern appears in line 10. Using the motivating and supportive “come on”, Owen aims to encourage and boost the confidence of the players which constitutes a key to the team’s performance, especially when they play under pressure. Emphasising the psychology of the players while encouraging them is a coach behaviour strongly associated with motivational leadership (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Grandzol et al., 2010; Janssen, 2003). Moreover, the use of the address term “guys” one more time fulfils the functions mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Overall, throughout this example, it appears that Jackson and Owen emerge as co-leaders while also being followers. The analysis explains how their roles as leaders and followers are rather interchangeable and not fixed. Jackson and Owen perform leadership by building on each other’s instructions or comments, sometimes resulting in overlap. Consequently, they fluidly position themselves and each other as leaders and followers throughout this unfolding extract, although this may be in a less salient way.

In spite of the collaborative enactment of leadership, Jackson and Owen employ different discursive tools in order to portray themselves as co-leaders; discursive tools which allude to transactional aspects of leadership discourse from Jackson, and the choice of relational aspects of leadership discourse from Owen. Therefore, despite initial perceptions that there is a structural collaboration between the two players, as they complete each other’s words, it appears that there is in fact a competition over the floor.

More about the dynamic relationship of these two concepts is explored in the following subsection. Finally, the analysis of the empirical data of the example highlights the importance of context and language use, while exploring the concepts of leadership and followership and their relationship, an aspect overlooked by quantitative studies which tend to measure this relationship using questionnaires,

experiments or models – for instance, the self-determination theory or the Leader-Member Exchange theory (LMX) (Agho, 2009; Haslam & Platow, 2016; Leroy et al., 2012).

#### 4.2.2 Examples where leadership and followership practices are more complex

The examples in this section illustrate how leadership and followership activities are understood from more complex examples of co-leadership.

##### *Example 11*

**Context:** This excerpt comes from a time-out recorded during a home game for the Tigers. The time-out takes place during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of the game when the score is 46-45 to the Tigers. The team has had three consecutive losses prior to this game, which is something that according to Richard, a 3<sup>rd</sup> year undergraduate student who has been playing for the team throughout his three years of studies, has not happened in two years. This example illustrates how dynamic and fluid practices of leadership and followership are, as they are collaboratively enacted by Derek and Owen, line by line.

Lines	Player	Transcript
1	-	((no talking among the players on the
2		bench))
3	referee	((time-out))
4	-	((the players come to the bench))
5 →	Derek:	guys >you think you're< excellent yeah
6 →		(.)we have a <u>full</u> [possession
7 →	Owen:	[yeah yeah
8 →	Derek:	(.) if I want to have, run a fast break
9 →		and have two shots within five seconds



(line 5: “>you think you’re< excellent yeah”) clearly designates a speech act, where a coach emphasises the good qualities of a team (Lyle, 2002, p. 59-60). Then, the second half of his utterance is another case where he acknowledges and emphasises the team’s good performance, highlighted through the stress on “full” (line 6: “we have a full [possession”). As a result of this “full possession”, the team controls the game. Consequently, by motivating the team Derek constructs his leader identity as he adopts a coach-like activity, employing discursive features which are associated with both transactional and relational aspects of leadership discourse (use of address term, second- and first-person pronouns).

Following Derek’s direction, Owen, who was playing when the time-out was called, enters the floor by interrupting and agreeing with him (line 7: [“yeah yeah”). Here Owen’s agreement is a direct verbal act of portraying follower identity because he states that he follows Derek’s direction (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Hence, in spite of interrupting Derek, Owen does not build towards the team’s strategic planning, but rather he only agrees with Derek, hence, temporarily constructing a follower identity. However, Owen’s rather proactive role contributes to the enactment of leadership by Derek in line 8, because Owen’s agreement functions as a reassurance to Derek that the team supports his instructions. Derek re-enters the floor and further explains his plan after a pause of less than a second.

Precisely, in the following lines, 8-11, Derek constructs a leader identity by making an informed projection based on his expertise (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018); he does authoring through a prediction of the future based on the fact that he has been watching the team’s game from the bench. Derek elaborates on how the team should take advantage of the stops they gain (lines 8-11). Starting with an inductive condition, he gives an example of himself (“if I want to have, run a fast break and have two shots within five seconds”). He then moves to what the team should do, namely get advantage of the stops they gain. This pattern is associated with coach-like practice, where the coach clarifies an instruction by moving from “I as a player” to “we as a team” (Lyle, 2002, p. 59-60; Popper & Lipshitz, 1992; Whitmore, 2009). The use of inclusive “we” reinforces the feelings of solidarity and cohesion among the players, where success comes as a result of team effort and co-operation

(Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Lyle, 2002, p. 284). Therefore, Derek points out the importance of team effort and collaboration, an instruction which is completed by Owen in the next line (line 12: “yeah they still need to come out to transition”). Apart from aligning with Derek, Owen further explains Derek’s point; as a result, one could argue that leadership is being performed collaboratively by Derek and Owen who set the team’s strategic plan by authoring instructions for what is being discussed (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018).

After joint laughter by a few players about something inaudible, Derek comes back to his initial direction (lines 15-16: “yeah? so defence isn’t great just think about it”). By returning to his advice, Derek concludes by making clear to the players that they need to improve their defence, hence he further constructs his leader identity by sharing an inside knowledge as authoring is done by providing specialist information (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018) which Derek has due to his presence on the bench.

Picking up on Derek’s instructions and after a brief pause, Owen re-enters the floor by saying the motivational “let’s go” (line 17), which is followed by clapping (line 18) by various players, revealing the team’s alignment and commitment to both player-leaders. At this point, however, Derek, who demonstrated a leader identity in the previous line, as well as the other team players now construct a follower identity by jointly clapping after Owen’s motivational phrase, thereby signalling approval and alignment with his suggestions. They perform followership via a direct non-verbal act (i.e., clapping) which echoes Owen’s motivational phrase, because clapping intends to encourage the team players (Lyle, 2002). Finally, the time-out is concluded by Owen’s team war cry in line 19 (“↑TEAM ON THREE ONE TWO THREE”). This is uttered in louder voice tone and with a high rising tone, constituting a drive to the players and highlighting, one more time, the importance of team effort towards the accomplishment of their goals. The choice of the word “team” reinforces this idea of mutual engagement and team effort while building trust and enhancing solidarity among the players (Lyle, 2002, p. 59-60; Popper & Lipshitz, 1992; Whitmore, 2009). Here, Owen portrays a leader identity because he closes the time-out talk through a verbal act which shows authoring through dismissing the team (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018).

In sum, throughout this example, two players (Derek and Owen) have stepped up and collaboratively engaged in co-leadership and followership practises by reassuring each other or giving instructions. Consequently, the example illustrates how their leader and follower identities are interchangeably performed; on the one hand, Owen firstly portrays a follower identity (line 7) before stepping up and contributing to the enactment of co-leadership together with Derek. On the other hand, Derek steps up from the start and constructs his leader identity (lines 5-6 and 8-11) before moving to the background when Owen overtakes towards the end of the time-out. Both players construct their leader and follower identities by building on each other's words, something that reveals how interrelated the two concepts are and how two players can switch from acting as a leader to acting as a follower as the situation unfolds in order to achieve their common goal, namely, to win the game.

*Example 12*

**Context:** The below excerpt is recorded during the team's varsity game and is the team's prep-talk before the second half of the game. After the first half, the team had a brief talk, where Derek asked the rest of the players to rest during the cheerleaders' show and to warm up afterwards. This talk takes place right before the beginning of the second half. The score between the two teams is 26-32 to the rival team.

Lines	Player	Transcript
1	-	((unintelligible chat among some
2		players))
3 →	Jackson:	>you're alright? <
4 →	Derek:	(2.0) hey (.) we need we need to start
5 →		like we've played the last fifteen
6 →		minutes and a half (.) yeah? (.) we're
7 →		good we're fine just take out those three

8 → and threes

9 → Jackson: (2.0) honestly like if we, all of us

10 → just, take more often the lines, then we

11 → reset

12 referee ((referee's whistle))

13 → Jackson: (2.0) let's go man let's go let's go

14 → let's go Tigers on four

15 Owen: (.) ↑TIGERS ON THREE ONE TWO THREE

16 all: TIGERS

Following the previous example where leadership and followership activities were shared between Derek and Owen, this example describes how these activities unfold between Jackson and Derek. The example here starts with Jackson addressing a question to all his teammates. The question aims to check if the players are ready for the second half (line 3: ">you're alright? <"). The players gather around him and, immediately, Derek takes over and motivates them by referring to their good last fifteen minutes (lines 4-6: "hey (.) we need we need to start like we've played the last fifteen minutes and a half (.) yeah"). Jackson's phrase here shows how he constructs his leader identity, as authoring is done by providing state-of-the-art information (Holm & Fairhurst). Precisely, Derek refers to the team's good performance during the past fifteen minutes in order to boost the team's confidence and ultimately, performance. Consequently, Jackson portrays himself as a leader at this point as he adopts a coach-like style (Chelladurai, 201; Fransen et al., 2014).

Following Jackson's call, Derek enters the interaction with a reassuring statement which reinforces the team's good performance and encourages the players (lines 6-8: "we're good we're good we're fine just take out these three and threes"). The use of the attitudinal adverbial "just" also shows the speaker's attitude to the statement he makes (Ifantidou-Trouki, 1993; Urmson, 1963, p. 228). Here, the adverbial illustrates Derek's confidence and certainty in the direction he just gave to the team.

Further, the use of inclusive “we” reassures the players of their good performance so far and motivates them to continue their hard job.

Indeed, several studies on sports literature highlight that the use of first-person plural pronoun “we” results in a spirit of solidarity and cohesion within the players and affects them positively (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Wilson, 2011, p. 156). In their study on the use of collective “we” and team efficacy, Fransen et al. (2012) found that positive communication, especially before the game, and coach interventions result in successful team outcomes. At the same time, though, the use of inclusive “we” indicates that Derek includes himself in this team effort, and that he is not just distancing himself from the team’s common goal by giving directions to his teammates. As a consequence, Derek not only demonstrates a leader identity when encouraging and motivating his teammates before the beginning of the second half, but he also portrays himself as ‘one of them’, as a member of this mutual engagement, who is also an addressee/recipient of the directions, not only an addresser.

Picking up from Derek’s direction about “taking the threes”<sup>24</sup>, Jackson follows, further explaining what the players should do, “honestly like if we, all of us, just take more often the lines, then we reset” (lines 9-11). The use of the two adverbials (lines 9, 10) “honestly” and “just”, along with the inclusive “we” pronoun denote, and highlight once more, the need for team effort – the task that needs to be followed is not complicated, but it requires everyone’s input.

On the one hand, the illocutionary adverbial “honestly” modifies an implicit illocutionary speech act of the main clause (Back & Harnish, 1979, p. 220; Ifantidou-Trouki, 1993; Ifantidou, 2001, p. 97-98). In this case, the adverbial describes Jackson’s act of stating that they should all take more lines and then reset (lines 9-11). On the other hand, the attitudinal adverbial “just” depicts the speaker’s attitude to the statement he makes (Ifantidou-Trouki, 1993; Ifantidou, 2001, p. 101; Urmson, 1963, p. 227-229), and thus, it “modifies the whole statement to which they are attached

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<sup>24</sup> “The threes” means the 3 point-shots.

by giving a warning how they are to be understood” (Urmson, 1963, p. 228). As a result, the adverbials are ascribed the role of a “non-truth conditional indicator” (Ifantidou, 2001, p. 101), which, in this case, becomes clear, as the act stated by Jackson is an improvement that should be followed by the players in order to achieve their goal. Thus, the conditional clause (lines 9-11) describes a real event, that the team resets and takes more opportunities in offence, provided that they all run for the lines. Therefore, Jackson describes a true event as a consequence of a feasible hypothesis (Leech & Svartvik, 1975, p. 96).

Apart from the use of adverbials, the use of inclusive “we” twice along with the expression “all of us” (line 9) stresses the importance of team effort and mutual engagement, and how all of them have to put themselves forward in order to win the game. Overall, Jackson, as a result of his attempt to encourage and boost his teammates before the tip-off of the second half, employs discursive strategies pertinent to relational aspects of leadership discourse (Holmes & Marra, 2004; Holmes et al., 2007; Schnurr, 2009, p. 131-132; Schnurr, 2013, p. 9-10), thus, portraying himself as a motivational leader (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Fransen et al., 2015; Grandzol et al., 2010; Janssen, 2003). While Jackson contributes to the enactment of leadership, Derek remains silent and follows Jackson’s instructions. He does not contribute anymore to this time-out, thus, despite his initially proactive role (lines 4-8) in highlighting his teammates’ previously good performance, he ultimately engages in a follower identity. This is supported by previous literature which suggests that refraining from taking initiative within a group is considered as an indirect performance of followership (DeRue & Ashford, 2010, p. 632). Therefore, the analysis aligns with Baker’s (2007) critique about the idealisation of the fixed leader role and shows how various players of the team can adopt these positions depending on the occasion. This is also pointed out by D. Collinson (2017) who outlines the possibility of having multiple and simultaneously overlapping identities during the practice of leadership. In this case, the identities which overlap are these of the leader and the follower.

At this time, the referee’s whistle indicates the end of the time-out and simultaneously Jackson stops his utterance. However, after a pause of 2 seconds, he

re-enters the floor making a motivational comment this time, introduced by the “let’s go” expression (lines 13-14: “let’s go man let’s go let’s go let’s go Tigers on four”). Such comments are frequently found in the sports discourse and are used in order to encourage and motivate the players of a team (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Janssen, 2003). This expression is not entirely uttered by coaches, but rather players with no assigned role who often use it to encourage their teammates (Fransen et al., 2015; Grandzol et al., 2010;). Nevertheless, the verb of the clause is still in imperative mode, therefore, “let’s” mitigates the illocutionary force of the direction given to the players and it also suggests that the speaker includes himself in the proposition made (Cole, 1975, p. 259).

Similar to Derek (lines 4-8), when motivating his teammates, Jackson follows a rather relational feature of leadership discourse. This becomes even clearer when he uses the address term “man”, a term which marks a familiar relationship between the speaker and the addressee and is mostly used among male interlocutors (Leech, 199, p. 112). As Leech (1999, p. 108) notices, despite the three functions of an address term which have been discussed in several examples before (see for instance Examples 1, 2 and 7 in Chapter 4), here the address term only functions as a marker of establishing or maintaining the social relationship between the speaker and the addressees (because it is not in an utterance initial position) (Leech, 1999, p. 108). This aspect of maintaining team cohesion while performing leadership is associated with relational aspects of leadership discourse, and as a result, Jackson contributes to the co-construction of leadership performance between Derek and himself by portraying himself as a leader.

After the referee’s whistle in lines 13-14, Jackson continues with a motivational act “let’s go man let’s go let’s go let’s go Tigers on four”. However, in his effort to encourage his teammates, Jackson uses an expression which sounds a bit odd as it has never occurred anywhere in the data. Hence, it could be argued that Jackson’s attempt to portray a leader identity is not successful here because this unusual expression triggers Owen’s intervention in line 14, where he concludes this interaction by authoring through dismissing the time-out (line 15: “↑TIGERS ON THREE ONE TWO THREE”). By contrast to Jackson’s (failed) attempt to initiate the

war cry, Owen's attempt is accepted because the players respond to it (line 16: "TIGERS") and thus, his role as team captain is emphasised.

Concluding, this example illustrates how dynamic and fluid leadership and followership practices between two players can be. Focusing on discursive strategies employed by players, the example shows the crucial role of context and language when interpreting leadership and followership phenomena. Therefore, we see how the two notions are interdependent and how hard it is to draw a distinguishing line between them. In fact, two players with no officially assigned roles in the team (Derek and Jackson) perform leadership and followership collaboratively despite the presence of the team captain who is expected to act as a leader due to his notional role and in light of the absence of a coach. In this example, although Derek takes over the team talk by reassuring the players about their good performance and projects a leader identity as he performs a leader-associated activity, he remains silent for the rest of the time-out, thus, shifting to a rather follower identity. This way, the example shows how leadership and followership can be performed by building on each other's contributions. The analysis of discursive tools employed in the example illustrates how the two players contribute to the leadership and followership practices and how they complete each other's phrases.

Aligning with the call of researchers in the field of leadership studies who highlight the asymmetrical power relations and the crucial role of discourse (Fairhurst, 2011; D. Collinson 2011, 2017; M. Collinson, 2018; Schnurr & Schroeder, 2019), the example shows why a more critical engagement with the concepts is required. Precisely, Owen, the notional leader of the team, remains in the background and only participates in the team talk at the end when he prompts the war cry, a purely captain-initiated activity. Consequently, leadership and followership dynamics "can emerge informally in more subordinated and dispersed relationships, positions and locations", as Critical Leadership Studies point out (D. Collinson, 2011, p. 182), and perhaps no clear line can be drawn between the two concepts. This relatively 'fluid' relationship between leadership and followership is explored in the last example of this chapter.

### Example 13

**Context:** This example comes from the same game as the previous one, but in this case the excerpt was recorded during a time-out in the third quarter of the game. Derek and Jackson are the two players taking part in this leadership performance.

Lines	Player	Transcript
1	-	((the players on the bench cheer those
2		coming to the bench; exclamations,
3		rewards, clapping among the players))
4 →	Derek:	(8.0) °okay° ↑guys we need to talk right?
5 →	Derek:	(4.0) °we did two weeks like [that°
6 →	Jackson:	[↑it is not
7 →		the <u>turnover</u> it is the fouls that are the
8 →		most over right? (.) all I mean is you
9 →		gotta turn the ball over they're just gonna
10 →		get frustrated right? it's all right
11 →		mistakes are [gonna happen
12	Owen:	[sounds ( )
13 →	Jackson:	[they're still again >in< the
14 →		basketball they're not gonna fall asleep,
15 →		play (.) get back and play defence alright?
16 →	Derek:	as far as we don't give up any point
17 →		we're done
18 →	Jackson:	(2.0) they just gonna stop in the score

19 → ((slightly claps)) and we are ready  
 20 → ((Andrew claps in the background)) to go  
 21 → for the fourth right?  
 22 → Owen: (3.0) let's go let's go (.) few stops one  
 23 → score let's go ((everyone stands up from  
 24 the bench))  
 25 → Owen: (2.0) ↑TEAM ON THREE ONE TWO THREE  
 26 all: TEAM

Based on my field notes, this time-out is called by the rival team at a point where the two teams are close in the score and the Tigers have played three very successful minutes. This explains the enthusiasm, the clap, and the rewarding comments among the players as they approach the bench. Derek, who is on the bench after Andrew substituted him a minute before, opens the team talk during this time-out after a pause of 8 seconds since the players have come to the bench. Derek waits for everyone to catch their breaths and have a drink (line 4: “okay”) before he starts his talk. In order to get everyone’s attention he begins with the address term “guys”, uttered in rising intonation, and then he continues with his instruction that the players need to communicate while attacking (line 4: “we need to talk right?”).

As highlighted in previous examples, the semantic function of an address term at the beginning of a clause serves the purpose of attention-getter; as an addressee identification of the speaker distinguishes the intended recipient from non-group members, and as a remark of establishing social relationship between the speaker and the addressee(s) (Leech, 1999, p. 108). These functions are fulfilled here, as Derek gathers everyone around him and gives them directions about the team’s improvement in offence. The third function is of particular importance since it serves as an underlying factor of team cohesion and engagement, also achieved through the use of the inclusive “we” pronoun in this line, too. Considering the point and the importance of the game, Derek constructs an identity of a leader who cares about

and fosters social relationships. As Derek highlighted during an informal (but unrecorded) chat with me, the fact that he “plays with these guys apart from just giving them instructions” affects quite significantly the way he communicates with the rest of the players and, consequently, the way he performs leadership.

This time-out initial phrase when combined with Derek’s update in the next lines (line 5: “we did two weeks like [that]”) illustrate how he constructs his leader identity when authoring by providing state-of-the-art information (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). While doing so, Derek encourages his teammates by referring to what they did correctly and successfully for the last two weeks. His emphasis on a well-played game highlights their recent good performance history, a prominent feature at the initial phases of Lyle’s model on coaching behaviour (2002, p. 108). However, Jackson interrupts Derek and enters the floor by controlling the agenda when authoring an ad hoc instruction (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). Jackson proposes what is more important for the team at this point: not just losing possession but also avoiding making unnecessary fouls (lines 6-8: “[↑it is not the turnover it is the fouls that are the most over right?”).

