Constructing the mind-world relationship:
The case of domestic labour in post-apartheid South Africa

Lebohang Dhlamini & Amy Jo Murray

2009

Abstract

This article explores how people rhetorically position themselves through constructing the mind-world relationship in the context of domestic labour in post-apartheid South Africa. Ten individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with five black employees and five white employers. These interviews were transcribed using the conventions of conversation analysis. Both groups engaged in particular rhetorical strategies, with differing effects. The employees constructed their own mind to account for their context and to position themselves as having some degree of self-determination. The employers externally motivated their practices by constructing their context and the minds of others to avoid internal accountability and produce self-justification. The analysis provides insight into ideologies that are present within the race relations of post-apartheid South Africa.

Literature review

South Africa, as a racially diverse nation, is embedded in a history of segregation, racial conflicts and power struggles, many of which have been crystallized within the domestic labour context (Gaitskell, Kimble, Macohachie, & Unterhalter, 1983). Gaitskell et al. (1983, p.88) further note that "the racist and colonial character of the relationship is very strong…[and resonates] with the overall structures of racial domination in South African society". The system of apartheid also placed whites with a distinct economic advantage through policies and practices, which further accentuated political and social distance between blacks and whites (MacDonald, 2006).

In his exploration of South Africa's racialised history, MacDonald (2006) shows how whites manipulated racial diversity to place themselves socially, politically and economically above all other races within the 'logic' of white supremacy. However, despite this produced supremacy, whites were also deeply dependent on the black population to carry out much of the manual labour within the work force. Because blacks were the majority of the population and because they were economically disadvantaged by their social and political position, black labour was (and continues to be) seen as disposable (Brown & Reynolds, 1994; Cock, 1981). This has led to a trend of the exploitation of black labour by white employers in diverse labour settings, specifically that of domestic labour (Brown & Reynolds, 1994; Davies, 1989; MacDonald, 2006).

Traditionally, domestic labour has been predominantly performed by unskilled black women for middle-class white women. In her review of narratives of black female domestic labourers, Davies (1989, p. 92) concludes that the relationship is a "conflicted relationship between workers and employers, particularly black women and white women". This conflict can be viewed as originating from different racialised socialisations, which are embedded in power differentials based on a dynamic interaction between class, race and gender (Gaitskell et al., 1983). Historically, the relationship between whites and blacks in South Africa is one of master and servant. This is a relationship in which whites are socialized into the prevailing ideological order while blacks are perceived as inferior (MacDonald, 2006). Similarly, domestic labour has been characterized by much dominance on the part of whites and inferiority on the part of blacks and these ideologies stem from a history of racial segregation.

However, within the context of post-apartheid South Africa, much is supposed to have changed, especially with regards to relations between blacks and whites. Through South Africa's liberal constitution, democracy has been established by providing citizenship to all members of all races, thereby separating the notions of 'race' and 'citizen' (MacDonald, 2006). Although this political manoeuvre has occurred, there are still economic and class differences which remain embedded in South Africa's social structures, many of which are synonymous with race. As a result, many of the previous disparities between races still exist as a product of South Africa's history and due to continuing class differences. However, it could be argued that although these disparities still exist, they are experienced and managed differently than in the past due to the introduction of democracy and its associated institutions.

Previously, domestic labourers were ignored in the drafting of many labour-related laws, partially due to the difficulty in regulating work which takes place in a private space such as a residence and because of the personal nature of the domestic labour relationship (Brown & Reynolds, 1994; King, 2007). Although domestic labour employees have been given employment rights through legislation such as the Employment Equity Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2000, these acts have failed to empower such marginalised employees (King, 2007). Davies (1989, p.94) notes that narratives that have been reviewed in her article "reveal the magnitude of institutionalized inequities in work and how these influence one's daily life". Thus employees find themselves in the difficult and ambiguous position of having employment rights but not being empowered to enforce them.

This is further complicated by the racial and class differences which exist in domestic labour and drive much of the practices or norms within the relationship. This context permits an atmosphere of dependence on the part of the domestic worker. Dickey (2000) describes this tension within the relationship as to be expected because of the workers' closeness to the family and class differences that are evident in the home. King (2007, p. 27) asserts that "the intimacy, the daily reaffirmation of racial and class differences and the deferential manner expected all serve to compel the servant to see himself/herself through the 'gaze' of their employer". All of these factors are interlinked and play a role in the domestic labour context. These racial and class differences reproduce social practices of the past, despite improvements in the legal rights of employees.