After that, Jackson completes his statement by clarifying what may happen, namely that the rival team may get frustrated if they turn the ball over (lines 8-10: “all I mean is you gotta turn the ball over they’re just gonna get frustrated right?”). The clear directive, realised by imperative tone of the ellipted modal in this declarative structure, and the use of second person pronoun “you”, is another example of Jackson portraying a leader identity, as he demonstrates inside knowledge and authoring is arguably done by providing specialist knowledge (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). Jackson closes his intervention by adding a rather positive comment which serves as an encouragement to the players at a point when the score is close (line 11: “it’s okay mistakes are [gonna happen]”). This reassuring comment mitigates the illocutionary force of the previous direction to the players and at the same time is encouraging, as Jackson admits that mistakes are going to happen. Literature in sports coaching identifies performance analysis and systematic planning as constituent parts of a coaching model, extensively used by coaches (Lyle, 2002, p. 101-103). Therefore, Jackson projects himself as a leader.

Although Owen attempts to enter the floor in the next line (line 12: “[sounds ( )” ), Jackson cuts him off and intervenes once again by adding to his previous comment. This example nicely illustrates the argument made in the chapter, namely, that the team captain is not the one who always does leadership, but rather, that there are other players with no assigned positions, who not only contribute to the practice of leadership, but are also entitled to cut the team captain off. At this point, Jackson interrupts Owen (line 13) and completes his previous statement. Jackson’s leader identity here is realised as authoring by providing specialist information (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018), because he notes what the rival will do if the players do not follow his instructions (lines 13-15: “[they’re still again >in< the basketball they’re not gonna fall asleep, play”). By explaining to them that the other team is going to react, Jackson adopts a common coach practice, ‘regulating procedures’, as explained by Lyle (2002, p. 104), according to which he aims to alert the players and motivate them to stay focused on the game. At the same time, though, he asks the players to play defence at all grounds (line 15: “(.) get back and play defence alright?”), hence setting a new defensive plan for the team. This constitutes a clear directive, realised through the imperative mode of the verbs, and as a result, Jackson constructs a leader identity which follows a coach-like pattern (Lyle, 2002, p. 59-60; Popper & Lipshitz, 1992; Whitmore, 2009) through the linguistic tools he employs.

The contributions of Derek and Jackson in the practice of leadership reveal that leadership and followership practices are dynamically enacted line by line as the time-out unfolds. Consequently, players can portray both leader and follower identities which are co-constructed as the interaction develops, suggesting that perhaps there is no clear line between the two practices.

The interplay between Derek and Jackson continues with Derek entering the floor one more time with another reassuring yet encouraging comment (lines 16-17: “as far as we don’t give up at any time we’re done”). With this reassuring comment Derek portrays a leader identity here because he makes an informed projection and authoring is done through a future prediction about the team’s performance based on his exclusive information (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). The use of inclusive “we”, reinforces solidarity, team cohesion and collective identity among the players as

explained in previous examples. In fact, Derek's reassuring comment prompts Jackson's contribution immediately after a two-second pause: "they just gonna stop in the score ((slightly claps)) and we are ready ((Andrew claps in the background)) to go for the fourth right?" (lines 18-21).

As in the case of Derek above, Jackson's leadership is based on authoring through a future prediction based on his 'executive' guess' (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). Although Jackson makes an authoring claim, this is still expressed through an encouraging comment: the use of the attributional adverb "just" indicates Jackson's attitude to the statement he makes (Ifantidou-Trouki, 1993; Urmson, 1963, p. 228) and clarifies his previous directions (given in lines 6-11 and 13-15). If the players follow his instructions, the rival team will have less chances to score and as a result the team will start the fourth quarter with a better momentum. Here, the adverbial expresses Jackson's certainty towards the offence of the opponent team while at the same time shows the simplicity of the task.

Furthermore, the use of inclusive "we" pronoun creates and maintains team cohesion and mutual engagement and is arguably part of the responsibilities of the leaders as it is frequently used in this context and by various players (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1990; Wilson, 2011, p. 156). Besides Jackson's discursive tools, leadership is performed here through a paralinguistic feature as well. Following his reassurance that the opponent team will stop in the score, Jackson also makes a slight clapping gesture. To show his alignment with Jackson's line of argumentation, Andrew also claps. Apart from encouragement to his teammates, Andrew's action is a nonverbal act of claiming followership because he shows that he agrees with Jackson's directions, hence supporting and endorsing his leadership performance (DeRue & Ashford, 2010).

The time-out closes with Owen's summary of what was mentioned by Derek and Jackson (lines 22-23: "let's go let's go (.) few stops one score let's go"). This indicates Owen's leadership performance here, which is realised from his hierarchical position to end the time-out discussion and dismiss the team players (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). Besides the wide use of the "let's go" expression as a means of motivation and

encouragement, “let’s” has also a latent role, which is to mitigate the illocutionary force of the utterance (Cole, 1975, p. 259). The motivational team war cry (line 25: “↑TEAM ON THREE ONE TWO THREE”), repeated by all the players in the next line, intends to enhance the team spirit and emphasise success as a result of team effort and mutual engagement. As it is explained in Example 4, Owen has minimum participation in the leadership activities throughout the example despite being the team captain. However, the fact that all players stand up from the bench when he says “let’s go” in line 9, signifies that he also performs some leadership-related activities here. This can also be seen from the next lines (25-26) where the rest of the players repeat the team war cry after him. Therefore, the concepts of leadership and followership are fluid and elusive, and activities associated with the two concepts can be even performed by the same individual in the same line.

This constant turn-switching between Derek and Jackson reveals, once again, the fluidity of the concepts and explains what Baker (2007, p. 51) refers to when she claims that “the fixed leader role is idealised, and its idealisation led to making sharp and distinct difference between leader and follower”. By contrast to mainstream terminology, both players are involved in co-leadership and in followership practices showing how leadership and followership are discursively constructed. Therefore, since there is no clear-cut distinction between the two concepts, terms such as leader and follower identities, which entail a process of performing something, may actually be more accurate to reflect the constantly changing reality compared to the rather “fixed” terms of leader and follower. Mainstream definitions about leadership and followership can be problematic and misleadingly binary, and the use of the terms “leader” and “follower” should be reconsidered.

Overall, throughout this example, it becomes clear how co-leadership and followership “co-exist” in open discussion with each other, as two different players with no officially assigned roles in the team aim to run the team talk. As the analysis explains, players shift between leader and follower identities as the interaction unfolds; the team captain has minimum intervention at all in some examples, thus questioning fixed and idealised definitions about notional leaders. Consequently, the example adds to current discussions about leadership and followership, how the two

practices emerge, and what their relation is. This is further elaborated on the following short discussion section.

### 5.3 Discussion

In this chapter the focus has moved beyond the representation of simple mainstream ideas about leadership and followership to the illustration of their fluidity and dynamic enactment. By problematising simplistic ideas of leadership psychology and the language behaviour of individuals with notional roles, such as the team captain, Chapter 5 includes examples of various players, including the captain, Owen, participating in leadership and followership performance. The examples analysed intend to question mainstream terminology on leaders and followers/leadership, and followership by showing how dynamically these practices are enacted. Taking as a reference point Baker's (2007) observation about the idealised role of leaders, the examples of co-leadership illustrate how two players emerge as co-leaders and followers simultaneously in team interactions. This happens line by line when they build on and complete each other's utterances in order to contribute to the leadership performance.

In more detail, Examples 9 and 10 focus on instances of co-leadership in order to unpack what have previously been understood as rather straightforward practices of leadership and followership. The analysis of the examples suggests that the roles of leader and follower are interchangeable between the two players who, most of the time, build on each other's utterances in order to make a decision. Moreover, the analysis draws attention particularly to the discursive strategies used by players and thus, aligns with current trends of CLS that stress the importance of context when discussing the interdependency between leaders and followers (D. Collinson, 2011, 2017).

Examples 11, 12 and 13 shed light on even more complex cases of leadership by looking at examples where the practices are more fluid and dynamic. Previous organisational and business studies highlight the close link between the two concepts and particularly point out that "leadership and followership are best seen as roles in

a relationship” (Heller & Van Til, 1992). They are considered as interrelated ideas on whose mutual enactment the success or the failure of the team’s goal depends (Heller & Van Til, 1992; Hollander, 1992). Moving away from conventional top-down approaches to leadership where the leader is considered the only active member, contemporary approaches take into consideration the active and dynamic role of both leadership and followership, and in fact, highlight that leadership is not a performance of a single individual, but rather a collaboration among individuals in “a pluralistic and fluid [environment]” (Hollander, 1992). Even before Hollander, Vanderslice (1988) had challenged the operationalisation of leadership “in individualistic, static, and exclusive positional roles” (p. 683) by questioning whether all the activities related to leadership could be filled by individuals outside the role of the leader. By separating leadership from “the” leader and by questioning leader-follower dichotomies, these studies point out the interdependence of leadership and followership and the active role of both parties when these activities take place (Baker et al., 2007; Benson et al., 2015; Vanderslice, 1988).

Examples 11, 12 and 13 outline cases where players with no officially assigned roles step up and take over the floor in co-operation with each other. The analysis suggests that followership is in open discussion with co-leadership and reinforces recent observations made by CLS about the power dynamics and shifting asymmetrical interrelations between leaders, followers and contexts which “emphasise that leadership dynamics can emerge informally in more subordinated and dispersed relationships, positions and locations” (D. Collinson, 2011, p. 182). Indeed, more and more researchers in the field of leadership highlight the crucial role of asymmetrical power relations and discursive approaches to leadership and followership and invite researchers to a more critical engagement with these concepts (Fairhurst, 2011; D. Collinson 2011, 2017; M. Collinson, 2018; Schnurr & Schroeder, 2019).

Therefore, the study problematises not only top-down simplistic ideas about leadership, but also challenges previous findings on leadership and followership, their nature and how they emerge. By contrast to previous studies, the two notions seem to develop between any member of the team and not simply between an assigned leader and a player. Consequently, the chapter concludes that the practices

evolve as the situation unfolds, resulting in an elusiveness which demands a more complex understanding of leadership and followership than the one generally adopted. More about the complex leadership-followership relationship is discussed in the next chapter.

## 6. Questioning notions of leadership and followership in more complex time-out interactions

### 6.1 Introduction

Taking as a reference point the observations made in the previous two analysis chapters, Chapter 6 aims to further problematise traditional understandings of leadership and followership by considering examples where several players participate. Precisely, this chapter shows how complex notions of leadership and followership are because, as at times, multiple players can be involved in and perform both practices interchangeably regardless of their notional positions or roles in the team.

The chapter focuses on the analysis of four examples (Section 6.2) which explore how leadership and followership practices are co-constructed and shared amongst various players as they seek to solve problems, make strategic plans, motivate one another, and foster solidarity. It also illustrates how players that would traditionally be seen as followers can perform these duties, and players that are seen traditionally as leaders can perform followership actions.

The data for this chapter focuses on time-out interactions as they unfold amongst Owen – the team captain, Jackson and Mark – who have both served as captains in the past, Derek – a new player to the team, and Richard, who is both a player and a coach to the team. As with the previous chapters, time-out interactions have been a key focus of my analysis, as they are rich in communicative activities and are instances when leadership and followership practices mainly occur. The analysis here focuses particularly on what verbal (or nonverbal) actions players do when performing leadership and/or followership to problematise the typical leader-follower binary associated with leadership models in sports teams.

## 6.2 Understanding leadership and followership in complex time-out occurrences

### Example 14

**Context:** This clip is taken from a home game of the team during a 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter time-out when the score is 55-64 to the opposing team. The extract starts when the referee calls a time-out, and the players return to the bench.

Lines	Player	Transcript
1	referee	((makes the time-out gesture, the players
2		return to the bench))
3 →	Derek:	let's >°fight°< heads up
4 →	Owen:	hey (.) come and support
5 →	Derek:	we need- we need to keep moving the ball
6 →		(.) yeah?
7 →	Jackson:	yeah there're still lots of time
8 →	Derek:	((checks the time)) three minutes time we
9 →		we need to stay in we need some three-point
10 →		game >don't< need to get stopped we need to
11 →		get <u>conscious</u>
12 →	Owen:	let's go let's go
13 →	Derek:	yep (.) this is the best game we've played
14 →		all [season
15 →	Mark:	[°but when we get to the rebound°
16 →	Derek:	[there's not many good °rebounds°

17 → Jackson: or Mark I just >don't< wanna lose that  
18 → possession  
19 → Derek: absolutely  
20 → Jackson: (5.0) hey let's try let's try  
21 → Derek: we have to °>kill them<° we have to °>kill<  
22 → them° from shooting yeah? that's the first  
23 → one who's here (.) six the first [quarter  
24 → Jackson [hey [what-  
25 → Derek: [so we  
26 → need to make sure because of that °half°  
27 → Owen: †let's go let's go ((stands up from the  
28 bench))  
29 Jackson: ( )  
30 → Owen: †hey let's go TIGERS ON THREE ONE TWO THREE  
31 all: TIGERS

In this first example we see how Derek and Jackson, a new but experienced player, and a former team captain, step up and have a dominant role in the problem-solving and the planning of the team's offensive strategy. Whereas the former performs leadership based on his experience and good knowledge of the sport, the latter held a hierarchical position as the team's captain in the previous academic year. Following the referee's sign for time-out (line 1), the team returns to the bench where it is Derek, and not Owen, who initiates the team talk. Derek has been on the bench in the lead up to the time-out and initiates the team talk using a rather encouraging expression "let's >°fight< heads up" (line 3). Although authoring through convening a group of people is an example of claiming authoring using one's hierarchical position according to Holm and Fairhurst (2018), Derek is the one opening the time-

out interaction, hence performing leadership. As the team is behind in the score and tries to reduce the difference in it, Derek, who was on the bench and already giving instructions to his teammates, sends a message to his teammates not to get down (line 3: “heads up”). This expression can be also interpreted as a directive to the team to pay attention and to be positive and motivated. Using this “evasive polite directive” (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 350) here, Derek also reinforces inclusiveness, even though he does not intend to participate in the action described by the verb (Cole, 1975, p. 259, 261-262). Thus, this formulation could be read as a directive “fight heads up”, which is in accordance with Owen’s directive in the following line aiming here to contribute to the problem-solving, because he instructs his teammates to “come and support” (line 4). Therefore, from the beginning of this excerpt, we see that Derek, a player without any official role in the team, steps up and initiates the team talk, thus constructing his leader identity. By contrast, Owen, the team captain, supports and follows Derek’s initiative and encourages others to pay attention to Derek.

Derek also makes a claim to organise the team’s offensive system in lines 5-6 (“we need- we need to keep moving the ball (.) yeah?”) where he makes an authoring claim through directing the progression of the team’s game according to Holm and Fairhurst’s (2018) classification. His plan is that the team keeps moving the ball, namely, run the ball from defence to offence, make more final attempts, and overall, play more actively. The communicative activity behind Derek’s plan aims to enhance the sense of collective responsibility to all players by imposing an evasive polite directive (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 350). In his attempts to highlight the crucial role of the collective upon following his instruction, Derek employs the inclusive “we” pronoun in order to reinforce group membership and solidarity amongst the players (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Fransen et al., 2012; Huisman, 2001). Despite these uses of the inclusive “we” pronoun, it is unclear whether Derek is actually including himself in this communicative activity, as he has been watching the game from the bench instead of playing during the last few minutes. Hence, in line with Holm and Fairhurst (2018), presumptive “we” can also indicate leadership as the speaker makes an

authoring claim through “presuming the capacity to speak on behalf of the collective of people [...], regarding actions that must be taken by this collective” (p. 701).

Semantic features of the “we” pronoun, such as this one here, are examples of why Wilson (2019) identifies a “pseudo-inclusive” aspect, too. In his words “[we] has the effect of softening the illocutionary force of the directive and communicates that the fulfilment of the directive is in the interests of not just the speaker, but also of the hearer” (Wilson, 2019, p. 44-45). If we accept this reading, then arguably Derek is “balancing a stance of solidarity with authority” (Wilson, 2019, p. 45), where he sets a directive mainly addressed to his teammates and does not include himself in it because he has been on the bench during that time (hence not playing) and he also remains in the bench after the time-out. While the pronoun has a pseudo-inclusive nuance, it still mitigates the force of Derek’s directive and any subsequent leadership claims. This choice might also suggest that Derek opens the team talk to others to contribute and participate in the leadership performance. By using these linguistic resources, Derek portrays a leader identity because he employs transactional aspects of leadership discourse.

In line with this planning, Derek performs further leadership tasks when he elaborates in line 6 what else the team should do. In more detail, he adds that the players need to work on their three-point game so that they develop a momentum and not be cut off by the opposing team (lines 9-11: “we need to stay in we need some nine-point game we >don’t< need to get stopped we need to get conscious”). As underlined above, Derek is on the bench, thus, “we” has rather a presumptive use here which allows Derek to make an authoring claim and speak on behalf of the team in order to advance the team’s game.

Besides the strategic planning of the team’s game, though, we see that Derek performs another communicative activity which also contributes towards leadership performance. This is the activity of providing supportive feedback for motivational purposes to his teammates (line 13-14: “yep (.) this is the best game we’ve played all [season]”). This time, Derek constructs his leader identity by giving an update about the team’s performance, an authoring claim through which the speaker provides

state-of-the-art information (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018); here, emphasising the team's good performance.

While Derek gives these instructions about the team's performance so far, Owen and Jackson, the current and the former team captain respectively, both align themselves with his advice, in lines 4 and 7 respectively. Their communicative actions of expressing agreement and reassurance indicate practices which have been associated with followership performance (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). As previous social constructionist approaches to followership highlight, followership is not tied to a role but to a practice, meaning that superiors do not always lead, but they can also commit to their subordinates and thus, they engage in followership practices (Fairhurst & Hamlett, 2003; Larsson & Lundholm, 2013). In this example, players with a notional leadership role in the team – such as Owen – are not only able to take a step back and leave the space to others to perform leadership, but also that leadership and followership practices are dynamically enacted by any player interchangeably. This point is explained in more detail below when Jackson and Mark also step up and aim to participate in the exercise of leadership.

Indeed, as the time-out interaction unfolds, Mark contributes to the leadership performance when he enters the floor in line 15 and questions Derek's previous instruction (“[but when we get to the rebound]”). This time, Mark interrupts Derek's previously encouraging comment (line 13) in order to express his disagreement. However, Mark's expression remains unfinished as he is cut off by Derek, who intervenes in line 16 and attempts to regain his role in the performance of leadership (line 16: “[there's not many good °rebounds]”). In these lines, both Mark and Derek perform leadership by what Holm and Fairhurst (2018) call authoring grants and resistances because they both talk over one another which suggests that they may express (dis)agreements, (dis)approval or attempt to gain control of the floor.

By interrupting Mark and immediately responding to his question, Derek forcibly takes control of the floor again, something which is particularly understood from his affirmative voice tone, as well as the attribute “good” which refers to the rebounds. The adjective “good” in particular denotes Derek's attitude towards the team's

performance in response to the offensive rebounds. This activity of providing feedback is associated with leadership and coach-like performance, something which Derek does here. Hence, Derek constructs his leader identity once again; his leader identity construction starts in lines 3 and 5, continues in lines 8-11 as motivational leadership, and carries on in line 16 as a rather transactional portrayal of leader identity.

Alongside Mark, Jackson also takes action (line 17) and contributes to the leadership performance. By contrast to Mark, Jackson makes a proposition which is specifically addressed to Mark (lines 17-18: “or Mark I just >don’t< wanna lose that possession”), a communicative activity which – in line with previous studies on address terms (Ervin-Tripp, 1972; Leech, 1999) – is used to catch the addressee’s attention and render the addresser in a higher position. This activity of addressing a specific claim to a player is an activity associated with coach-like behaviour (Chelladurai, 2011; Whitmore, 2010), especially when his claim is supported by Derek (line 19: “absolutely”), who agrees with him. By using this adverb, Derek expresses determination and his alignment with Jackson’s claim, an activity which can be linked with followership performance (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). As highlighted earlier, leader and follower identities are socially constructed in interactions – in this example Derek’s follower identity is understood by a direct verbal act of affirming Mark’s proposition (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Therefore, apart from illustrating how leadership is jointly co-constructed among the players of the team and how leadership responsibilities are shared among them, the extract also shows how followership is co-constructed with leadership, as well as how players perform both practices interchangeably. Derek, for instance, who has been contributing to the leadership performance, is at this stage in the interaction seen to be contributing to followership. In line with a previous observation according to which Owen was performing followership (lines 4, 12), now Derek also performs followership.

Towards the end of this time-out interaction, we see how both Jackson and Derek portray leader identities and contribute towards leadership performance (line 20 and 21-23). Contrary to their previous contributions, where they expressed some directives related to the team’s strategic plan, here, they both make rather

motivating comments and encourage their teammates. In more detail, after a pause of 5 seconds, Jackson re-enters the talk and encourages his teammates to keep on trying (line 20: “hey let’s try let’s try”). As previous literature suggests, encouraging comments is a common practice among coaches (Chelladurai, 2011; Whitmore, 2010). Jackson’s encouragement also indicates that he agrees with what has been discussed so far, and thus, he is in line with the instructions given by Derek. The use of the “let’s” formulation reinforces the crucial role of team effort and the solidarity among the players (Wales, 1996, p. 67).

Similarly, Derek returns in lines 21-23 and 25-26 where he highlights and summarises his instructions. Although his instructions are not realised through directives this time, the communicative activity of setting a strategic plan for the team’s game (or “agenda control” according to Holm and Fairhurst’s (2018) classification) is understood through the inclusive “we” pronouns in Derek’s authoring claims where he provides specialist knowledge based on his expertise and thus, projecting a leader identity (lines 21-22: “we have to °>kill them<° we have to °>kill< them° from shooting yeah?”; lines 25-26: “[so we need to make sure because of that °half°”).

In spite of this use, as underlined in previous chapters, the inclusive “we” pronoun may often convey a pseudo-inclusive meaning, as the addressee indirectly excludes himself from the act expressed. Here, Derek excludes himself from “the killing” of the opponent team because he has mainly been on the bench and continues to stay there even after the time-out in order to observe the team’s performance. By opting for such an expression, Derek portrays a leader identity because he contributes to the strategic planning while fostering solidarity and team effort amongst the players.

Finally, the time-out concludes with Owen who stands up from the bench and initiates the war cry (line 30: “↑hey let’s go TIGERS ON THREE ONE TWO THREE”), an authoring claim through which he dismisses the players and performs leadership (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). Here, Owen “leaves” his previous role as follower and contributes to the leadership performance through the communicative practice of motivating his teammates. As previous studies highlight, followership can be realised

when one chooses to speak only when called (DeRue & Ashford, 2010); in this case Owen talks when the time out is close to an end, and it is time for the war cry.

Overall, the example illustrates how various players with or without officially assigned roles, step up and contribute to the leadership and followership performance. Derek, Jackson, Mark and Owen contribute to these practices through a range of communicative activities, such as setting the team's strategic planning motivating one another or fostering solidarity amongst them. Moreover, as the analysis suggests, players without notional roles take over the leadership performance while the team captain contributes to the minimum. Besides that, the example also reveals that players can perform both practices interchangeably in quite complex exchanges. Thus, we understand not only how dynamically these practices are enacted, but also how elusive and fluid they can be.

#### *Example 15*

**Context:** This time-out is recorded during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of an away game. The interaction takes place among Mark, Jackson, and Owen, as they discuss how they can improve their performance both offensively and defensively.

<b>Lines</b>	<b>Player</b>	<b>Transcript</b>
1	-	(the players gather around the bench)
2 →	Mark:	let's just <u>stop</u> the break and start from
3 →		the inside (.) let's pop back on the court
4 →		(2.0) okay, yeah?
5 →	Jackson:	↑you have to talk on <u>defence</u> as well >like<
6 →		we're just <u>quiet</u> run over them run over the
7 →		court >that's gonna work< just get in a way
8 →		get in a way (.) I can't just let them

9 → drive through the ball you're fucking far  
10 → you're so far all right?  
11 → Owen: let's go let's go we'll win °we're not that  
12 → [far°  
13 → Mark: [let's just (.) wake up and play seriously  
14 → ↑guys, if we don't stop doing fouls, yeah?  
15 → and play forwards you don't stop doing the  
16 → first two-three minutes >of the back< and  
17 → turn back  
18 → Mark: let's just cross each other let's just  
19 → penetrate let's penetrate and give to [Alex  
20 → Owen: [Let's  
21 → go let's go (.)↑TEAM ON THREE ONE TWO THREE  
22 all: ↑TEAM

In this example, we see again Mark contributing to the problem-solving and strategic planning of the team's game, but we also see Jackson joining in. Based on my fieldnotes, the Tigers are ahead in the score, but they made some mistakes during the last minutes, which have resulted in a smaller difference in the score between the two teams. Following the referee's whistle for time-out, the players gather around the bench (line 1), where Mark initiates the team talk (lines 2-4: "let's just stop the break and start from the inside (.) let's pop back on the court (2.0) okay, yeah?"). Here, Mark opens the time-out and makes an authoring claim by convening the team talk, hence constructing his leader identity (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). The communicative activity that Mark performs is setting an offensive plan for the team – a break, namely, an attempt to move the ball up the court into a scoring position. This activity is similar to what Holm and Fairhurst (2018) classify as "agenda control" and authoring through directing the progression of a meeting when someone in a

hierarchical position does leadership. In this case, Mark is the one who has been team captain in the past. His instructions are expressed through “let’s” formulations, indicating sympathy between him and his teammates and, thus, reinforcing inclusiveness, according to literature on speech act theory (Wales, 1996, p. 67). Despite these relational aspects, the illocutionary force of the directive set is mitigated with the use of “let’s” formulations and according to Cole (1976, p. 259, 261-262), the “literal” use of “let’s” constructions denotes a person in authority – Mark in this case. By setting the team’s plan, Mark constructs a leader identity and does leadership by performing coach-like tasks.

Adding to Mark’s instructions, Jackson also steps up and delegates responsibility to the players because he uses his previous hierarchical position to make authoring claims by assigning tasks to his teammates (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018) (lines 5-10: “↑you have to talk on defence as well >like< we’re just quiet run over them run over the court >that’s gonna work< just get in a way get in a way (.) I can’t just let them drive through the ball you’re fucking far you’re so far all right?”). Contrary to Mark, the linguistic resources which express Jackson’s actions are directives explicitly given to his teammates. The rising intonation at the beginning of his utterance, the verbs in imperative mode, as well as his subtle complaint that the players run the court without communicating properly, set an overall scene of annoyance and tension from Jackson’s end. The repetition of the attitudinal adverb “just” three times denotes Jackson’s propositional attitude towards the team’s performance (Urmson, 1963, p. 227-229).

By reiterating that the plan proposed by Mark and himself will work (line 3: “>that’s gonna work<”), Jackson performs leadership again because he makes an informed projection, an authoring claim through a future prediction based on his information or guess (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). These communicative activities (viz., providing reassurance and encouragement to his teammates) suggest coach-like talk, which is also completed by Jackson’s final directive “just get in a way get in a way” (line 7). Therefore, Jackson constructs and portrays a leader identity which leads to another leadership claim – when defending, his teammates are far from the offending players of the rival team according to Jackson, and thus, he has to do a foul in order to

impede the rival team from driving through the court and being in a scoring position<sup>25</sup>. Hence, in these first fragments of the excerpt, we see how communicative activities are employed by Mark and Jackson in order to perform leadership collaboratively.

Following Jackson's and Mark's instructions, Owen, the team captain, joins the team-talk and motivates his teammates by saying "let's go let's go we'll win we're not that far" (lines 11-12). Taking as a reference point the directives given by Mark and Jackson, Owen here performs followership by reassuring, and thus, motivating and boosting his teammates, through the encouraging comment "we'll win °we're not that far°". Thus, by performing this communicative activity related to followership (viz., expression of agreement with previous contributions and encouragement to the team, which previous research has classified as a direct verbal act of claiming follower identity according to DeRue & Ashford, 2010), he dynamically engages in the enactment of leadership practice. Therefore, we not only see how dynamically leadership and followership practices are enacted as the conversation unfolds, but also that players with no officially assigned leadership positions take over leadership performance (such as Jackson and Mark). By contrast, the official leaders, in this case Owen, portray a follower identity instead.

This becomes even clearer when Mark interrupts Owen in the following line and gives a clear directive to the group (line 13: "let's just (.) wake up and play seriously"). Even though the directive begins with a "let's" formulation, which can be considered a hesitation marker as Mark cuts off Owen, Mark sets an explicit instruction to his teammates to "just wake up and play seriously". This communicative activity can again be read as an additional leadership claim by Mark, especially when his directive becomes more specific in line 14, after a pause of 3 seconds (lines 14-17: "↑guys, if we don't stop doing fouls, yeah? and play forwards you don't stop doing the first two-three minutes >of the back< and turn back"). In this case, Mark performs leadership using his knowledge when making an informed projection and claiming

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<sup>25</sup> Jackson is a centre player which means that he plays under the rim and is the last point of impediment when defending.

authoring through a future prediction (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). While doing so, Mark accomplishes two communicative practices: on the one hand he sets the team's strategic plan, while on the other hand he aims to foster solidarity amongst them. This is also realised from the use of the inclusive "we" pronoun and the address term "guys", which function as attention markers to all his teammates as well as enhancement of solidarity among themselves (Ervin-Tripp, 1972, p. 223-225; Leech, 1999, p. 112).

Mark's contribution to this time-out finishes with another instruction for the strategic plan of the team – in this case he explains an offensive plan (lines 18-19: "let's just cross each other let's just penetrate let's penetrate and give to Alex"). Although the directive is less explicit here due to the use of "let's" formulations, Mark still makes an authoring claim through directing the progression of the team's offensive plan (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018) (that is, pick-and-roll which will result in Alex's penetration). Through this series of instructions, Mark constructs his leader identity through the two communicative activities he performs.

Finally, the time-out ends with Owen this time interrupting Mark and initiating a war cry (lines 20-21: "let's go let's go (.)↑TEAM ON THREE ONE TWO THREE"), which is repeated by all players. As seen in most of the examples, Owen as team captain is the one who introduces a war cry at the end of each time-out, and this may suggest that this communicative activity is only performed by the official leader of the team. According to Holm and Fairhurst (2018), closing a meeting – the time-out in this case – is an example of leadership which is performed by dismissing a collective. Therefore, Owen also contributes to the leadership performance in this time-out by performing this communicative activity.

Overall, the analysis of this example shows how various players construct their leader and follower identities collaboratively and thus, how a reciprocal relationship between leaders and followers is created (Collinson, 2016). Mark initiates the discussion and sets instructions (lines 2-4), Jackson joins and adds to Marks' instructions (lines 5-10) and then Owen jumps in and gives confidence to his teammates, especially after Mark and Jackson's directives (lines 11-12). Towards the

end of the time-out, Mark takes over again and makes his directives more explicit (lines 13-17) before Owen taking over again and concludes the leadership practice (lines 20-21). Consequently, the example illustrates how dynamically the two practices are performed by various players and how players can perform followership at some points and leadership at another. In sum, the chapter shows how leadership performance is achieved interchangeably with followership as a collaborative accomplishment through the involvement of various players regardless of their notional roles or the lack thereof, for instance, the case of Jackson in this example.

*Example 16*

**Context:** This extract is the team talk during a time-out during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of an away game. The discussion reproduced here picks up on the plan formulated by the team in Example 15 above, made during an earlier break in the same game. While how the team can improve its performance both offensively and defensively was discussed, here the team explores the alternative options it has as some drills did not go as planned (see line 6 about the lay-ups).

Lines	Player	Transcript
1	-	((horn))
2	Owen:	(unintelligible due to loud background
3		cheering)
4	Jackson:	°hey Mark (.) let's go°
5	Mark:	[I'm not,
6	Owen:	[( )-
7 →	Mark:	↑what happened to the lay-up?
8 →	Owen:	we were nervous
9 →	Jackson:	↑the lay-up didn't work
10 →	Mark:	o- okay I can retry we've got options (2.0)

11 → and people you gotta shout like Mark I'm  
12 → here (.) cos if you don't shout I can't  
13 → really know where you are  
14 → Richard: [we've got big mismatch, that's a full  
15 → press zone  
16 → Mark: when you have the ball you need to shout me  
17 → Mark give me the ball °like acknowledge give  
18 → the ball°  
19 → Jackson: more important use all the fouls we've got  
20 → especially ( ) okay? when the foul comes up  
21 → you cannot >fairly get ( ) all right? stand  
22 → up stand up ((players stand up from the  
23 → bench)) we need to stop them from  
24 → penetrating  
25 → Owen: ↑TEAM ON THREE ONE TWO THREE  
26 all: TEAM  
26 Jackson: let's go Tigers let's go ((after the time-  
27 out))

We see here how Mark and Jackson perform leadership through problem-solving and strategic planning of the team's game despite the presence of Richard, the student coach, who joins in the discussion only occasionally, and mainly to perform what is arguably followership. By clarifying what was previously suggested by Mark, Richard directly shows that he has been paying attention, and is aligning with and supporting his suggestions, hence, following him according to DeRue and Ashford (2010). The time-out starts with a sporadic talk among Owen, Jackson and Mark (line 2-6). As the

plan previously suggested in Example 15 does not seem to have worked, Mark takes the initiative to solve this problem by outlining the strategic planning which the team should follow. Thus, he initiates the problem-solving discussion by questioning what happened to the lay-up (line 7) – a question associated with coach-like talk and indicates Mark's leadership performance through this authoring claim, which expresses his disapproval for the team's performance (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018).

In other coaching contexts, such a question has been identified as one asked by coaches to the players when the game does not go as planned (Lyle, 2002); this in turn triggers Owen's and Jackson's responses. Hence, through this communicative activity of initiating the problem-solving and setting up a new plan for the team, Mark opens the time-out talk and performs leadership here. His leadership performance prompts followership performance from Owen and Jackson when they choose to speak about the failed lay-up only when they are called on, a direct verbal act according to DeRue and Ashford (2010). Firstly, Owen explains that the players have been nervous (line 8: "we were nervous"), implying the reason why the previous plan did not work, while hiding the blame from any one individual and placing it on the entire team. Jackson also admits the previous plan was not effective (line 9: "↑the lay-up didn't work"). Both Owen's and Jackson's responses can be interpreted as followership performance because they choose to speak when asked so in this particular moment (DeRue & Ashford, 2010) and their responses prompt Mark's instructions in the next line.

Then, Mark steps up again and performs leadership when making an authoring claim through a future prediction based on his "executive guess" (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018) about the team's performance if the players do not follow his plan (lines 10-13: "o-okay I can retry we've got options (2.0) and people you gotta shout like Mark I'm here (.) cos if you don't shout I can't really know where you are"). Mark's communicative activities here are arguably expressed as "evasive polite directives", which according to Quirk et al. (1985, p. 350) mitigate the illocutionary force of a clear directive. By contrast, Mark opts for the modal "can", which reveals his ability to run the court himself and penetrate the defence of the opposite team before passing the ball to

Alex who will then do the lay-up<sup>26</sup>. At the same time, though, he asks for his teammate's co-operation with him shouting at him before passing the ball. The linguistic resources employed here indicate, on the one hand, that Mark places team over self (line 10: "o- okay I can try"), offering himself and his self's action for the good of the team, whereas, on the other hand, he gives an unmitigated directive (lines 11-12: "and people you gotta shout like Mark I'm here").

The latter instruction enhances teamwork as well. In such a way, Mark's construction of a leader identity and leadership performance when promoting the importance of putting team over self and giving a clear directive, are associated with coach-like talk. In fact, the way in which Mark expresses these two directives is noteworthy as the use of the modal "can" along with the reassuring "we've got options", mitigate the illocutionary force of his directives as the use of modal verbs conveys "the speaker's attitude to the content of the utterance" (Holmes, 1983, p. 100), and consequently, of the leadership practice. Moreover, "people" is used as an address term here<sup>27</sup>, something also indicating that he gives a direction that everyone should listen to. As explained in the previous analysis chapters, address terms are commonly used by coaches to foster solidarity and inclusiveness among team players, while also gaining players' attention. Here, "people" is used with a similar function as "guys" or "fellas" in other examples because Mark gains the attention of other players when using it, as indicated by the fieldnotes.

Even though Mark has not finished, he is interrupted by Richard, the student-coach, who intervenes and also admits the team's serious mistakes by offering more offensive privileges to the rival team (lines 14-15: "we've got big mismatch, that's a full-press zone"). Although a student-coach, Richard constructs his follower identity as he shows that he follows the latter's direction and agrees with him (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Similar to Mark above, Richard also employs the inclusive "we" pronoun when explaining the team's mis-performance. Following Richard's comment, Mark re-enters the discussion and, in fact, continues his previous

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<sup>26</sup> This interpretation is based on my fieldnotes and on what was decided in the previous time-out.

<sup>27</sup> The address term here fulfils the first pragmatic function, as defined by Leech (1999, p. 108), which is to gain attention.

instruction in line 16 by explicitly explaining the tasks to be done by his teammates, hence, he portrays a leader identity through the authoring claims related to delegating responsibility (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018) (lines 17-18: “when you have the ball you need to shout Mark give me the ball °like acknowledge give me the ball°”). By contrast to his previous instructions, Mark employs this time the second person pronoun “you”, which makes it a clear directive to his teammates. This fragment illustrates once more that leadership and followership practices are interchangeable and are performed on a turn-by-turn basis from the players.

Towards the end of the time-out, Jackson also steps up and adds to Mark’s directive (lines 19-24: “more important use all the fouls we’ve got especially ( ) okay [...] when a foul comes up you cannot >fairly get ( ) all right? stand up stand up we need to stop them from penetrating”). This excerpt illustrates that Jackson only towards the end steps up and shifts from performing followership (line 9) to performing leadership (lines 19-24), which reveals that under different occasions players who are more dynamically engaged in leadership performance in Examples 1 and 2, may have more active involvement in followership practices.

From a more analytical point of view, similar to Mark’s previous directive (lines 16-18), Jackson also employs the imperative “use” and the second person “you” pronoun in his directive, making it a clear directive as if it was given by a coach. Adding to that, the way that Jackson closes his directive is remarkable: he asks twice everyone to stand up (lines 21-22: “stand up stand up”), which his teammates do. When combined with “we need to stop them from penetrating” (lines 23-24), his words could be received as a “wake up”. Therefore, we see how Jackson contributes to the problem-solving and the planning of the strategy of the team by using a combination of linguistic resources.

Finally, the time-out ends with Owen’s “team” war cry (line 25), a communicative practice which has particular connotations for leadership, as explained in previous examples. Consequently, this example illustrates how (mainly) Mark and Jackson construct their leader identities and perform leadership, and how Owen and Richard (who are the two notional leaders) portray follower identities in order to solve the

team's problem in offence and plan a better offensive strategy. As the interaction unfolds, we see how players adopt and perform both practices, often interchangeably.

*Example 17*

**Context:** This time-out, which is the first time-out of a home game, continues on from the pre-match talk quoted in Example 7, as analysed in Chapter 4. After the end of the previous game, which was lost, Alex decided to quit from the team, a decision that he only announced to Owen and not to the rest of his teammates. Therefore, apart from the two consecutively lost games, the Tigers in this game also have to deal with Alex's withdrawal from the team<sup>28</sup>.

Lines	Player	Transcript
1	Derek	((stands up and gives instructions to Owen
2		when George is in free-throws))
3	Derek:	that's right good shot man °good [shot°
4		((clapping))
5	Richard:	[get back Mark
6	Derek	((stands up from the bench and claps his
7		team-mates))
8 →	Derek:	guys >come on right here< take a seat on
9 →		this side take a seat
10 →	Mark:	↑okay (2.0) u::m but people can't be >at my

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<sup>28</sup> Alex is a 6' 9" centre player and as Mark, Jay and Derek admitted later in their interviews, he constituted a valuable player for the team, which had organised its offensive and defensive systems based around him – he was responsible for going for the offensive and defensive rebounds blocking the offensive attempts of the rival team, scoring, and doing all the work in the rim essentially. Therefore, his sudden decision did not give enough time to the team to reconsider another playing system, as this game takes place only 3 days after his decision to withdraw.