King (2007) argues that many domestic labourers respond to these tensions by exhibiting what could be interpreted as 'passivity'. This would include not confronting employers when they are wronged, not seeking legal redress when their employment rights have been abused and not joining forces with other domestic labourers to bring about change in their situation. This passivity could be due to the employees' recognition that job shortages and high levels of unemployment make job retention necessary, even when working conditions are not favourable. In other words, passivity could be the resignation that poor working conditions are better than not having work at all. Another interpretation of passivity could be something similar to passive resistance, where wrongs are silently endured but are also resisted in some way or another. It could be argued that this is a form of self-determination, where employees are not allowing employers to have complete control over their working context or relationship.

Whites in post-apartheid South Africa are also faced with managing a precarious social position related to power differentials between themselves and black people. Much of the power which is available to white employers originated because of the racist laws of the apartheid government. In addition, the domestic labour relationship takes place within the home of the employer. Because the space is private and is the territory of the white employer, white employers have historically treated their employees as one of their possessions (King, 2007).

MacDonald (2006, p.5) argues that South Africa "now possess standard liberal democratic institutions - open elections, individual rights, equality under the law, constitutional

government, free political activity and much more". In light of these political ideologies, whites are caught in a dilemma between, on the one hand, benefiting from past and present racial prejudices and, on the other hand, not seeming to abuse or misuse their power while conforming to the tolerant and liberal values of the country's constitution. King (2007, p. 17) argues that "overt racism has been challenged by the removal of apartheid, however it cannot be assumed that racial prejudices have been completely erased from the social practices of the South African society". It is argued that much overt racism has been replaced by modern racism, which includes different forms and content within talk to avoid the appearance of prejudice (Billig, 1991, 1996).

Because of the long history and salience of race within South Africa, there are also many stereotypes which exist around the topic of domestic labour employers and employees (King, 2007). Some stereotypes about employees include that they are lazy, that they steal from the employers, they lie, they are not skilled or educated, that they are disempowered and that they are invasive. Stereotypes about employers include issues such as being exploitative, underpaying employees, being bossy and abusive, giving inferior food to employees, not caring about their employee and maintaining social distance. It could be argued that both employers and employees are aware of and can orient themselves in relation to stereotypes which exist about themselves and their counterpart.

Durrheim (under review) argues for the possibility of implicit stereotyping, in which race is never made explicit in talk. It could be argued that conversely, when speaking about matters which include race, one is aware of implicit stereotypes which exist about one's self and the other. It is argued in this paper that South Africans are aware of stereotypes, both implicit and explicit, which exist about themselves and their counterparts in the domestic labour relationship. Therefore, both blacks and whites are caught in a dilemma of not appearing irrational by using stereotypes and also must not act in a way which fulfils stereotypes about themselves.

One strategy that is available to both blacks and whites in post-apartheid South Africa regarding orienting themselves in relation to stereotypes about domestic labour is that of the construction of the mind-world relationship. Edwards (2004, p. 31) defines this as "the way that mind and world are generally played against each other, in a conceptual and rhetorical trade-off between the world 'out there' and the mental world 'within'". According to

Edwards (2004), by focussing on talk related to race, one is not attempting to discern the 'true' feelings, attitudes or opinions of the speaker. Instead one is attempting to see how race is (or is not) constructed. In addition, ambiguities and inconsistencies which may be expressed are not viewed as anomalies, but instead are viewed as performing activity in talk. Thus, in analysing talk, one has an "interest in how talk works, as an arena of activity, as *managing* these kinds of concerns about mind and world rather than expressing them" (Edwards, 2004, p. 33 original emphasis).

In order to situate talk within wider historical and societal issues, it is important to draw on the notion of ideology and rhetoric through examining common sense which emerges and is produced in talk (Billig, 1991, 1996; Billig et al., 1988). Billig (1991, p. 1) argues that common sense as a cultural product is a form of ideology that "not only has a wider history, but that it also possesses present functions, which relate to patterns of domination and power. In using common-sense notions, people will find themselves repeating the assumptions of their times". By using a rhetorical approach, which focuses on the argumentative nature of talk when looking at common sense, it can be shown how one determines or justifies the self against criticisms of the other, both in terms of actual and potential criticism (Billig, 1991).

The present study investigated talk around the topic of domestic labour among white employers and black employees in post-apartheid South Africa. This focus was chosen to address the paucity of research focusing on areas unrelated to the exploitation of black employees by white employers. It was also chosen in order to explore how people talk about this controversial topic. This is especially salient due to the social transformation which has been aimed for since the end of the apartheid era. As has been argued above, both black employees and white employers are caught in ambivalent positions, as their history presents them with roles that their present situation contradicts or negates. In the discussion below, we focus on the utterances of a small sample of domestic labour employers and employees to explore how they position themselves in post-apartheid South Africa within the domestic labour relationship using constructions of the mind-world relationship.