11 → back< (.) [like  
12 → Owen: [just play hard core  
13 → Jay: we don't need to put a place before  
14 → Derek: okay if we- all right we've got to be aware  
15 → of where the basket [is  
16 Owen: [yeah  
17 → Derek: [the ball can't get to the  
18 → >jump to the throwline< without anyone  
19 → having bottom [°or°  
20 Owen: [yeah  
21 → Jay: [I'm a::lways behind you a:::lways behind  
22 → you  
23 → Mark: when (.) but they got nothing °done yet°  
24 → Derek: [yeah exactly- they they should knock they  
25 → should knock to > able to< get out  
26 → >whenever they're stopped< (.) yeah?  
27 → Jackson: someone has to- >let's just see the ball<  
28 → like nothing get the [ball  
29 Derek: [yeah  
30 → Jackson [and then we just in  
31 → rotate like you know like (.) the only size  
32 → the squad is in the centre,  
33 → Owen: °the guy has a scar°

34 Derek: okay,

35 → Mark: >okay get me some (help) make sure about

36 me< ((unclear due to background noise))

37 → Jackson: let's go inside >the rim< ((referee's

38 whistle is heard))

39 → Derek: when they shoot ((whistle again)) we are

40 → not on 4 or we are not boxing out

41 → Owen: [let's go let's go TIGERS ON THREE ONE TWO

42 → THREE

43 all TIGERS

This excerpt starts with Derek and Richard giving instructions to Owen and Mark respectively, while a time-out has not been called yet (line 1-7). Richard appears in this example, as he has not quit the team yet (see above in Example 1). As we see in line 12, Derek stands up from the bench and claps to his teammates as they return to the bench when the time-out is called. He is actually the one who asks everyone to approach the bench and listen to what will be discussed (lines 18-19: “guys >come on right here< take a seat on this side take a seat”) although Richard – the student-coach – is also present. In this case, Derek opens and convenes the time-out talk (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018) and then initiates the leadership performance by inviting everyone to the bench in order to start the team talk. In his attempt to provide solutions to the team’s problems in offence and defence during this game, Derek performs leadership by adopting a coach-like routine, by asking the players to come back to the bench (“come on right here”) and by giving explicit orders as to where the players should sit (“take a seat on this side take a seat”).

Although Derek’s attempt to set a plan which would improve the team’s offensive system due to Alex’s withdrawal from the team (see also footnote 24), Mark, Owen and Jay intervene (lines 10-13). While all players try to solve the problems that have

emerged both in offence and in defence due to Alex's withdrawal, they perform leadership and followership practices. Mark firstly, performs leadership (lines 10-11) when he authors resistance when expressing his disapproval for his teammates current positions which are not helpful to him when organising the team's offence (lines 10-11: ↑okay (2.0) u::m but people can't be >at my back<). However, he gets interrupted by Owen in line 12, who cuts Mark off and portrays his leader identity when authoring resistance expressed through the disapproval of Mark's plan and the use of an unmitigated directive in order to fulfil his communicative purpose, namely, to "just play hard core" (line 12). Likewise, Owen's directive leads to Jay's suggestion in line 13, which can also be seen as a followership practice because he aligns with Mark (an act characterised as followership according to DeRue & Ashford, 2010) and facilitates the enactment of leadership because it prompts Derek's involvement in the next line.

Thus, we see a domino effect of how the activities unfold here; Derek's initial contribution (lines 8-9), prompts Mark's suggestion (line 14), which then leads to Owen's directive (line 12). In fact, this interplay between leadership and followership is underlined in various studies which adopt a follower-centred perspective to leadership and point out the key role of followership in the leadership process (Baker, 2007; Crossman & Crossman, 2011; DeRue & Ashford, 2010), as well as the relational dynamics between the two practices (Baker, 2007; D. Collinson, 2011; M. Collinson, 2018).

Given the contributions of various players, a decision on which strategic plan to follow has not been reached yet. Hence, Derek takes over again in the next line, and suggests that the players focus on the rim, and thus, Derek performs leadership again (lines 14-15: "okay if we- all right we've got to be aware of where the basket [is]"). Derek here performs leadership by giving an instruction which is expressed as an authoring claim through presuming his capacity (stemming from his expertise) to speak on behalf of the group of the players regarding actions that must be taken from them (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). The involvement of all these players with multiple views leading to Derek's suggestion in lines 14-15, which resolves these views, shows how leadership is performed in action. The interplay between leadership and

followership highlighted above continues here, as Owen expresses his agreement with Derek (line 16: “[yeah”), and therefore, he performs followership before Derek continues in line 17, where he completes his directive. Owen’s short, yet affirmative verbal act shows that he follows Derek’s direction (DeRue & Ashford, 2010).

Hence, we see that even if Owen performed leadership earlier (line 12) by interrupting Mark and setting a clear directive, here, he performs followership by aligning with Derek. As pointed out before, this discussion also illustrates that the two practices are performed interchangeably, that players with notional titles can perform leadership as well as followership, and that the same individual can perform both practices during the same time-out. As above, Owen performs followership again when he simply states that he follows the instructions given by Derek (line 20: “[yeah”) (DeRue & Ashfor, 2010) before Jay and Mark intervene in the next lines. While Jay expresses his complaint that he could get the back as he is always behind Mark (lines 21-22: “[I’m a::lways behind you a::lways behind you”), and Mark participates in the leadership practice by encouraging his teammates as the opposing team has not played well so far (line 23: “[but they got nothing °done yet”). This communicative activity promotes motivation amongst the players as they face a crucial game with limited players able to cover Alex’s absence as a centre player.

Similar to Mark, Derek also participates in the leadership practice when the latter cuts Mark off in order to agree with him and add to his strategic plan (line 24). Here, Derek clarifies the players of the guest team will be able to “react” with a knock-out game “whenever they’re stopped” by them (line 24-26: “[yeah exactly- they they should knock they should knock to > able to< get out >whenever they’re stopped< (.) yeah?”). By proposing this strategic plan for the team by making an informed projection as authoring claim through his “exclusive guess” (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018), Derek constructs a leader identity and performs leadership, despite the lack of using a directive as a linguistic tool.

After that, Jackson steps up and takes over the leadership performance in his attempt to make Derek’s previous instructions (lines 14-15 and 17-19) clearer and more explicit to his teammates. In line with Derek’s instructions, Jackson steps up for the

first time in this time-out and gives a clear directive to his teammates to just make sure of where the ball is, aim to get the ball by any means and then just rotate amongst them until they score (lines 27-28: “>let’s just see the ball< like nothing get the ball”, lines 30-31: “[and then we just rotate like you know like (.)]”). By doing so, he participates in the leadership performance.

Additionally, Jackson presents this directive as a fairly straightforward task, realised by the use of the attitudinal adverb “just” and the reassuring comments which follow in the next line. While setting this strategic plan, Jackson also motivates his teammates when underlining that “the only size in the squad is in the centre” (lines 31-32), implying that the only tall player of the opposite team is the one under the hoop (viz., the centre one; also referred to as “big”), thus, stealing and rotating the ball will not be a hard task. Hence, Jackson steps up and participates in the problem solving and the team’s strategy, by contributing to the team’s agenda planning and making an authoring claim when directing the progression of the game (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018). Jackson’s communicative activities are performed by giving clear directives, such as “just see the ball< like nothing get the ball”, as well as by making encouraging comments which aim to boost the performance of the team, such as “we just rotate like you all know” and “the only size in the squad is in the centre”.

While Jackson unfolds his strategic plan, Derek slightly intervenes and agrees with him (line 29: “[yeah]”), an activity which could be associated with followership practice because his short yet affirmative verbal act states that Derek follows Jackson’s strategy (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Likewise, Owen’s comment in line 33 to provide details about the “big” player of the guest team (“°the guy has a scar°”) alludes to followership practice, because it is an indirect verbal act which shows that he follows Jackson’s line of thought and clarifies it (DeRue & Ashford, 2010).

Later on, even though Derek attempts to take over again (line 34), he gets interrupted by Mark who intervenes in order to ensure that he gets the support he needs in order to help rotate the ball (lines 35-36: “>okay get me some (help) make sure about me<”). After Mark, Jackson also takes over and reiterates his previous instruction, slightly rephrased this time (line 37: “let’s go inside >the rim<”). Although Jackson

introduces his strategic planning with a “let’s” formulation, it still reads as an “evasive polite directive” according to Quirk et al. (1985, p. 350) which mitigates the illocutionary force of an otherwise direct speech act. Therefore, we see how Mark and Jackson contribute collaboratively to the leadership performance by doing problem-solving and strategy-planning activities.

Before the time-out ends and whilst the referee blows his whistle, Derek jumps in, has a final word with the team and reminds his teammates that when the rival team takes a shot, they should guard the power forward or they will not put themselves in the best position to secure a rebound (c/f with lines 39-40: “we are not on 4 or we are not boxing out”). Derek’s contribution illustrates how he constructs his leader identity by authoring a resistance when he expresses his disappointment (Holm & Fairhurst, 2018) that the players are not defending as they should when the rival team is in offence. Finally, Owen concludes this time-out with a war cry (line 41-42), repeated by all players (line 43).

Overall, this example illustrates how various players step up and take over leadership performance in their attempt to solve the problems in the team’s offence and defence following Alex’s resignation from the team. The team talk is initiated by Derek who takes over by gathering all players around the bench and prompting the team talk. However, he is interrupted by Mark, Owen and Jay who propose different directives, which leads Derek to take over again (lines 14-15 and 17-19). Even though, at first Derek initiated the team talk and led the leadership performance, here, we see that other players, namely Mark and Jackson, gradually step up and contribute to the problem-solving and the strategy-planning of the team. Therefore, not only do we realise how dynamically leadership is performed in action, but also how a player who initiates leadership performance can gradually perform followership, whilst others emerge as leaders. Here, at least, the officially assigned leader, namely the team captain, mainly participates in followership practices and leaves others to lead.

### 6.3 Discussion

In this chapter, the focus has moved beyond the representation of mainstream leader-centred perspectives on leadership and power asymmetries (Chapter 4), and the ways in which leadership and followership practices are discursively co-constructed (Chapter 5), to a more follower-centred post-heroic perspective on leadership. In an attempt to understand how leadership and followership practices unfold, the chapter focused on the communicative activities employed by the players when performing these practices.

Taking as reference point episodes where the team had to decide on a strategic plan or to solve a problem in the offence/defence, the chapter explored the notions of leadership and followership on a turn-by-turn basis, namely on the micro-level of the interaction, in order to highlight the central role of followership practices and their untapped contribution to Critical Leadership Studies. The analysis of the empirical data illustrates that various players step up and take over leadership and followership practices interchangeably. Followership is not “a process of accepting the influence of others” (Northouse, 2019, p. 295), when aiming to accomplish common goals, but rather, a practice which is discursively and socially constructed. In the examples of this chapter, it is often understood as the verbal act of simply stating that one follows with the directions given or the strategic plan set, or by complementing previous directions (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). Even if a player performs a communicative practice in order to solve any potential problems in the team’s offence/defence, or to set another strategic plan for the team, thus, performing leadership, they may also do some tasks which are associated with followership performance later on as the time-out takes place. In line with previous studies, the analysis also suggests that the players with notional leadership responsibilities – such as the team captain or the officially assigned coach – are not always the ones who actively participate in leadership. Rather notional leaders often leave the space for more players to take over these responsibilities and perform leadership, while they themselves engage in followership practices.

Drawing on these observations and considering the current trends in CLS which highlight the crucial role of followers for the enactment of leadership, the analysis of the above examples illustrates that players who have been performing mainly leadership in Examples 14 and 15, are mostly engaged in followership practices in Examples 16 and 17. Although alignment has been defined as “the organisation and coordination of knowledge and work in a collective” (Drath et al., 2008) and as an essential aspect of describing an activity as “leadership”, the analysis here suggests that alignment can be an aspect associated with followership.

In fact, the analysis of data illustrates that followership practices could be linked with relational activities, such as motivating one another, fostering solidarity amongst the players, or as aligning with or agreeing with the instruction given. As the analysis has explained, players step up and engage in followership practices in their attempt to dynamically participate in the activities of strategic planning or problem-solving. Therefore, it is understood that followership is not a practice of influencing others, but rather a discursive practice which, alongside leadership, facilitates these communicative activities.

Lastly, it is important to take into consideration the contextual information of this case study, namely that Richard is a coach but also a player to the team who decided to quit mid-season; Alex is the only “purely” central player who also decided to quit during the data collection period, though before Richard; and Mark and Jackson have been captains of the team in the past. Consequently, it can be inferred that CLS cannot rely only on interactional data. By contrast, all this contextual information is as important as the interactional data gathered in order to shape a clearer picture of how leadership and followership practices unfold and are performed. All these observations made throughout this, as well as the previous analysis chapters, are discussed in more detail in the Discussion chapter that follows.

## 7. Discussion

### 7.1 Introduction

Taking as a reference point a basketball team without an officially assigned coach, this thesis challenges simplistic understandings of leadership and argues that leadership is a rather complex and multifaceted activity which involves multiple individuals in the enactment of it. As various individuals are engaged in leadership practices, the evidence presented in the analysis chapters suggests that followership practices emerge, too. Following the call of Critical Leadership Studies for more follower-centred perspectives to leadership (see for example, D. Collinson 2011; M. Collinson, 2018; Larsoon & Nielsen, 2021; Schnurr & Schroeder, 2019), the findings of this thesis have problematised traditional, and quite often context-less understandings of leadership in sports and have illustrated how studies of language in action such as this one, can provide more comprehensive conceptualisations of leadership.

The interactional evidence presented in this thesis suggests that leadership is a constellation of different interpersonal activities that extend beyond simple leader – follower dynamics. The examples in Chapter 4 are situated within the traditional and more simple conceptualisations of leadership, according to which leadership is performed by one individual. Even within this tradition though, the analysis has shown how the notional role of the presumed leader, namely, the notional responsibilities of the team captain, is questioned by players with no officially assigned roles, who step up and perform leadership – often despite the presence of the team captain. Chapter 5 presents how leadership can be shared between two players, and how followership practices emerge as a result of the shared leadership practices. Chapter 6, the final analysis chapter, shows how various players, many without institutionally endowed leadership roles, participate in the enactment of leadership and followership practices in order to accomplish their communicative purposes. It also explores the relationship between leadership and followership and concludes that the two practices should be approached in open discussion to one another in order to capture the complexities of their relationship. Consequently, a

potential distinction between what constitutes leadership, and what followership, becomes more challenging and elusive.

After the chapter introduction in Section 7.1, the chapter continues with a brief summary of the main points and arguments from the analysis chapters in Section 7.2. Section 7.3 considers the findings of the seventeen examples analysed across the three analysis chapters and juxtaposes them to the mainstream conceptualisations of leadership and followership.

## 7.2 Broadening the lens: a brief summary of the main arguments of this thesis

In summarising the analysis presented in this thesis, four broad claims can be made about leadership and followership; these are briefly introduced below.

**Claim 1** – Leadership does not depend on pre-assigned notional roles.

Traditional understandings of leadership place a clear line between leadership and followership as opposing sets of social behaviour (Hannaeh et al., 2014; Herold, 1977; Hodgkinson, 1983). Adopting a follower-centred perspective to the study of leadership and following the call of Critical Leadership Studies, this thesis suggests that the notions of leadership and followership are less defined and the dividing line between the two can be quite blurry. This becomes more pronounced when looking closely at the micro-level of leadership and followership practices of team members in actual real-life settings where these practices take place. Therefore, the previously proposed black-and-white definitions of what is leadership and what is followership are not reflective of the reality, which is more nuanced; hence, a distinction between the two is not clear-cut. Leadership and followership do not necessarily depend on notional roles assigned to players, but rather, they are realised through the communicative activities which are associated with both practices and performed by the players. This is further elaborated on subsection 7.3.1.

**Claim 2** – Leader “identities” can be preferred over “leaders”: discourse over leadership positions.

Considering that leadership is understood as a discursive performance (Fairhurst, 2007, 2008), it is treated as a social practice enacted in and accomplished through discourse. Leadership claims are identified from the linguistic tools employed by the players, such as clear directives, encouraging comments, or the use of address terms which aim at enhancing solidarity while also getting things accomplished. Hence, leadership is not a predetermined fixed characteristic that one owns, but rather a practice which is dynamically co-constructed and negotiated through discourse. Therefore, the thesis suggests that it is more accurate to refer to leader identities rather than to the term “leader”. The same observation applies to follower identities, as the analysis has shown how the same players can perform both practices even in the same time-out. However, as leader and follower identities are shaped in the micro-level of the interactions, they are sometimes questioned and negotiated among the players. Subsection 7.3.2 expands on this.

***Claim 3*** – Followership is a complex discursive activity and not merely the acceptance of the influence of others.

Following a similar line of thought and focusing on the discursive tools and strategies that the players employ when performing leadership practices, it is argued that followership is understood as a practice, a social activity rather than simply the acceptance of the influence of “the” leader (Herold, 1977; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; see also Northouse, 2019, p. 294-295). Followership is realised as a discursive activity, which contributes to and encourages the enactment of leadership; followers are not seen as passive subordinates (Hollander, 1974; Steger et al., 1982), but rather they function as the “wheel” that facilitates the strategic planning or the problem-solving. Subsection 7.3.3 expands on this claim.

***Claim 4*** – Leadership and followership practices shift constantly due to the socio-pragmatic features of the CofP.

A major factor which should be taken into account when interpreting the data and making the previous claims is the wider socio-pragmatic context which includes two aspects. On the one hand, the team structure and cohesion (or the lack thereof)

affects the involvement of players in the leadership and followership practices. The team, being a university level basketball one competing for the second Division of the regional Universities and Colleges league, has a fluid team structure<sup>29</sup>. In spite of the notional role of the team captain and the presence of a student coach and player – Richard combines both capacities – the analysis demonstrates that the hierarchy dynamics in this CofP are rather loose and thus, any player is able to take action and perform leadership or followership practices. Therefore, the highly dynamic environment of time-outs, which “give space” for problem-solving, strategic planning, motivation, and encouragement practices to be expressed, facilitate the enactment of leadership and followership practices by whoever is willing or most able to step up at that particular moment. This thesis outlines the significance of socio-pragmatic aspects of the particular CofP and their role in questioning top-down hierarchical models of describing leadership. This is further elaborated on Subsection 7.3.4.

The overview of the four claims explains how this thesis adds to the search for critical approaches to the study of leadership, arguing that CLS cannot only rely on interactional data, but rather that contextual details need to be considered as well. Hence work should be done on a case-by-case basis with the aim of contributing to the current debates about leadership and followership conceptualisations.

### 7.3 What do these observations mean for current conceptualisations of leadership studies?

The following subsections further elaborate the main findings and discuss their implications for the current understandings of leadership studies.

#### 7.3.1 Leadership does not depend on pre-assigned notional roles but is negotiated in linguistic practices

The analysis of the examples throughout this thesis has demonstrated that leadership practices, as they are recognised in some mainstream understandings, are

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<sup>29</sup> This assumption is based on my fieldnotes and on the follow-up interviews with the players. See, for example, the interview excerpt with Derek in 2.2 of the Appendix.

evident, but this is not the only way they are understood. To put it simply, the *official* leader of a team, namely, the team captain (mainly the case in my study) or the student coach, does not always engage in leadership practices. Therefore, more individuals have the opportunity to be involved in problem-solving or the strategic planning of the team. Throughout the thesis, the analysis has also shown multiple times how various players without any notional roles step up and take over leadership practices.

Even in the case of Chapter 4, where the focus was on examples where one individual was involved in leadership practices, we see that Owen, the team captain, and thus, the ratified leader, has minimum involvement in the enactment of leadership. In fact, the examples where he has a more dynamic role and gives clear instructions to his teammates (see Examples 1 and 2 in Chapter 4) are moments during the game, before or after a time-out, and not a time-out interaction per se. This observation results in two findings. Firstly, the team captain has minimal involvement in problem-solving or in the strategic planning of the team, at least in the case of the Tigers. Secondly, players without notional roles take over these communicative activities. Some of the players who step up and engage in leadership practices, such as Jackson and Mark, have had notional roles in the past (they are both former team captains), whereas others, such as Jay, have not, or are even new players to the team, such as Derek. Interestingly, though, Owen's involvement during time-outs is realised predominantly through encouraging comments to his teammates, thus, constructing a rather motivational leader identity (see Examples 1 and 2 in Chapter 4) when gathering the players around the bench or when initiating the war cry at the end of a time-out.

Following the same line of argument, Richard, the player who has offered to coach the team at the end of the previous academic year, has not been found to perform leadership in accordance with the mainstream understandings either. Similar to Owen, Richard has minimal involvement in the enactment of leadership, and in fact, only in examples where leadership practices are shared between two or more players. In such examples, we see Richard initiating the team talk during a time-out when highlighting the team's performance (see Example 4 in Chapter 4), or on some

other instances when he intervenes and contributes to the strategic planning of the team (see Examples 16 and 17 in Chapter 6). Despite these task-oriented communicative activities which contribute to the team's game, and in spite of Richard's notional role as student coach, he is not always involved in leadership, let alone performing it. Therefore, although Richard is present in many of the examples, he is not involved in the leadership practice in a traditional sense as one would expect from his role as student coach. By contrast, players without any assigned role take over leadership practice more often and perform task-oriented activities.

Multiple times throughout the analysis chapters, the data has shown how players with no officially assigned roles discursively perform activities which are arguably associated with leadership performance. In the examples of Chapter 4, we see how, apart from Owen, Jackson (the former team captain), and Derek (new player to the team) contribute to these communicative practices. Thus, not only do we realise that any player can enact leadership, but also *how* they claim leadership, and *what* linguistic resources they use. Verbs in imperative mode (see Examples 1 and 4 in Chapter 4 and Example 10 in Chapter 5 for a detailed analysis of this feature), attributional adverbs to downplay the difficulty of an instruction (see Examples 12 and 13 in Chapter 5), or even "let's" formulations to mitigate the illocutionary force of a speech act (see Examples 2 and 3 in Chapter 4 and Example 15 in Chapter 6) are linguistic tools preferred by all three players when they perform leadership.

The same observations are made in examples in Chapters 5 and 6 where leadership practices are shared between two or more players. In these chapters, we see Jackson, Derek, and Mark to a great extent, alongside Alex, Richard and Jay to a lesser extent, to step up, collaborate, and contribute to the strategic planning, problem-solving or motivation of the team (for instance in Examples 9, 11 and 12 in Chapter 5, and Examples 14 and 17 in Chapter 6). Owen, on the contrary, has minimal involvement in the exercise of leadership – in some cases where he motivates his teammates – yet, he is the one who always initiates the war cry at the end of each time out. This shows that in spite of his minimal involvement during the collaborative practice of leadership, he still maintains some duties/features of his notional role as team captain.

This remark reveals the complexity of leadership practices and illustrates that describing how leadership is achieved and how individuals contribute to its accomplishment, remains a fluid and nuanced activity. This point becomes even clearer when data from the follow-up interviews<sup>30</sup> with the players is considered. Indeed, during the follow-up interviews players confessed that Richard decided to play (and not only coach the team) and announced his decision to Owen at the beginning of the season, after a few wins of the team. Again, this demonstrates that individuals with ascribed leadership roles do utilise their notional roles to make some decisions, but not exclusively as they are not the only ones who make decisions.

These observations are in line with previous discourse analytical studies which have highlighted that the officially assigned leader of a team does not always perform leadership solely, but rather, that leadership is a social practice accomplished through discourse (Choi & Schnurr; 2014; Clifton, 2012; Schnurr & Chan, 2011; Schnurr et al., 2021; Vine et al., 2008). A similar remark was also made in a recent study by Schnurr et al. (2021) on the nature of emergent leadership on a netball team. This study adopts a discourse analytical perspective and highlights how several players of the team engage in leadership practices due to the absence of their coach. Following a sociolinguistic perspective and focusing on the importance of certain linguistic features, the current study also underlines that leadership as a social practice is enacted in and accomplished through communicative activities, such as problem-solving, strategic planning, or encouragement (Choi & Schnurr, 2014; Holmes & Marra, 2004; Holmes et al., 2007; Schnurr, 2009). Focusing on the micro-level of interactions, the study has provided a more comprehensive understanding of “the everyday practices of talk that constitute leadership and a deeper knowledge of how leaders use language to craft ‘reality’, construct meaning and contribute to sense-making” (Clifton, 2006, p. 203). In fact, as the analysis explains, in many of these communicative activities the team captain is somewhat involved and players with no officially assigned duties are the ones mainly contributing to the problem solving or the strategic planning of the team. This finding aligns with the conclusions

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<sup>30</sup> See Appendix 2 for the transcriptions of the relevant interview excerpts.

of previous studies which explain that leadership is not only what individuals *do* and *how they do it* with language, but more importantly, that predefined notional roles, such as “coach” or “team captain” in this case, do not necessarily designate someone as “leader” (Clifton, 2012; Holmes, 2005; Holmes & Marra, 2004; Schnurr & Zayts, 2011, 2017).

Consequently, by looking at the micro-level of naturally occurring interactions and employing discourse analytical approaches to leadership, one can understand how leadership is achieved in the moment, “focusing on a lived rather than a reported experience” (Schnurr & Schroeder, 2019, p. 447), where anyone beyond their assigned leadership roles or the lack thereof can contribute to it. By adopting such an approach and studying leadership practices as they are

“embedded in their local environments [...], we can gain new insights into how leadership is achieved as an in situ accomplishment, how leader identities are talked into being and how these identities are contextually bound, and how meanings of leadership are constructed in response to the exigencies of the situation” (Clifton et al., 2019, p. 164-165).

Connecting this assumption with my study, the analysis has revealed that leadership practice is highly dependent not only on the established characteristics of the CofP but also on the particular occasion – on each game and the momentum of the game in case of this study. Considering Examples 2 and 3 in Chapter 6, for instance, we see how leadership roles “shift” between Mark, Jackson and Owen, and how the strategic planning suggested by Mark during a previous time-out, is questioned and re-set by Jackson in the next one. Likewise, a similar pattern appears with Examples 7 in Chapter 4 and 17 in Chapter 6. In the case of the former, Derek performs leadership by giving a set of instructions to his teammates, which are changed in the latter when Jay, Mark and Jackson also intervene and suggest a different plan. Consequently, it appears that leadership identities are created based on the timing during the game.

In line with CLS, which encourage the active role of followers for leadership performance, this observation leads to a number of conclusions. Firstly, leadership practices are discursively enacted and realised through linguistic resources. Looking closely at the linguistic resources of the players, we realise how opting for direct instructions or other expressions which mitigate the illocutionary force of an otherwise direct order, builds towards the leadership practice.

This leads to the second conclusion which is related to leadership identities: they are locally defined. This is made even clearer in Example 9 in Chapter 5, where Alex makes a clear leadership claim denoting a leader identity when he says “I am the coach” as a response to the referee’s question. Anyone can take part in the enactment of leadership provided that they contribute to the strategic planning of the team or to other communicative activities associated with leadership, such as problem-solving or encouragement and fostering solidarity among the team players. Consequently, the data presented and analysed in this thesis suggest that assigned leadership titles, such as “team captain” or “coach” do not necessarily designate one as “the” leader. By contrast, leadership *identities* are claimed, realised, negotiated and rejected through interaction and linguistic resources. Thus, not only are traditional conceptualisations of leadership challenged, but also, they depict how complex, fluid and – to some extent – hybrid, leadership practices are. The fluidity of the concept is even reflected in the loose team structure – Richard is both a student coach and a player for the team. Interactional features and contextual details are needed in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of them, and this is also the reason why leadership practices, as discussed below, are interchangeable with the followership ones.

Moreover, it should also be acknowledged that some of the players who often intervene and contribute to the enactment of leadership, such as Jackson and Mark, have previously held notional leadership roles. This is an important contextual feature which can explain the reason why they feel comfortable stepping up and taking over leadership (see Subsection 7.3.4). Nevertheless, it should not be perceived as a panacea for the degree of their involvement, as it does not apply with

other players, such as Jay (an established team player), and Alex and Derek (new team players). Even though one could suspect that these claims about leadership practice can only be made due to the context of the study, the study is based on naturally occurring video-recorded sports interactions (see also File & Wilson, 2017; Schnurr et al., 2021; Wilson, 2011, 2017) which constitute detailed in situ examples of leadership practice.

### 7.3.2 Leader “identities” can be preferred over “leaders: discourse over leadership positions.

As the analysis of the data has shown, leadership claims are dynamically made by players who shift between leader and follower roles, indicating that these roles can change on a turn-by-turn basis. Instead of using fixed terms, such as “leader” and “follower”, the thesis suggests that leader and follower identities could be used as an alternative that would convey the rather fluid aspect of the concepts.

The versatility of the concepts reflects the complexities of contemporary workplaces with flatter hierarchies and the new operational economies (Clifton, 2017, p. 45). Thus, heroic notions of leadership that tend to focus on the behavioural traits and the notional roles of individuals in leadership positions, have been increasingly challenged in recent years (Clifton, 2017; Clifton et al., 2020; Schnurr & Schroder, 2019). In their attempt to question such behaviour-oriented approaches, linguistic studies which perceive leadership performance as a discursive practice accomplished through communication (Fairhurst, 2007, 2008; Clifton, 2012), have adopted distributed approaches where leadership practices are shared among various individuals. Despite the increasing interest in more discourse-oriented studies which seek to reveal how leadership is enacted in and through interactions (Clifton, 2006, 2012; Holmes & Marra, 2004; Choi & Schnurr, 2014), many – but not all – of them tend to focus on teams where leadership practices are shared among individuals in hierarchical positions. Thus, as Clifton (2017) acknowledges, leader identity equals manager identity. Considering this observation, as well as the tendency of CLS for more follower-centred approaches to the study of leadership, my study, using video-recorded naturally occurring data during problem-solving or strategic planning

episodes, has illustrated how leadership practices are shared among various players who are not in hierarchical positions.

In order to understand how leadership practices are co-constructed and shared, my study has followed the conceptualisation of 'leadership in interaction' approach, which entails the analysis of talk and text in the micro-level of the interaction, "the analysis of specific interactional processes through which leadership is accomplished in the micro-level of the interaction" (Clifton et al., 2020, p. 2). Such an analytical lens is adopted in many recent qualitative studies that aim to unpack leadership in more depth by focusing on the practices of people in leadership positions (for example, Clifton, 2006, 2014; Larsson & Lundholm, 2010). Nevertheless, some exceptions to this tendency include a study by Choi & Schnurr (2014) who explore the discursive processes of solving disagreements and negotiating consensus in a leaderless team, and studies by Vine et al. (2008) as well as Schnurr & Chan (2011), which explore how co-leadership is performed through disagreements between co-leaders, namely individuals in hierarchically superior positions.

Building on these studies, my thesis has adopted the assumption that leader and follower identities are constructed in interaction – something that is not a fixed category but rather is constantly negotiated through discourse (Clifton, 2017; Clifton et al., 2020a; Schnurr & Zayts, 2011), and has explained how the turn-by-turn analysis of data illustrates how leadership practices are shared among individuals who do not necessarily hold hierarchical roles. Following Choi & Schnurr (2014) who argue that leadership activities in a leaderless team were distributed and conjointly performed among members, my study has provided further details on how team members solve their problems (either successfully or not – see Examples 15 and 16) or set the strategic plan, and how followership practices emerge whilst leadership activities take place. Consequently, the analysis of the examples has illustrated how team players who are not in leadership positions co-construct leader and follower identities through their communicative activities – that is, problem-solving, strategic planning or motivating each other. Through such activities we understand not only how leadership responsibilities are shared amongst them, but also how leadership claims are responded to; sometimes supported (see Examples 9, 13, 14 in Chapters

5 and 6) and sometimes questioned (see Examples 15, 16, 17 in Chapter 6). Most importantly though and in spite of the responses to such claims, it is realised how leadership identities were collaboratively constructed among the team players while they were performing transactional and relational aspects of leadership discourse. Consequently, leadership identity is not limited only to players with a notional role in the team, but rather any player can portray themselves as leader when they participate in leadership practices with other team players.

Apart from the leader identities, the study has concluded that follower identities emerged as collaborative leadership practices occurred. Nevertheless, as these are discursively constructed, they constantly shift throughout the interaction. This dynamic and perhaps fluid relationship between leadership and followership is further discussed in Subsection 7.3.4. Contrary to Choi & Schnurr (2014, p. 32), who have concluded that “team members were nevertheless successful in negotiating consensus that enabled them to leave disagreement behind and move their discussion forward”, the present study has found that followership practices which emerged at certain points of the interactions functioned as an expression of agreement with the decision (or plan), and helped move the team’s practice forward (either through problem-solving or strategic planning). Therefore, it is understood that in light of the absence of an officially assigned coach in the team under research, players who step up and take over leadership responsibilities can construct themselves not only as leaders but also as followers at different moments even during the same game (see Subsection 7.3.4).

Besides this conceptual contribution as to how leadership practices are shared among various team players, the thesis also demonstrates the benefits of applying Interactional Sociolinguistics as an analytical framework to unpack leadership phenomena. While on the one hand, IS contributes to our understandings of how leadership and followership claims are realised discursively because of the array of micro-level details when combined with the macro-level contextual information (Clifton et al., 2019, p. 119-120; Schnurr & Mohd Omar, 2021), on the other hand it shows how these claims are responded to – either accepted or questioned – when solving problems or setting the team’s strategy.

Contrary to Vine et al. (2008) who only focused on examples of co-leadership, my study goes beyond such instances and shows how the methodological tools of IS benefit the understanding of more complex leadership examples. As realised from examples in Chapter 6, the micro-level analysis of the time-out interactions would not have been enough for understanding the complex processes unless contextual features of the games were also considered. Specifically, Examples 14 and 15 in Chapter 6 occurred consecutively, a detail which is important for the interpretation of Mark's initiative to start the team talk during the time-out. Mark, who had been crucially involved in the strategic planning of Example 14, takes over the team talk in Example 15; this is necessary contextual information as Mark's initiative (Example 15, line 6) could have been interpreted as an attempt to manipulate the strategic planning in Examples 14, and 15 in Chapter 6. By contrast, Mark's introductory utterance has been significant for the team talk as more players were involved in the new strategic planning of the team's game. Likewise, background information is also needed for the analysis and interpretation of the directions given by Derek in Example 17 of Chapter 6 – namely, Alex's withdrawal from the team prior to the game and the subsequent "gap", both offensive and defensive, that needs to be covered. Therefore, the analysis of contextual information when combined with the linguistic choices of the players is pivotal for unpacking the communicative activities which index that leadership phenomena take place.

In light of this, the thesis also makes a methodological claim, as it has illustrated how qualitative methodologies benefit the comprehension of complex leadership phenomena and can therefore offer a "thicker" understanding of leadership performance which is based on naturally occurring data instead of what people think about leadership, which is the current focus of leadership psychology. The thesis contributes to the current debates about leadership constellations by looking at the micro-level of the interactions and analysing the discourse analytical tools that the players employ when they solve problems, set the strategic planning, or motivate one another. In this way, the study contributes to the current follower-centred debates about leadership, where leader and follower identities are performed through discourse, and provides a linguistic nuance, shaking off hegemonic notions

of leadership where leader identity equals manager identity (Clifton, 2006; Svenning, 2012; Schnurr & Zayts, 2011). Following Huisman's (2001) discursive perspective of understanding leadership, my thesis explains how leadership is realised as a sensemaking process during problem-solving or strategic planning activities. In such an environment, anyone can perform leadership and followership, and claim these identities accordingly, provided that they contribute to the problem-solving and or strategic planning of the team, or to motivational activities.

### 7.3.3 Followership is a complex activity and not merely the acceptance of the influence of others

While exploring the leadership practices which occur among the players of the team, the concept of followership has also emerged from the analysis of data and became particularly evident in Chapters 5 and 6 where the focus was placed on examining how leadership practices are realised when two or more players contribute to them. Historically, most researchers have disregarded the role of followers and paid attention to the role of leaders as transformative agents (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014). However, based on the analysis presented, I would argue, as others have done (Baker 2007; Larsson & Nielsen, 2021), that followership has rather an important role in shaping and facilitating leadership practice and followers are not realised as "an empty vessel waiting to be led, or even transformed by leaders" (Goffee & Jones, 2001, p. 148), or as individuals who passively accept the influence of others (Northouse, 2019, p. 294). According to previous studies, followership was conceptualised as "the opposite of leadership in a leadership continuum, a direct or indirect influential activity, or a role or a group noun for those influenced by a leader" (Crossman & Crossman, 2011; see also Atchison, 2004; Briggs, 2004; Gron, 1996; Hodgkinson, 1983; Russell, 2003; Seteroff, 2003). Hence, followers were defined as passive "subordinates who have less power, authority, and influence than their superiors and who therefore usually, but not invariably, fall into line" (Kellerman, 2008, p. xix).

In contrast to these conceptualisations, more recent studies follow a critical angle and adopt a follower-centred approach to the study of followership in relation to

leadership (Baker, 2007; Clifton et al., 2020; D. Collinson, 2011; M. Collinson 2018). According to this perspective, which portrays followers not as influence-based subordinates but as active contributors to the enactment of leadership (Clifton et al., 2019, 2020; D. Collinson, 2011; Fairhurst, 2011) followers have a rather active and dynamic role in the enactment of leadership practice. Following such a perspective, the examples of Chapter 5 have revealed that followership activities are realised when two players collaborate and co-construct leadership practices, either where these instances are clear enough (such as in Examples 9 and 10 in Chapter 5), or more complex, such as in Examples 11, 12 and 13, also in Chapter 5. In these excerpts, followership is mainly understood as an activity of reassuring each other's instructions (see Examples 11, 13), or by fostering teamwork via making encouraging and motivating comments (see Examples 12, 13).

These observations show that followership is a complex activity as it can be conceptualised differently depending on the example. Hence, expressing agreement with a previously given instruction or encouraging and motivating the teammates are activities associated with followership. At the same time, the chapter concludes that leadership and followership practices are interrelated with each other – players who act as leaders can engage in followership activities even in the same example (see Example 13, Chapter 5) as the time-out unfolds. Consequently, we can argue that as the two concepts unfold in relation to each other, it is hard to draw a line which distinguishes them, or to make clear-cut distinctions as to what is leadership and followership (see Example 11, Chapter 5). By contrast, the empirical data shows that the two practices are performed by building on each other and as a response to one another (see Example 12, Chapter 5). As previous studies in behavioural science and psychology support, leadership and followership co-exist, implying that they are in an open discussion (Heller & Van Til, 1982; Hollander, 1992). My study offers the sociolinguistic alternative to these assumptions; looking at the micro-level of the interactions, the analysis shows how leadership and followership co-exist in interaction and how they are co-constructed and even questioned while an interaction unfolds (see Example 13, Chapter 5).

The same conclusions are drawn in Chapter 6, where the analysis focuses on more complex time-out interactions. The examples illustrate that leadership and followership activities are understood discursively through certain communicative activities, such as giving instructions, setting the strategic plan of the team, motivating one another or fostering solidarity among the players (Example 14). Thus, leadership and followership are practices which are performed by individuals discursively and are not dependent on pre-assigned notional roles. It is exactly the discursive nature of these practices that helps us understand that the dynamics between leadership and followership are far more complex than the superficial, black-and-white definitions provided by organisational and behavioural studies (Bass, 1985; Bjugstad et al., 2006; Zaleznik, 1965). This is the reason why there were limited, if any, followership practices in Chapter 4, where leadership was performed by one player only.

By contrast to these definitions, we can argue that leadership and followership are performed interchangeably and equally by players with or without notional leadership roles (Example 15). This dynamic relationship between the two practices was also addressed in previous studies which attempted to theorise our knowledge about followership and highlighted the close relation between that and leadership (Agho, 2009; Baker, 2007; Benson et al., 2015; Crossman & Crossman, 2011). Baker (2007, p. 50) particularly points out that “leadership could no longer be studied in isolation or with only a small nod to followers”. However, while Agho (2009) and Benson et al. (2015) base their findings on data from questionnaires or interviews, Baker (2007) and Crossman & Crossman (2011) provide an overview of literature. My study offers the much-needed empirical data to show how leadership and followership are socially constructed practices through interaction.

At the same time, the elusive relationship between leadership and followership is also realised from the fact that the team captain is often involved in followership activities and has minimum involvement in leadership practices (as one would expect given his role), especially in complex time-out interactions, such as in the examples in Chapter 6. Interestingly, in most of them, Owen, the team captain, mainly encourages his teammates or expresses his alignment with a previous instruction

given, thus, performing followership (see Example 14 in Chapter 6). Consequently, the sociolinguistic analysis of my study concludes something different from previous studies in the world of sports which highlight the crucial role of the team captain as “the” leader of the team who acts as an inspiration, a role model or a motivation to their teammates (Dries & Pepermans, 2012; Newman et al., 2019). In my study, the analysis illustrates that in moments where leadership is shared among many players, the team captain only participates in the team discussion as a follower.