Methodology

One-on-one semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with white employers and black employees within a domestic labour context. The aim of the interviews was to explore talk around the issue of domestic labour, with a specific focus on underlying racial issues. Ethnomethodological theory, methods and techniques were used to direct the design and implementation of the interviews and the analysis thereof (Baker, 2003; Potter, 1996).

Sample

The sample consisted of ten participants, which were comprised of five black employees and five white employers. The sample was purposively selected using criterion sampling, as is described by (Patton, 1990). It was decided that there should be no employment connection between participants because of ethical considerations based on the unequal or dependant nature of the relationship. A convenient date and location for the interview was agreed upon with each participant.

Data collection process

Open-ended semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. The interviewers were trained students enrolled in a research psychology Masters program. The interviews lasted roughly forty five minutes. Data collection was considered within the context of 'the interview', where the "self is a process, ever negotiated and accomplished in the interaction" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 664). Thus in this study, "interviews [were] treated not so much as techniques for getting at information…but more as in-their-own-right-analyzable instances of talk-in-interaction" (Baker, 2003, p. 396). Therefore, the data collection and analysis viewed the interview as a form of social interaction which both the interviewer and the interviewee participate in and co-construct (Baker, 2003; Fontana & Frey, 2000; Silverman, 2005).

Prior to being interviewed, participants were informed of the nature and purpose of the study. Issues around participation, such as voluntariness, the risks and benefits of the study and other matters related to informed consent were discussed and all participants were asked to sign informed consent forms. Participants were invited to address any concerns about their interview with either the interviewer or with the supervising member of staff from the School of Psychology at UKZN.

Data analysis

The data consisted of ten interviews that were tape recorded. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim, using conventions adapted from Silverman (2005) (see Appendix). Analysis was incorporated from the time of data collection through various methods suggested by (Miles & Huberman, 1994), such as contact summary sheets, coding and memoing, which allowed for points of interest and themes to emerge early in the research process. The transcripts were also coded using NVivo software.

The data was analysed using an ethnomethodological approach, as explained by Baker (2003) and Potter (1996). The analysis was situated through the conventions of conversation analysis (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996; Wetherell & Potter, 1992), attending to the critiques of Antaki, Billig, Edwards and Potter (2003) related to what constitutes poor discourse analysis. According to Potter (1996), conversation analysis specifically applies notions of ethnomethodology such as indexicality and reflexivity by understanding them in terms of conversational sequences and the interactional work performed by utterances respectively.

However, it is also considered important to position utterances which occur through talk-in-interaction within the wider context of post-apartheid South Africa, specifically focusing on the ongoing justification and hegemony of unequal race relations. This approach to analysis emerges from the call from Wetherell (1998) for a more eclectic approach wherein there is engagement between the ethnomethodological and post-structuralist traditions. Such an analysis is "concerned with members' methods and the logic of accountability while describing also the collective and social patterning of background normative conceptions" (Wetherell, 1998, p. 405). This will be achieved by focusing on ideology and rhetoric that occurs in the common sense talk of participants (Billig, 1991, 1996).

Wetherell and Potter (1992, p. 149) argue that ideology can be defined as "discourse that re-presents social products as natural products". The notion of naturalising social products is particularly significant in the present data analysis as forms of social action are presented as naturally occurring through the accomplishment of accounting for such action. Therefore, there is a need to incorporate the notion of mind-world relationships (Edwards, 2004) within an analysis of the data to develop an understanding of how certain positions, identities and actions are justified and made accountable rhetorically.

Analysis and discussion

According to Edwards (2004, p. 34), "the discourse of mind-world relations includes offering one's thoughts, opinions, policies and ideas as constrained by the nature of the world". Within this analysis, we will consider the use of mind-world relations to produce or achieve certain effects. The strategies used by black employees will be contrasted with those of white employers. It will be argued that black employees largely attempt to rhetorically produce themselves as self-determined, showing that they are in control of their life and working context to some degree. White employers, on the other hand, attempt to construct themselves as justified in relation to their employees and their context. Both of these sets of rhetoric are oriented in some way to the common sense and stereotypes which exist within the topic of domestic labour. For each of the extracts, 'R' represents the researcher and 'I' represents the interviewee.

From the internal to the external: Producing self-determination

In extract 1, the interviewee gives a description of eating practices within her domestic labour context, giving various accounts of why the employers and employees eat at different times (lines 5-6, lines 8-11, line 14). She rhetorically constructs the mental state of the employees (her and her co-worker) as having power in order to argue against a situation in which they could seem to be determined by their employers.

Extract 1 (employee interview1)

1 I: The boss and the madam, they eat one o'clock, we eat two o'clock.

2 R: Oh, they eat at one o'clock,

3 I: Yes.

4 R: Why do you eat at two o'clock?

5 I: Because, he said "this time for one o'clock is time for them to eat, must .hhh

6   (2.) give them food first".