Thus, many times followership activities are performed by players who get involved and facilitate the team talk in order to move forward the communicative activity which is performed at that particular moment (see Example 17, Chapter 6). From the same example we also see how players can perform both roles – that of leadership and that of followership – in quick succession. Therefore, not only do we see the fluid, and perhaps even hybrid, relationship between the two practices, but also, how their interchangeable relationship “facilitates” the accomplishment of the team’s goals. Although previous studies have researched the interdependency of leadership and followership, they have followed quantitative methods, such as questionnaires, experiments or the application of leadership models (for instance, self-determination theory or the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory) (Agho, 2009; Haslam & Platow, 2016; Leroy et al., 2012). Hence, the crucial role of language and context is often overlooked, creating a gap that my study’s interactional data attempts to fill.

All the remarks made in the previous paragraphs lead to the conclusion that, arguably, followership has a more active and dynamic role in leadership practice than it may otherwise or traditionally be given. By contrast to initial studies of followership which described followers as passive subordinates who “recognise their responsibility to comply with the orders of leaders and take appropriate action consistent with the situation to carry out those orders to the best of their ability” (Townsend & Gebhart, 1997, p. 52), the present study has explained how followers have a proactive role in the leadership practice. This finding is also outlined by Baker (2007) who highlights that leadership and followership cannot be studied in isolation to each other anymore or claims that the fixed leader role is idealised.

Instead of being a passive acceptance of the influence of others, followership is predominantly realised as an expression of alignment with the instruction previously given. Precisely, the analysis of the turn-by-turn time-out interactions suggests that alignment is realised as an expression of agreement, or as an indication of followership with what has just been suggested. By performing tasks related to followership (e.g., expression of agreement with a directive or encouragement to the team), various players actively engage in the enactment of leadership practice. In fact, Northouse (2019, p. 294, 304-305) conceptualises followership as a shared process involving the interdependence of leaders and followers in a bilateral relationship. This approach derives from the Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) framework of followership as a co-created process, where followership is understood as a give-and-take activity, where the interacting behaviours of leading and following individuals are combined for the enactment of leadership and followership. However, this framework as well as Northouse's (2019, p. 295) definition of followership is described as a process of influencing individuals or considering one's personal traits in order to accomplish a shared goal, rather than as an activity which is discursively achieved. Following the approach of leadership as socially co-constructed among interacting individuals (Fairhurst, 2007; Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012), and by using the analytical tools of Interactional Sociolinguistics, the study has illustrated how leadership and followership practices are actively performed and discursively accomplished.

#### 7.3.4 Leadership and followership practices shift constantly due to the socio-pragmatic features of the CofP

The observations made in the above section reveal the dynamic relationship between leadership and followership, and suggest that they are performed through discourse, in the micro-level of the interaction which leads them to a relationship of open discussion. This means that they are constantly co-constructed and negotiated using contextual features, such as the hierarchy dynamics and the interactional environments of time-outs. Hence, while one player practices leadership, they can also be involved in followership activities at another moment, even during the same time-out. Therefore, followership cannot be approached in a "decontextualised"

setting perceived simply as an acceptance of the influence of others (Northouse, 2019, p. 295); on the contrary, it is perceived as a crucial activity for leadership practice. In fact, Northouse's (2019, p. 295) definition of what constitutes followership as well as the various typologies and theoretical approaches to followership summarised by Northouse (2019), which have been discussed in more detail in Section 2.5 of the Literature Review, do not consider the crucial role of discourse when exploring followership. By contrast to these models which are based on individuals' own behavioural traits (for instance, the description of followers based on a dominance–submission matrix by Zaleznik (1965), or the classification of followers based on their engagement by Kelley's (1992) typology), my study focuses solely on the contextual information and the discursive devices employed by the players when participating in leadership and followership practices.

As Clifton et al. (2020a, p. 2) point out, leadership in interaction entails the analysis of “specific interactional processes through which leadership is accomplished at the micro-level of the interaction”. It can be argued that by scrutinising the micro-level of interactions while considering the wider contextual features for the interpretation of leadership practices, “a better understanding of the everyday practices that constitute leadership” is attained (Clifton & Van De Mieroop, 2019; Clifton et al., 2020a, p. 2). Thus, by unpacking leadership practices, we can also gain an understanding of what constitutes followership and how it is accomplished.

In line with constructionist-based perspectives on followership, followership is co-constructed and negotiated between interacting individuals in each situation without necessarily aligning with formal hierarchical roles (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). This assumption becomes particularly relevant to my study because the analysis has shown that followership practices are performed by any player, including those who are in subordinate positions, without any formal role. However, despite the linguistic turn to the study of leadership in recent years, followership is still approached as “one person's attempt to influence and the other person's response to these influence attempts” (Northouse, 2019, p. 295). Consequently, scholars in the field of CLS have called for further research on the relationship between leadership and followership. Following this call of CLS, my

study has explored followership practices as they emerge when leadership practices are shared between two or more players of the team, considering contextual features when analysing certain sports examples. Such context that I have focused on, are the Tigers' hierarchy dynamics, and the way each particular time-out discussion is inflected by the game in which it is embedded.

Whereas the former factor results in a loose team structure, the latter is the setting where communicative activities are done in a limited period of time. The analysis demonstrates how both factors facilitate the involvement of various players in leadership and followership practices. As a consequence, the relationship between leadership and followership is one of an "open discussion" (Heller & Van Til, 1982; Hollander, 1992). Contemporary scholars have further questioned the notion of followers as "passive subordinates" (Agho, 2009; Baker, 2007; Benson et al., 2015). In their search for new avenues in the study of leadership which reflect the complexities and flat hierarchies of contemporary workplaces, scholars have redefined the role of followership and have concluded that followers have a rather proactive and dynamic role in the leadership practice (Baker, 2007; Benson et al., 2015; Crossman & Crossman, 2011). Baker (2007, p. 50) particularly points out that "leadership could no longer be studied in isolation or with only a small nod to followers".

The ongoing critical debate highlights how blurred the boundaries between leadership and followership are and illustrates how they do not refer to assigned and fixed titles, but rather to social practices understood through discourse. These practices are open, negotiable and even ambiguous given the socially constructed, multifaceted and shifting concepts of identity (D. Collinson, 2006). In fact, interactional data shows that defining leadership and followership based on one's attributes does not coincide with everyday workplace practices, as leadership and followership can actually be performed by everyone provided that they contribute to the activity taking place (i.e., problem-solving or strategic planning).

The proactive role of followership is also observed in my study as many times players involved in followership activities appear to facilitate or move forward the problem-

solving or the strategic planning of the team (see Examples 16, 17 in Chapter 6). The growing importance of followership and followers' identities was in fact highlighted by D. Collinson (2006), who followed a post-structuralist approach and questioned the idealised understandings of the two concepts. Thus, followership has a crucial role in the exercise of leadership, and it can be inferred that often the contribution of followers is key to the team's progress. The crucial role of followership in the enactment of leadership is specifically highlighted by CLS which outline how follower-centred perspectives question the authority of notional leaders and their assigned power accordingly (D. Collinson, 2006, 2011; Crossman & Crossman, 2011; Schnurr & Schroeder, 2019). Consequently, CLS studies of leadership shed light on both leaders' and followers' identities and the complex ways they interact and question the mainstream dichotomous identities of leader and follower (D. Collinson, 2006). Following this trend, my study has revealed how players without any assigned roles step up and contribute to leadership performance either by doing leadership or followership, an observation which explains how the two practices unfold interchangeably through sequential patterns and language games. Thus, the thesis contributes to the current debates about leadership and followership by examining the interactions at the micro-level.

Situated in the field of CLS, which was discussed in more detail in Section 2.4 of the Literature Review, the study highlights the importance of adopting follower-centred approaches to the study of leadership because they can provide a thicker description of the complex leadership practices as they consider the role of followership of equal importance to that of leadership when analysing and interpreting leadership practices. Important to this is also the consideration of the hierarchy dynamics among the players, which result in a loose team structure. This is understood because players who have held notional roles in the past, tend to intervene and either accept or question the leadership claims of other players. Thus, besides the analysis of interactional data, the fluid and dynamic relationship between leadership and followership is also understood from some crucial contextual features.

Firstly, the fact that Richard decided to announce, instead of discussing, his decision to start playing for the team after the team's first few wins, illustrates how a player

who has a notional role – he is “the” coach – takes advantage of the aspects of his role and makes a unilateral decision in light of the concomitant privileges. Based on traditional conceptualisations of leadership, such a decision of a coach would not be much of a surprise, as he has the power and the authority to do so derived from his notional role. According to literature on organisational communication and business management which follows heroic notions of leadership, leaders are often defined by their hierarchical positions as well as their charisma and are the ones who make the decisions (Conger, 1999; Hunt & Conger, 1999; Bryman, 1992). This approach is mainly adopted in sports teams where the coach is “the leader” who makes decisions, motivates the players, acts as a mentor or engages in management tasks (Cotterill & Fransen, 2016; Lyle, 2002).

However, as recent studies explain, heroic notions of leadership are questioned because they cannot capture the complex realities of contemporary leadership which often takes place in organisations with flat hierarchies or asymmetrical power dynamics (Clifton, 2017; Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 6). These assumptions are also made in my study where complex leadership practices emerge as players refuse to adopt asymmetrical power relations as they have held leadership roles in the past. This observation is seen in the case of Richard, for instance; although he decides to play as well as coach the team, the data recorded from the court shows that he has minimal involvement in making decisions by himself.

By contrast, he participates in examples where leadership is shared among players, either by performing leadership or followership. This finding supports previous sociolinguistic studies which claim that leadership is a social practice achieved through discourse (Clifton, 2012; Holmes et al., 2011; Vine et al., 2008). However, as researchers have noticed, empirical research which illustrates how leadership practices are actually distributed and how the relational dynamics between leadership and followership are constructed in situ is still lacking (Crevani et al., 2010; Larson & Lundholm, 2010; Uhl-Bien, 2006); this thesis goes some way to rectifying that gap by providing empirical data.

An important aspect which might have explained the degree of involvement of the players in leadership practices is the rather loose organisational hierarchy whereby players often refuse to adopt these hierarchical roles. This reason can be grounded in the fact that many of them have had leader roles in the past. While on the one hand players with previous leadership positions are more engaged in the leadership practices, this may also result in their refusal to adapt to the new hierarchical dynamics, and therefore, they get involved in leadership and followership practices. In more detail, both Mark and Jackson have been team captains in the past, something which perhaps affects the degree of their engagement with leadership and followership practices.

Although this assumption is related to traditional conceptualisations of leadership, sociolinguistic studies also point out that individuals with notional roles are more inclined to interrupt and contribute to leadership practices. Such studies (Holmes & Marra, 2004; Schnurr & Chan, 2011) suggest that individuals in leadership positions construct themselves either as “hero leaders” or as “team-players” in situations of conflict management. Contrary to these findings, in my case study, although players with previous experience in leadership roles step up, they mainly portray themselves as “team players” who *contribute* to the communicative activities with their involvement. Consequently, the findings conclude that, despite not being the sole factor, having held a leadership position in the past can affect one’s level of engagement in leadership performance. Thus, socio-pragmatic aspects of the local context which signal leadership practices should be considered when analysing leadership and followership practices. These aspects are understood through the discourse analytical tools employed by the interlocutors.

Another contextual factor which is crucial and is related to the involvement of many players in the leadership practices is the highly interactive context as well as the fact that decisions are made in limited time and often under pressure. Most of these interactions take place during time-outs, which are often used to deliver tactical instructions for the upcoming playing pattern (Schul et al., 2014). Apart from instructions, time-outs are also used for the encouragement and the motivation of the players (Lyle, 2002, p. 183, 284). Therefore, it is understood that the

communication which occurs in these moments is pivotal, both in terms of the transactional and relational aspects of leadership discourse.

Another recent study in communication under pressure in high performance sports has illustrated the complex communicative practices used by boxing coaches in the one-minute breaks between rounds (SCCRC, 2020). Following a similar sociolinguistic perspective and analysing the discourse of the players when they make leadership and followership claims, the current study illustrates how the socio-pragmatic features of a highly interactional context encourage the involvement of various players in the leadership performance. The communication takes place under pressure and at short periods of time, which may lead more players to become involved in the accomplishment of the team's goals.

In the current climate of critical, follower-centred approaches to leadership, the analysis of data has shown how the features of the CofP under research can contribute to the involvement of both leaders and followers in the enactment of leadership. As Clifton (2017, p. 66) points out, there is an inherent instability in the identities of leader and follower and thus they can shift on a turn-by-turn basis. This finding is realised by empirical studies which analyse the actual practice of shared leadership as well as the dynamics of it (Clifton, 2017, p. 46). This was also suggested from the data of this thesis where leader and follower identities constantly shift not only across different time-outs, but also in the same one. Therefore, it can be argued that critical perspectives can question mainstream conceptualisations of leadership because they take into account the wider socio-pragmatic context, where leadership and followership practices occur, shed light on the active role of followership when conceptualising leadership, and thus, offer an understanding of the relationship between these two practices as they are studied at the micro-level of the interactions. My study, situated within the paradigm of CLS, and considering the observation of previous studies about the lack of empirical research (Crevani et al., 2020; Groom, 2003; Larsson & Lundholm, 2010) provides naturally occurring data of leadership and followership which allows for the construction of evidence-based conceptualisations.

Consequently, it is shown how the study of leadership can benefit from sociolinguistic perspectives, which are overlooked by mainstream psychological or behavioural studies due to their focus on the effectiveness of the coach's talk (Shields et al., 1995; Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986) or the relation between leadership behaviour and team cohesion (Aoyagi et al., 2008; Light Shields et al., 1997). This observation leads to the conclusion that highly interactional contexts where social practices (such as problem-solving, strategic planning, or decision-making) need to be achieved, can encourage the involvement of more individuals in the leadership practice, and thus, question top-down hegemonic understandings of leadership. By focusing on the communicative practices which occur during these moments we can gain a more comprehensive and holistic view of leadership, rather than making potentially superficial claims about charismatic leaders, who take the full responsibility in crucial moments when the pressure is high (Conger, 2015; Fairhurst, 2009; Conger & Kanungo, 1998).

Taking everything into consideration, it can be argued that the combination of discursive approaches to the study of leadership, when analysed in the wider socio-pragmatic context in which they occur, can help the analysis and understanding of more complex leadership cases where activities are performed within a limited period of time. The linguistic analysis illustrates how players make leadership and followership claims purely based on the discursive strategies they employ and not on assigned roles. However, the fact that some players have been in leadership positions previously as well as the relative authority of the present appointed leader, is an important factor that should be considered and may affect the degree of their involvement in leadership and followership practices. Consequently, the observations made throughout the analysis align with current trends in CLS, which emphasise the importance of studying and analysing leadership from a follower-centred perspective and within the contexts where it unfolds in order to avoid a superficial description of it (Benson et al., 2015; D. Collinson, 2011; Crossman & Crossman, 2017).

## 8. Concluding remarks

Leadership is a multifaceted topic that has been in the microscope of academic research for decades (Northouse, 2009). Although it has been studied from various approaches (person-based, practice-based, and task-based approaches – see in Section 2.1 or in Grint, 2010) and disciplines, such as organisational and behavioural studies (Manson et al., 2014), psychology (Gilbert et al., 2017) or sociolinguistics (Fairhurst, 2007; Holmes et al., 2011; Ilie & Schnurr, 2017), scholars have not reached a unanimous definition as to what constitutes leadership. In fact, there are as many definitions of leadership as the scholars who have attempted to define and study it (Bass, 1981, p. 7). For many years, leadership has been studied from a psychological point of view and was related to heroic perspectives, where leaders had exceptional characteristics. Thus, leadership was based on their personal qualities and the main focus of the study of leadership was how effective leaders led (Waugh & Streib, 2006).

Nevertheless, a shift has been made in the study of leadership as more and more (socio)linguistic studies have attempted to study leadership from a linguistic point of view, where the focus is placed on the discourse and communication when interlocutors perform leadership (Clifton, 2006; Holmes & Marra, 2002, 2004; Vine et al., 2008). Despite these sociolinguistic studies, leadership remains a complex notion with many nuances, as questions about how and by whom leadership is performed, remain unanswered.

Following the call of recent studies for more critical approaches to the study of leadership (D. Collinson, 2017; Schnurr & Schroeder, 2019) and using naturally occurring video-recorded data, this thesis has problematised mainstream leadership conceptualisations by exploring how leadership works in a university-level basketball team without an official coach. Section 8.1 summarises the contributions of the thesis; Section 8.2 outlines the limitations of the current study, and finally, Section 8.3 concludes with future research directions.

## 8.1 Contributions

Following the traditional top-down conceptualisations of leadership and focusing on examples where one player performs leadership, the first analysis chapter analysed 8 examples where one player performed leadership. One would expect that in the absence of a coach, the team captain would be the one to take on a leadership role given his notional position. Yet, this is not what happened. As elaborated in Subsection 7.3.1, leadership does not depend on one's position (team captain in this case), but rather it is a social practice achieved through discourse. Therefore, the analysis aligns with previous studies conducted in professional contexts which suggest that leadership is a discursive performance (Fairhurst, 2007, 2008).

The thesis adds to the existing body of sports literature, where such sociolinguistic studies are still limited. Precisely, most studies of team sports have adopted a psychological angle and have examined how effective a coach talk is (Shields et al., 1995; Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986) or what is the role of gender or race when coaching (Hovden & Pfister, 2006). In contrast to such studies, my thesis questions dominant discourses as to who performs leadership and how this is performed and contributes to sports scholarship by offering a discourse analytical perspective.

The conceptualisation of leadership as a complex and dynamic discursive practice is best portrayed in Chapters 5 and 6, where leadership responsibilities are shared between two or more players respectively. By zooming in on the simple as well as the more subtle linguistic tools employed by the players when performing leadership, the analysis has illustrated how leadership and followership practices constantly shift, not only across different examples, but also within one example. The players performing these practices change as well. Consequently, as Subsection 7.3.2 has outlined, using terms such as "leader" or "followers" can be problematic, as these are pre-existing and fixed terms which do not reflect the complexities of the context. As Clifton et al. (2019, p.164-165) explain, leader identities are constructed through discourse, contextually bound, and often expressed "in response to the exigencies of the situation". In line with the social-constructivist view of identity adopted in the present study, the analysis has suggested that terms such as leader and follower

*identities* more accurately reflect the constantly shifting leadership and followership practices. At the same time, the terms leader and follower identities also convey the co-construction of the practices.

While exploring how leadership claims were co-constructed or shared among the players, the study has also shed light on the concept of followership. Contrary to early studies of followership in the field of psychology and organisational studies, where followership is understood as the acceptance of the influence of the leader (Northouse, 2019), my study offers a linguistic alternative and explains how follower identities are constructed in and through discourse. Thus, the thesis also contributes to the conceptualisation of followership as an active discursive practice which supports a better understanding of the relationship between leadership and followership.

As elaborated in Subsection 7.3.3 and considering the aforementioned observations, leadership and followership are two dynamic and complex practices which unfold as the interaction proceeds. Consequently, followership is not the passive acceptance of the influence of others, but rather, a social practice which facilitates the problem-solving or the strategic planning of the team's game. Therefore, players construct leader and follower identities interchangeably based on their discourse, and consequently, it could be argued that the use of the static terms of "leader" and "follower" is problematic because the terms are highly ambiguous and the boundaries between them are blurred (D. Collinson, 2006).

By doing so, the thesis contributes to the call of recent studies for a "thicker" description of the phenomenon of leadership. The analysis has illustrated how leadership and followership are in open discussion not only in the sense that they are interchangeable, but also in the sense that they are co-constructed as the interaction unfolds and players perform either leadership or followership activities. Although recent studies in the field of CLS have outlined the active roles of followership for leadership performance (D. Collinson, 2006, 2011, 2014; Crossman & Crossman, 2011), these have remained at a theoretical level of description. This study provides

the empirical data to support such claims, and thus, contributes to the current debates about leadership and followership and to the call for rethinking the terms.

It is likely that some of the socio-pragmatic aspects that were specific to this study were instrumental in reaching these conclusions about the dynamic and fluid relationship between leadership and followership. The analysis has revealed that sometimes the hierarchy dynamics as well as the highly interactional time-out environments are factors which have affected the ways that players perform leadership. The fact, for instance, that both Jackson and Mark have been team captains in the past could be the reason why they are inclined to step up and take over leadership responsibilities on different occasions. Nevertheless, this factor is not enough to undermine the findings of the study, as there have been examples where these players did not get involved in leadership tasks at all.

The findings are based purely on the turn-by-turn discursive analysis of the video-recorded data. Additionally, the highly interactional nature of the site is another factor that should be taken into account when analysing and interpreting the data. The fact that the data was recorded during the actual games and time-outs of the team, where the pressure was high and the time often limited, is another important factor which affected the level of involvement of the students. Consequently, the thesis also contributes to the existing leadership literature by showing how a highly interactional environment can provide insights into how leadership claims are constructed, questioned and negotiated among the interacting individuals.

Lastly, and in line with a sociolinguistic turn to the study of leadership phenomena in sports teams, recent studies have adopted a discourse analytic lens to explore phenomena. Some of these include the study of the discursive construction of leadership and team identity in a New Zealand rugby team (Wilson, 2011), the discursive construction of racial humour as means of team cohesion in a male football team (Wolfers, 2020) as well as the discursive construction of emergent leadership in a netball team (Schnurr et al., 2021). Methodologically and conceptually then, my thesis contributes to this body of literature which adopts discourse analysis, and in

my case Interactional Sociolinguistics in particular, in order to explore the discursive co-construction of leader and follower identities in a basketball team.

## 8.2 Limitations of the current study

Despite its contributions, findings of this study should be considered in the backdrop of its specific characteristics. These are mainly related to *(i)* the time spent with the team; *(ii)* my identity as a student-researcher researching a university level basketball team; and *(iii)* the choice of the team under research.

### ***Time spent with the team***

It would have been useful to focus on a team with the same characteristics for a longer period of time, that is, for the whole academic year instead of a single term, so that the researcher can gain a broader idea of the team, collect more interactional data, and study the team under different phases (especially in the case that players quit the team after some time). This would have provided more breadth into the data and would have been closer to a truly ethnographic study.

Furthermore, it would have been useful if data was collected from the social events of the team where the dynamics were different and there was no time pressure. Having done so, more insights into the team cohesion would have been gained. Although I was subsequently invited to some of these social events, collecting any was not possible for two reasons, ethical and methodological. Firstly, this was not stated in the consent form signed by the participants, and secondly, members of the female team of the club, who had not signed any consent form, were also present. Therefore, from an ethical point of view, collecting data from social events would not have been possible. From a methodological point of view, it would have been very challenging for me to record any data in the very loud and noisy environments where the socials were taking place.

### ***Identity as a student-researcher researching a university level basketball team***

A second limitation is associated with my identity as a student-researcher researching students. Admittedly, the fact that I was also a student myself, made the

process of gaining access to the team a lot easier and more straightforward, as the participants knew that they facilitated the research project of another student. Perhaps gaining access to the team's training and games would have been more challenging had I approached another team which competed at a more professional level or would consist of a different roster.

### ***Choice of the team under research***

The third limitation of the study relates to the choice of the team under research. As explained in Sections 3.5.1. and 3.5.2, the Tigers, is the Men's 1<sup>st</sup> team of a university basketball club, which consists of two male and one female teams. For the practical reasons outlined in 3.5.1, I decided to focus my research on the 1<sup>st</sup> team only, something which constitutes a limitation itself. Ideally it would have been beneficial to gather data from both men's teams in order to explore how things run in the 2<sup>nd</sup> team in which the club president was also competing and coaching besides the team captain. Should that have been the case, I could have explored how, if any, different players constructed their leader and follower identities in a team with similarities but with a different roster and, admittedly, team dynamics. Consequently, a deeper understanding of leadership and followership would have been gained.

Lastly, the study is informed by the wider context where it is situated. Being a university-level basketball team competing for the regional championship, the roster consists of non-professional unpaid players. In this context, it is perhaps not unusual for teams to lack a coach, although several of the opponent teams did have one.

### 8.3 Future research directions

Leadership performance in a team with no officially assigned leader is a topic that has not attracted scholarly interest in the world of sports and more sociolinguistic studies need to be conducted in order to shed light on how leadership (and perhaps followership) are discursively performed. Although this study has offered the empirical data to challenge top-down mainstream conceptualisations of leadership and followership, and to respond to the calls of recent studies for the need of more

critical approaches in the study of leadership (Clifton et al., 2019; M. Collinson, 2018; Schnurr & Schroeder, 2019), there are still avenues for future research.

Taking the findings of the present study as a reference point, future studies could focus on sports teams with a similar team structure and explore how leadership is performed in these teams to test the current findings about leadership and followership. Moreover, future studies could pay attention to the aspect of gender and leadership. Similar studies can be conducted in mixed gender sports teams, such as netball or handball teams, in order to unpack leadership phenomena and find out if gender is a factor associated with leadership claims in mixed gender teams.

Considering the observations about followership and its relationship with leadership outlined in Subsections 7.3.3 and 7.3.4, it would also be interesting to explore how these notions are understood in teams outside the sporting context, such as in the professional workplace or the healthcare sector. It would be worth exploring how participants construct their leader and follower identities, especially when an institutional leader already exists. By doing so, we could find out how followership is understood in teams with an official leader, and if leadership and followership are dynamically enacted and interchangeable practices in other settings and scenarios.

Methodologically, future studies can use interview data in combination with the interactional data recorded, and not only as a supplementary source of data as was the case in my study. Incorporating interview data to the main body of the dataset, can provide more background information as well as some clarifications with regards to interpretation.

Concluding, I hope that this small-scale case study will encourage more empirical studies on leadership and followership even outside of the sports fields in the future, and that more linguists will enter the field of sports as a research site and investigate unexplored aspects of it.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Team sheet

The team roster is summarised in the following table:

<b>Player</b>	<b>Games played</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>(Previous)<sup>31</sup> role</b>	<b>Years playing for the team</b>
Owen	7	Point guard	team captain	2
Mark	7	Shooting guard	(team captain)	4
Derek	7	Shooting guard	n/a	1
Jay	7	Small forward		2
Andrew	6	Power forward	n/a	3
Jim	2	Small forward	n/a	3
George	7	Power forward	(team captain, club president)	6
Richard	4	Point guard	Coach	3
Alex	3	Centre	n/a	1
Jackson	7	Centre	(team captain)	3
Nathan	4	Power forward	n/a	1

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<sup>31</sup> The roles in brackets denote that the player had this role in the past.

## Appendix 2: Extracts from interviews with the players

### 2.1 Mark about the team cohesion

*M: Mark, R: Researcher*

M: it was mainly Owen and Richard because Richards was the coach at that point.

R: was he part of the execs or no?

M: mmm ((hesitation)) no, I don't think so (.) you might have to ask Owen or Adam<sup>32</sup> but I don't believe he was on the exec but he was the official coach of the team and they (3.0) so, Richard and Owen decided what we are doing in our train sessions and what plays we'd learn what defences we would learn, that was up to then to decide what to do

R: so, I think I'm confused (.) what was the involvement of the execs in the trainings? because you just mentioned that Owen and the execs organised the trials and some other things like the team structure, not the structure, how the trainings run ((Mark agrees by nodding his head)) and then was it also Richard who helped [or,

M: [yes (.) so, the exec plus Richard, I was not sure if Richard was on the exec

R: okay, alright (.) so, all of these parts were involved

M: yes, so all those parts were involved

R: ahh

M: I know that at the start of the year during pre-season Jackson, ((hesitation)) so Richard had decided to run and play during pre-season, we had an offense to run in pre-season. I wasn't in pre-season, okay, so we had pre-season before week 0 for people to come (.) so, Richard had come up with a play, like an offensive scheme for

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<sup>32</sup> Adam is the basketball club president.

us in pre-season and I believe that he missed one of the training sessions or he missed one of the early training sessions before our first game

R: hmm why?

M: I believe because he was playing with his other team so he couldn't make it so he had another commitment and he couldn't make that training session so during that training session (2.0) Jackson (1.0) under (.) Owen's permission decided to show to everyone a play that he would like to run. So, we learned circle hum at start of the year and I know that once Richard came back and ( ) the team circle he was disappointed to Jackson because he felt that Jackson had gone behind his back and did not run the play Tom had come up with.

R: what was the play that Richard had come up with?

M: I don't know (.) because that was in pre-season, I have no idea how it is (.) so, I know that throughout the whole year, Richard was pretty mad that we didn't run his play so I think that that helped him want to leave the team because he felt that he didn't have control over the players. (3.0) hum, I don't know (.) does this answer your questions?

R: mmm yeah, of course (.) so, you said that he felt that he didn't have control over the team (.) so was he the official coach at the beginning of the year

M: yeah

R: right

M: so, even though he was the coach he still felt like he didn't have control um

R: do you feel that there was another reason why he couldn't have control over the team? was it just cos he missed the training and then the guys practised one play or were there other factors?

M: I think it was also because (2.0) people within the club I feel didn't really respect Richard because of the fact that he doesn't socialise with anyone really in the club

and I believe this year he came to two of the ((name of the bar)) times, two of the ((name of the bar)) after games, but even from my previous two years I feel that Richard has made himself a bit of an outcast (.) within the group (.) so, people how have been here for longer, for two years .. so I feel like the other people would just see Richard as an outcast and especially during the coaching sessions when sometimes if you would come up with a punishment

R: such as? what do you mean by punishment?

M: when he decided to stop playing for us and coaching at the same time, he would (.) if for example you'd miss, if for example we're doing a drill and it wasn't the drill correctly, um it's just common for coaches to call for a punishment on the player for example for running there back in less than 10" . . so sometimes Richard would come up with punishments similar to that by running side line to side line . . and sometimes he wouldn't participate in that he would, ((hesitation)) even if he was participating in the training, he wouldn't participate in some of the punishments we had to do and,

R: why would he participate in the punishment if he was the coach?

M: but he is also, (1.0) at this point he was playing with us, he's also training with us and playing with us

R: so (.) at first at the beginning of the year he decided that he'd be the coach,

M: yeah but from that ( ) he decided he was also playing

R: so when did he decide he'd be the coach? in pre-season?

M: yeah over the summer when people we doing,

R: right so over the summer he decided I will coach you ((Mark agrees by nodding his head)) until pre-season ((Mark agrees by nodding his head)) when he comes with that plan ((Mark agrees again)) the offensive plan ((Mark agrees again)) and then he decides to play for the team ((Mark agrees once again)), at what point?

M: after the trials (.) so, after the trails during we had the two-week break for our first game

R: did you train during these two weeks? did the team train?

R: yeah (.) I believed he coached two sessions and then he decided he's gonna play with us as well and he started playing and coaching

R: Right (3.0) How did you find this decision?

M: um I was annoyed because initially (2.0) if (1.0) if he was gonna coach, then the exec would play him to coach (.) and that's fine that's fine with me (.) but I felt like if he was gonna play and coach and get paid, then that's just not fair (.) because that's just unfair to all of us I even said to Owen or Adam I don't remember who that was that if that happens then ↑I want to get paid as well

R: uh (.) and what did they say?

M: uh they just laughed (.) I was just saying as a joke but it's a valid point

## 2.2 Mark about Derek's basketball experience

*Various excerpts from the interview with Mark's; M: Mark, R: Researcher*

R: so Derek joined the team this year so why do you say that his integration was smoother let's say compared to Alex's integration to the team?

M: I feel like (4.0) hm:: (2.0) ↑I feel like personality-wise he fits a lot better with the people within the club and I feel like (2.0) Derek is more of a leader than Alex as in he'd voice his opinion (.) rather than (2.0) from ( ) and moaning about thing and not telling people ↑and getting angry when people doing certain things he doesn't like

(40.0)

R: so Derek is a great leader as you just said. Why?

M: hm: (3.0) I, he just gets respect from people

R: why does he get [respect?

M: [people just respect him because, his points are valid (.) um:: he's knowledgeable a::nd (2.0) he knows how to control people like he knows the right ways to motivate certain people (.) that's what I'd say

R: so do you believe that these are the attributes that a good leader should have?

M: yeah

R: do you believe that other players in the team have these attributes [to make them good

M: [no

R: [leaders?

M: no I think the only person is Derek. (3.0) Jackson is not understandable (.) he doesn't understand other people like he doesn't understand how to motivate other

people he has one way and that's it whereas Derek would be a bit more diverse (2.0) and I just mentioned Jackson because he was captain last year

(20:00' later)

M: when Richard left Derek, Jackson, Owen and me (I'd say) and then maybe George and Jay °sometimes° I might be wrong though

R: why these players?

M: hm::: (.) Derek because I just feel he was, the leader

R: so you felt that he was the leader when Richard left

M: yep

R: did you feel that he was the leader before Richard leave?

M: (3.0) no (3.0) he didn't feel like the leader, but he was definitely someone who (.) no I take it back I take it back ↑halfway through term 2 (.) ↑no it term 2 I feel like Derek became the leader (.) I feel like Derek became the leader

R: how come?

M: I think he just naturally became the leader and I think that pushed down that step in terms of the leadership level of the club and then once that happened (.) and that was part of the reason why Richard was leaving but when Richard left the club (2.0) so that was because he was naturally a leader and he had good knowledge of the sport and then it was Owen (3.0) I feel it was Owen because he was the captain and Jackson because always voices his option he would always say something because he was the previous team captain and his opinion would still matter and then I would say something because this is how I'd feel so when Richard left that were the main four that talked all the time

R: (4.0) so who was making the decisions that usually a coach does when Richard left?

M: (.) Derek (.) Derek

R: decisions like?

M: u::m who was playing who was sub in the games because sometimes Derek, he wouldn't play as much as he should because he was more monitoring the team when everyone was playing and deciding on the subs (2.0) cos I know that in varsity Derek didn't play that much because he was (laying) out people playing and he was more ((hesitation in his voice)) he was more of a ↑coach and Derek is the type of person >that< when he's not playing good he'd be honest with himself and say I'll sit down and I'll help coaching people °if that makes sense°

R: I think you mentioned earlier that Owen chooses the starting five whereas Derek chooses the subs?

M: yep (.) it doesn't make sense

(...)

R: why isn't it Owen who does this?

M: because it's hard to so subs when you're playing as well and I feel that Derek has a better mindset of being able to disconnect himself from I I want to play and what is best for the team and just has a better knowledge of everything going around him (.) about u:m what decisions should be made

### 2.3 Derek about team cohesion and Richard

*D: Derek, R: Researcher*

D: I think that (.) the certain breakdowns during games, is because of the limited training time we had u:: and the sort of lack of ↑structure in those trainings

R: (2.0) lack of structure, okay was someone responsible during the trainings? I mean was it decided since the beginning of the year this is how we [will run trainings-

D: [so::: at the start of the year Richard was supposed to be coaching u::m that was that was organised from before the season started ((researcher agrees)) and initially and initially seemed to work reasonably well

R: for how long did it work?

D: h:::m when I say initially I probably mean for the first couple games of the year

R: uh okay

D: and then after that point he decided he wanted to play as well as coach ↑which (.) immediately makes it (2.0) u::m immediately makes the team dynamic more difficult (.) when you have a captain when you have a captain and you also have a player coach who >sort of< who in theory is supposed to making objective decisions like you know a coach is very much (.) supposed to be impartial and is difficult then to remain impartial while you're playing yourself and you >are wanting< to play yourself u::m a::nd so:: that was the first point I think which started to lose some structure u::m (2.0) I mean ( ) I'm more than happy you know (.) be vocal a::nd >you know< throw my opinion ((researcher agrees)) ↑but I didn't envisage that, in being my first year here I would end up having to do with ↑quite as much as I ended up having to do it (.) u::m and or- at least feeling like (1.0) hold on a minute this is like, (2.0) there's something that needs to be said here because otherwise this training session will end up a waste of time or this game is going to go completely pear-shaped, u::m an maybe there were times where possible where I didn't need to say

anything and stuff would have been fine anyway ↑but it's always been sort of, especially with basketball it's always been (.) u::m my view you know we need to call people to account more for more >suddenly I think we saw this< yeah ((researcher agrees by nodding her head)) it needs to be very much the case of ↑if, I I have no problem with Richard playing and coaching if that was the case from the start of the year and the sort of ground rules set out but it was the case the ↑ground rules that were set out from the start of the year they weren't maintained because, (.) the circumstances changed

R: yeah the balance

D: yeah and I found often the time I ended up running a rotation for a game while ↑not being captain ↑not being coach both of them being there and just, (.) it didn't really I mean it didn't really matter that they were both there so it sort of reverted

R: so did you feel like I have to take up this cause no one else actually does

D: u::m don't get me wrong I like doing that anyway like is by (no) means (reluctant)

R: yeah okay it's not bad

D: but also at the same time, yeah largely it was the case of well if, if (1.0) I'm more than happy also not to say something I would genuinely say something if I feel that otherwise it's not gonna be said and if someone else is there and they say anything that's great ((researcher agrees)) yeah as long as the issue or whatever it is done with that's not a problem and most of the times I'd rather if someone else did that ↑but if no one else is gonna do it yes you know I'll do it myself but ended up being sort of later on in the year like I think maybe varsity is for example because that we did have a lot final years so:: buy but in certain games later in the year >I think< I probably played about 10-12 minutes (.) because having to run a rotation and, (.) inevitably in my head the fairest way to do it and the way that it makes the people most likely to accept the decision is to restrict the amount of time that you play yourself whether whether you view this as being best for sort of the team or not u::m in terms of the team cohesion I think it is sort of the best way of doing this u::m ↑and that's why

ideally I >would have done< that I'd like to have to sort of say less or organise less but ,

R: so did you have to take Owen's or Richard's permission to rotate something or no?

D: no

R: so it was just your decision

D: largely yeah I mean Owen would still pick stuff (in front) which of course not a problem like absolutely supportive of that bu::t

R: so is this something the captain always does?

D: in university sport it kind of it would be it would be the coach if he was there but if there's no coach it generally falls to the captain to do and that's why that's why there was a strange sort of, I don't want >to call< ((hesitates)) power balance in terms we had a captain who picked the starting 5 we had a player-coach who (2.0) coached trainings but didn't coach games (.) really like if he was present in a game he would play in the game but generally not doing so much coaching

R: okay

D: if we were both in the bench and I was running a rotation he would ask me if I thought he should go in (.) [rather just him,

R: [deciding

D: deciding yeah but also you had a lot of final years with strong characters who were also very much wanting to get their opinions across and so:: which very much sort of made it a an interesting dynamic u::m and not a particularly coherent dynamic

## 2.4 Richard about team cohesion

*Ri: Richard, Re: Researcher*

Re: so you started for the team as a coach is that right?

Ri: yeah that's correct

Re: did you decide to be a coach cos as you mentioned earlier you had experience in the past with coaching junior teams or local teams or was it out of necessity?

Ri: u::m the reason why I decided to be a coach this year was because I was already playing for a another team and I thought that playing for six times per week wouldn't be very good for my health so:: I thought I'd be better at coaching (.) and I thought that they really needed a coach ((researcher agrees)) so that is why I decided to coach

Re: did also Adam as a president asked you to do that? o::r I mean was the club in search of a coach at the same time?

Ri: u::m yes I think so, u::m (3.0) I don't really know if they were searching, I I talked to Adam before the year started said that I'd be interested in coaching so I talked to him probably in July last year or July or June last year said I'd be interested in coaching next season, he asked me again about it pretty close to the trials and then I said yes sure I'll coach

Re: but at some point you were coaching and playing for the team at the same time right? when did this happen and how did you make this decision?

Ri: (2.0) u::m this happened probably in our third or fourth game because we were getting very bad [attendance

Re: [wow ((surprised)) what do you mean?

Ri: u::m we had a squad for the first team of about 10 players a::nd we were often getting only 7 or 8 and that's just about okay to play a game but it means that your players are going to get very tired ((researcher agrees)) and it also meant that if you couldn't get anyone else to play then everyone, who it would make the situation way

much worse so I just tried I said I would be there and if we needed me then I would end up playing but I thought I'd still be coaching xxx and I thought my primary role would be as a coach

Re: o:::kay you just said my primary role would be a [coach

Ri: [yeah

Re: so do you think that the distinction between coaching and being a player playing for the team when needed do you think that this distinction was clear to the team?

Ri: u::m I don't think so a::nd yeah u::m I felt like that was me when I first started playing when I began to lose control over the team and the games and that kind of thing (3.0) but there were issues slightly before that like I was never in charge of ↑picking the teams that was always Owen's job which I never really understood I mean again I should have talked >to him about it< but it's ↑I find looking back that it's all about lack of communication on my part for a while certain things happened in a way if that makes sense

## 2.5 Richard about Derek's basketball experience

*Ri: Richard, Re: Researcher*

Re: oh about Derek

Ri: [okay

Re: did he take the initiative to contribute more and more to the team talk while you were there?

Ri: (2.0) ((hesitating)) yes yes he did,

Re: how did he decide to gradually contribute more and more?

Ri: u:m he started in our first year training sessions (.) so::: I would u:m run a drill and I knew he was very experienced and >he had< a very similar I mean basketball education to me u:m he was brought up in pretty much exactly the same system as I was but he also played once for the regional team as a child that kind of thing so:: he had a very similar knowledge base to me so if I'd run a drill I felt like he'd know (.) and then, I could even ↑first I would say Derek what do you think? do you have to add to this? and then he'd contribute something and then what I'd do would be to literally (sit with him down) with half of the team and he'd run it on the opposite side and then I'd run it on my side because at times I was ( ) running drills with 25-26 [people

Re: [yeah I see

Ri: u:m it was actually very convenient (.) ↑then the other thing is that I always thought Derek is a great person to have on the team

### Appendix 3: Screenshots

*Screenshot 1: Screenshot of Derek (top right corner) when doing the “let it go” gesture from Example 9*



*Screenshot 2: Screenshot of Andrew clapping in the background when Jackson gives instructions. Taken from Example 13*



Screenshot 3: Screenshot of fieldnotes referring to Example 4

• 69 → 1 (adds) + 00 (adds) → 7 (≈ 1) → 03 → 08  
 → 03 → 00 (team out)

(time-out: (score: 20-26 - less than ~~at~~ <sup>a minute</sup> to the end of 1<sup>st</sup> q)

• end of 1<sup>st</sup> quarter: score 23-29  
 IMG - STEER

7-00 → 1-169 → 1 (S+3 talking) → 03 (moves closer to 0) → 069 → 1 → 00 (lets go, lets go Warwick on 3)

• 2<sup>nd</sup> q: 23-29 - starting 5: 3, 10, 69, 1, 21 (10, 5, 7 out)

• 3: "Shaq, wow" → giving ~~inst~~ indicating to Shaq when he's about to get in  
 69 00, 21, 7 switch switch with 69, 3, 10.  
 MVI - 0269

• 69 "let go T...x - where's our defence?" + encourages the team after a ~~good~~ successful offence

Note: The notes at the bottom of the screenshot indicate that Jackson, Derek and Richard substituted Owen, Nathan and Andrew respectively.

Screenshot 4: Screenshot of fieldnotes referring to Example 6

time-out: 69 (small talking)  
with 7 and 00

score: 74-58 (almost 4 min to the end of the <sup>game</sup>)  
69 → 00 → 69 (two 2 dribble) → 1-00  
→ 1 (200 → 01-000 (let's go let's  
go team on 3 team))

• 3 - not playing - giving instructions ("easy  
easy") + "yeah Papa" "settle settle settle  
get a good shot"  
+ "set up" "set up"  
- "set" set the play up, come on xxx"  
# 2 advice given to 00 and 5

• 1. 05 to the end, score 79-63  
• Final score: 81-63

Note: My notes indicating that Derek was giving instruction to Owen and Jay are seen in the middle of the image.

#### Appendix 4: Table of basketball terminology

Bench	The sitting area for the coaches and players who aren't currently on the court. Both team's benches are located on the side line at opposite ends of the court.
Big Man	A coach will often use the term 'big man' when referring to one of the taller players on the team. Usually the centre or the power forward.
Block (court area)	There are two small rectangles located on the outside of the key that coaches will refer to as the block.
Box out	After a shot has been taken, coaches will encourage their players to box out. This means making contact with the player they're guarding and establishing position between them and the basket to put themselves in the best position to secure a rebound.
Centre	Also known as the '5'. The tallest player on the team is often referred to as the 'centre'. This player's main responsibilities are to secure rebounds and defend the paint.
Defence	The team on defence is the team without possession of the basketball. While on defence, the team will attempt to prevent the opposition from scoring in their basket.
Dip	The process of bringing the basketball down to a lower starting point before shooting. Dipping the basketball allows

players to have a consistent starting point and also adds power and momentum to the shot.

Drop	A pick-and-roll defence in which the defender guarding the screener greets the ball-handler at or below the level of the screen until the ball-handler's defender gets back in front of his original man.
Elbow	The court area where the free-throw line meets the side of the three-second lane.
Foul	A violation of the rules, usually involving illegal contact with a player of the opposition.
Free-throw	An uncontested shot 15 feet from the basket directly in front. Most free-throws are awarded to players who have been fouled while shooting. Each free-throw is worth one point.
Hedge	A 'hedge' is a common pick-and-roll defence. It involves the screener's defender stepping out to meet the ball-handler and force them to dribble wide while the on-ball defender recovers.
High post	High post is the area along the free throw line and both elbows.
Lay-up	A close-range shot taken when attacking the basket. Usually involves the shooter banking the basketball off the backboard.

Low post	The area which is near the block, on either side of the lane to about halfway up the lane towards the free throw line.
Man-to-man defence	A defence that involves all players matching up and taking responsibility of guarding one player on the opposition team. It is a team defence and players are required to help each other, but all players have a specific opponent they're defending.
Mismatch	When an offensive player has an advantage over the defender that's currently guarding them. When this happens, the offense will usually look to isolate this matchup on the wing or in the low post.
Offense	The team on offense is the team with possession of the basketball. While on offense, the team will attempt to score in their opponent's basket.
Overtime	If a game is tied after the end of regulation, teams will often play a 5-minute overtime period to determine a winner.
Penetration	Penetrating is when an offensive player is able to dribble towards the basket through the defence.
Pick-and-roll	A common and effective two-person offensive action involving an offensive player setting a screen for the player in possession of the basketball. The screener will then roll towards the basket looking to receive a pass from the ball-handler.

Point Guard	Also known as the '1'. One of the five positions on the court. The point guard is usually tasked with dribbling the basketball up the court, initiating the offense, and controlling the tempo of the game.
Power Forward	Also known as the '4'. One of the 5 positions of the court. Power forwards play a role similar to that of centre. They typically play offensively with their backs towards the basket and position themselves defensively under the basket in a zone defence or against the opposing power forward in man-to-man defence. The power forward position entails a variety of responsibilities, one of which is rebounding.
Rebound	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To obtain the ball after a missed field goal attempt.</li> <li>2. The act of rebounding.</li> </ol>
Screen	A screen involves a player setting a stationary block on their teammate's defender. The goal of a screen is to give their teammate space that may lead to an open shot or simply to receive a pass that puts them at an advantage.
Shooting Guard	Also known as the '2'. One of the 5 positions on the court. This player is usually the team's best shooter from the perimeter.
Side line	The boundary lines that separate the playing area from out-of-bounds on the side of the court.
Small forward	Also known as the '3'. One of the five positions on the court. Small forwards are known for their versatility as they're able to contribute in multiple areas. They're able to rebound the

basketball while also capable of dribbling the basketball up the court if necessary.

Three-point play	A three-point play is when a player scores a two-point basket while being fouled. They then go to the free-throw line and if they make the bonus free-throw it's called a three-point play.
Timeout	Coaches have a certain number of timeouts per quarter or half depending on the league they are coaching in. Timeouts are used to rest players, motivate the team, make substitutions, change strategy, etc.
Tip-off	The jump ball that starts every basketball game.
Transition	The term 'transition' is used to describe the movement from offense to defence or defence to offense after a change of possession.
Triangle offense	An offensive strategy with the goal of exchanging three (sometimes all five) positions, creating spacing among players and allowing each one to pass to four teammates. The most important feature of the triangle offense is the side line triangle created by the centre in the low post, a forward at the wing, and a guard at the corner; the other guard stands at the top of the key and the weak-side forward on the weak-side high post, together forming the "two-man game". Every pass and cut has a purpose, and each is dictated by the movements of the opposing defence.

Zone A defensive strategy that coaches will use which requires defenders to guard specific areas of the court instead of opposition players.

### **Sources**

*250+ Basketball terms all coaches and players must know.* Retrieved from <https://www.basketballforcoaches.com/basketball-terms/>.

*Glossary of basketball terms.* Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary\\_of\\_basketball\\_terms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_basketball_terms).

*The basketball dictionary.* Retrieved from <https://medium.com/the-basketball-dictionary>.

## Appendix 5: Table of transcription conventions

### Speech sounds

wo:rd	lengthen sound – the number of colons show the duration a full stop marks a falling intonation
?	a question marks a rising intonation
,	a comma marks a slightly rising intonation but is also used when the intonation contour is hearable as incomplete
↑word	sharp rise in pitch
↓word	sharp fall in pitch
<u>underlined</u>	stress
CAPS	louder talk
°word°	talk which is quieter or whispered
>word<	talk which is noticeably faster than the surrounding talk

### Contiguous or simultaneous talk

=word	latching – no discernible space between two turns of talk
[word	start of simultaneous talk
word]	end of simultaneous talk

### Pauses

(.)	very short pause
(0.3), (1.2), etc.	timed pause in seconds

### Problems of hearing or comprehension

(words)	problematic talk, with possible hearing
( )	talk which cannot be understood for transcription
(words)/(words)	alternative possible hearings

### **Adding transcriber's information**

((word))	transcriber's comment, description
→	highlighted feature in transcript
..	lines omitted
=	placed at the end of one line of a transcript and a later line by the same speaker; this indicates continued talk that has been split for typographic reasons

### **Source**

Liddicoat, A. J. (2021). *An Introduction to Conversation Analysis* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Bloomsbury.

**Centre for Applied Linguistics**  
**Application for Ethical Approval**  
**MPhil/PhD Students**

**A Information**

<b>Name of student:</b>	Anastasia Stavridou
<b>Date of registration:</b>	28 August 2018
<b>Project title:</b>	"Emergent leadership and sports: exploring the case of a leaderless basketball team."
<b>Supervisor:</b>	Dr Stephanie Schnurr and Dr Daniel Dauber
<b>CRB Clearance:</b>	N/A

**B Texts**

*If your research does not include any textual data, please confirm this below and go to Section C*

*If all or some of your texts are not in the public domain, please explain what steps you have taken to obtain relevant permission for their collection and use. Please also complete any relevant parts of Sections C and D.*

*If some or all of your texts are in the public domain, give details of this and explain what steps you have taken to obtain any relevant permissions. When this permission has been obtained, please pass a copy to the Research Secretary to be added to your file. (You may not need to complete Sections C and D.)*

My data will derive from observations, face-to-face interviews and audio or video recordings that I will conduct with the team players. Firstly, I will contact the participants and ask them whether they would be interested in participating in my research. Once they have agreed, they will be provided with the Participant Information Sheet (which includes all the details of the research, such as data collection, the data protection and usage, the benefits of participating in the research, alongside any potential risks/side effects/discomforts that may arise) and the Consent Form which has to be signed.

**C Participants**

**Details**

*Please describe the participants in the research including ages of children and young people where appropriate. Also specify if any participants are vulnerable e.g. as a result of learning disability.*

The participants contributing to my research will be players of a university-level basketball team with various socio-cultural background. It is not expected that participants will be vulnerable.

**Respect for participants' rights and dignity**

*How will the fundamental rights and dignity of participants be respected, e.g. confidentiality, respect of cultural and religious values?*

All participants will be treated with equality and their data will be handled with confidentiality, anonymity and respect. This entails that all participant names will be pseudonymized and no data will be used without participants' consent. In addition, participants will be informed that they will be free to withdraw at any stage of the research in case they feel stressed, anxious or uncomfortable.

**Privacy and Confidentiality**

*How will confidentiality be assured? Please address all aspects of research including protection of data records, thesis, reports/papers that might arise from the study.*

Data will derive from observations, face-to-face interviews and audio and/or video recordings that I will conduct with the team players. Thus, confidentiality will be assured by changing all names that appear in the all these data sources. Also, any references to the club's name will be replaced by pseudonym. This entails that I will not reveal any information that may give away participants' identities or those of their basketball club.

It should be clarified that any pseudonyms will be used when there is reference to other basketball clubs or opponent teams in order to avoid any link with them.

In the case that I obtain the permission of the team to use data from their WhatsApp group, confidentiality will be assured by changing participants' names, as well. Finally, in the case that I use screenshots from video recordings in my thesis, all faces will be blurred so that no personal data is disclosed.

**D Consent**

***Will prior informed consent be obtained?***

- from participants***    **YES**
- from others***        **NO**

***Explain how this will be obtained. Provide details of the relevant procedures and any issues associated with them.***

Participants are initially contacted with regards to my research and its purposes and they are asked if they would be interested to take part. The first point of contact is done through emails.

***If verbal rather than written consent is to be obtained, give reasons for this.***

N/A

***If prior informed consent is not to be obtained, give reasons for this. If the research involves observation where consent will not be obtained, specify situations to be observed and how cultural/religious sensitivities and individual privacy will be respected.***

Participants have been contacted in advance and they will be given the consent form after they agreed to participate in the research. Nonetheless, I will clarify to the participants involved that no data will be analysed until I receive their consent.

***Will participants be explicitly informed of the student's role/status? If not, give reasons for this.***

Yes, they will be.

***Will deception be used? If so, provide a clear justification for this and details of the method of debriefing.***

No.

***Will participants be informed of the use to which data will be put?***

Yes, participants will know that the data will be collected for the purposes of my PhD research and for any other academic use, such as potential publications, workshops or conferences presentations.

***Will participants be told they have the option to withdraw from the study without penalty?***

Yes, participants will be aware of that and they will be assured that they are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and this will not affect them in any way.

***Attach a copy of all consent forms to be used in the study.***

#### E Security and protection

##### Data storage

***Where will data be stored and what measures will be taken to ensure security?***

Data will be stored in my secure university server as soon as I collect them.

***For how long after the completion will the data be stored? (All data must be kept at least until the examination process is complete.)***

Data will be stored for at least 10 years after any publication on which this data is based.

#### F Protection

**Describe the nature and degree of any risk (psychological as well as physical) to participants and the steps that will be taken to deal with this.**

Participants may feel stress or anxiety after a tough training or a lost game, thus, they may change their minds. This will not be a problem because I will reassure them that they are free to withdraw at any point if they do not feel comfortable. Of course, related data will be irrevocably destroyed as soon as participants have withdrawn.

**Identify any potential risks to the researcher and the procedures that will be in place for dealing with these.**

I might deal with some issues related to well-being, such as stress or anxiety while I am waiting for participants to give their consent. In this case, I will contact my trusted supervisors for appropriate guidelines, support and courage.

**How will participants' well-being be considered in the study?**

I do not expect that participants will be exposed to any risk by taking part in my research, since their involvement is rather minimal. In the case that they do feel any discomfort, they will be aware that they can pause or postpone their participation or even withdraw without any consequences affecting them. Moreover, I will provide them with the contact details of my supervisors so that they have a point of contact for any issues that may arise.

**How will you ensure that your research and its reporting are honest, fair and respectful to others?**

No data will be manipulated or counterfeited for the purpose of the research. Everything reported back will be based on the original data collected.

**How will you ensure that the research and the evidence resulting from it are not misused?**

All the data collected will be used for the purpose of my own research. I will be the only one with access to the raw data, while my supervisors will have access to the analysis of data. Participants will be aware of the contingencies of such a study when they sign the consent form, which can be future publications or workshops/seminars. In any case, their participation is appreciated, thus they will be treated with respect so that their identities remain private.

## G Ethical dilemmas

**How will you address any ethical dilemmas that may arise in your research? Please give details of the protocol agreed with your supervisor for reporting and action.**

In the case that ethical dilemmas arise and I do not know how I can deal with them, I will contact my trusted supervisors and try to solve them. If the dilemma is tricky and controversial, I will also consult the research ethics advisor of the Centre for Applied Linguistics, Prof. Johannes Angermüller.

H Authorship

*Have you and your supervisor discussed and agreed the basis for determining authorship of published work other than your thesis? Give brief details of this.*

No, we have not discussed about any authorship of published work.

I Other issues

*Please specify other issues not discussed above, if any, and how you will address them.*

J Signatures

<b>Research student</b>	<b>Date</b>
Anastasia Stavridou	20.01.2019
<b>Supervisor</b>	<b>Date</b>

K Action

Action taken

**Approved**

**Approved with modification or conditions – see Notes below**

**Action deferred – see Notes below**

**[Where applicable] CRB clearance reported to HSSREC**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
Angermuller	
<b>Signature</b>	<b>23/01/2019</b>





## Participant Information Leaflet

**Study Title:** "Emergent leadership and sports: exploring the case of a leaderless basketball club."

**Investigator(s):** Anastasia Stavridou

### Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

Please ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

### Who is organising and funding the study?

This research is conducted as part of my doctoral studies and the study is not funded by any external body.

### What is the study about?

The purpose of the study is to explore how leadership is enacted within the players of a basketball team by observing their training sessions and their time-outs during games.

### What would taking part involve?

In the case you agree to participate in the research, you will be asked to give your consent to observe and record some parts of your training sessions and your time-outs during the games. In addition, you might be invited to participate in a follow-up interview.

### What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

If the team is interested, I could deliver a workshop not only to your team, but also to the basketball club in general, where I share some findings of my research. This might help the team players understand better their own communication patterns and gain insights on how to improve their leadership strategies.

### What are the possible disadvantages, side effects or risks, of taking part in this study?

There are no possible disadvantages, side effects, risks and/or any discomforts for the participants. Data collected will be treated with confidentiality, anonymity and respect towards all participants. In any case, you will be free to withdraw at any point if you feel any sort of discomfort or inconvenience.

### **Expenses and payments**

Participants will not receive any reimbursement for their participation in the study.

### **Will my taking part be kept confidential?**

Participants' data will be kept confidential and no real names will be revealed at any point. Any names, or references to former players of the team/other basketball clubs/coaches, will be changed into pseudonyms and all data will be safely stored at my secure university server. The analysis of the data will be shared with my supervisors and they will not be accessible to any third party.

### **What will happen to the data collected about me?**

As a publicly-funded organisation, we have to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information from people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, such as this, we will use your data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the research study.

The university is committed to protecting the rights of individuals in line with data protection legislation. Data gathered will be stored in a secure university server right after the collection and it will be kept for 10 years after the study has finished.

Research data will be pseudonymised as quickly as possible after data collection. This means all direct and indirect identifiers will be removed from the research data and will be replaced with a participant number. The key to identification will be stored separately and securely to the research data to safeguard your identity. All data gathered will be stored at a secure university sever accessible only by me. In any case, the participant is free to withdraw at any stage with no further consequences if any unforeseen implications arise.

### **Data Sharing**

Raw data will be used for my study, which will not be shared with any other party other than me. I will be the only person having access to the data; my supervisors will have access to the analysis of data but not the authentic data per se.

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. The University of Warwick has in place policies and procedures to keep your data safe. Data will be stored at a secure university server and will be accessible only by me (i.e. the researcher).

This data may also be used for future research following review and approval by an independent Research Ethics Committee (or a journal reviewer), and subject to your consent at the outset of this research project.

### **What will happen if I don't want to carry on being part of the study?**

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate will not affect you in any way. If you decide to take part in the study, you will need to sign a consent form, which states that you have given your consent to participate.

If you agree to participate, you may nevertheless withdraw from the study at any time without affecting you in any way.

You have the right to withdraw from the study completely and decline any further contact by me and/or other departmental staff members, such as my supervisors.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible and keep the data secure in line with the University's Information and Data Compliance policies.

**What will happen to the results of the study?**

The findings will be used for the purpose of my current PhD study and will be kept for at least 10 years. They may be used for publications or workshops conducted by the researcher. Participants will have the option to request a short report about the study's findings written in lay language.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by Prof. Johannes Angermuller, the ethics advisor of the Centre for Applied Linguistics of the University of Warwick.

**Who should I contact if I want further information?**

Chief Investigator: Anastasia Stavridou  
PhD Candidate- Intercultural  
Communication  
Centre for Applied Linguistics  
University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL  
United Kingdom

Study supervised by: Dr Stephanie Schnurr  
Associate Professor  
Centre for Applied Linguistics  
S1.93 Social Sciences Building, University of  
Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL  
United Kingdom

Dr Daniel Dauber  
Associate Professor  
Centre for Applied Linguistics  
S1.79 Social Sciences Building, University of  
Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL  
United Kingdom

**Who should I contact if I wish to make a complaint?**

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm you might have suffered will be addressed. Please address your complaint to the person below, who is a senior University of Warwick official entirely independent of this study.

**Head of Research Governance**  
Research & Impact Services  
University House  
University of Warwick  
Coventry  
CV4 8UW  
Email: [researchgovernance@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:researchgovernance@warwick.ac.uk)  
Tel: 024 76 522746

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact

our Data Protection Officer, Anjeli Bajaj, Information and Data Director who will investigate the matter: [DPO@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:DPO@warwick.ac.uk).

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not lawful you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

**Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Leaflet**