7 R: Okay.

8 I: We never eat one time because we're waiting for them to finish and then we

9   take the, the plate and put it in the sink, we wash it. And then we take out our

10   food and we're going where, anywhere where we want to sit, not force to sit,

11   not sit there-not sit there, we sit <u>any</u>where.

12   R: [Oh, okay! But okay, that's interesting. But what do, why do you think that

13		they eat at one and you must eat later? (.)
14	I:	We choose by ourself to take this time, already the, our lunch is one o'clock!]
15	R:	Okay.
16	I:	We're changing by ourself because we see that .hhh, it's-it's not nice time hhh
17		to eat the time they're eating because .hhh they, ( ) hhh stand up early and we
18		are scared to to to sit because there's, already the boss is standing out and he's
19		going to work and we're still <u>sitting</u>.
20	R:	[and you
21	I:	[We just give the time to go out and then we're sitting, how long ( ), we like to
22		sit.
23	R:	Okay! (hehe)
24	I:	We decide by ourself.

At the beginning of this extract the employers are labelled as "the boss and the madam" (line 1), clearly positioning them as having authority and power. These are labels that gained currency during the apartheid era and their use in this context echoes the history that serves as the background to domestic labour. This clearly positions the employee as being under the authority of white employers. The racial separateness of apartheid is also reproduced through the use of pronouns such as "we" and "they", which are used throughout the extract. These pronouns rhetorically construct the groups and oppose them against each other, implying that it is 'us against them'.

There is a progression in extract 1 regarding the various accounts of the respective eating times of the employers and employees. A number of contextual descriptions are given which initially account for these differences. The interviewee states that herself and the other employee eat later than "the boss and the madam" because "he said" (line 5), implying the situation was decided for the employees in a command-like manner. In addition, by the interviewee ventriloquating the employer, she is constructing the employer as powerful and able to create a hierarchy of their needs, as is seen when she says that she has been told to "give them food first" (line 6).

Next the employee accounts for the different eating times as a result of some sort of dependence on the employer, as is seen in her utterance of "because we're waiting for them" (line 8). Both of the accounts given thus far position the employees as disempowered and as

determined by their employers. However, the interviewee goes on to say that they can eat "anywhere" (lines 10, 11), emphasizing this point through intonation. This positions the employees as having more power, as being able to choose *where* to eat their lunch, even if they cannot choose *when* to eat, positioning themselves as having some degree of freedom in terms of self-determination.

However, the researcher then asks for an account of the different eating times (lines 12-13), which the interviewee could interpret as calling for an account of the limitations of the independence which has just been argued for. In response, the interviewee gives a number of psychological actions, such as "we choose" (line 14), "we're changing" (line 16) and "we decide" (line 24), all of which position the employees as having freedom and agency in their situation. This is emphasized through the repetition of "by ourself" (lines 14, 16, 24), which follows each of the actions listed above and rhetorically achieves a claim of independence from the rule of the employers. Thus by constructing certain versions of the employees' minds (which positions them as able to "choose", "change" and "decide"), the interviewee constructs a version of the world in which she has power, agency and freedom in relation to her white employers.

While the interviewee in extract 1 uses psychological states to position herself as powerful and proactive in her context, the interviewee in extract 2 constructs her mind to account for her lack of interaction with her employer. Although the lack of interaction could be interpreted as passive and disempowered, the interviewee rhetorically uses mental states to show that she is not being inactive but instead her situation is not troublesome to her.

Extract 2 (employee interview 2)

1 I: It's just that with the ((employer's name)) when they leave the house and leave
2   us they close the gate and they don't leave the keys behind. So even that
3   doesn't worry me because I'm never in any hurry or expecting any visitors.
4 R: So why do you think that is, the fact that she doesn't leave you with the keys?
5 I: I don't know maybe someone stole from her I wouldn't know.
6 R: Ja
7 I: And I've never asked her why she doesn't leave the key. Ever since I started
8   working there she waits for us to arrive then she leaves with the key.
9 R: Hmm what do you think about that, that she locks you in, what do you think

10		about that (.) or feel?
11	I:	At first it worried me that how come she trusts me with her belongings in her
12		house
13	R:	Hmm
14	I:	But at the same time can't leave me with the gate keys because if I finish early
15		I have to wait for her till 2 o'clock or till 3:30 when she comes back with the
16		kids from swimming but it's never occurred to me to ask her, I've never and as
17		time went by I forgot about it
18	R:	Ja
19	I:	and I've never been upset with her for doing that.

The interviewee uses psychological states such as "doesn't worry" (line 3) and "I don't know" (line 5) to rationalize her situation. She gives an account that her employer locks her in but explains that it does not worry her because she is not in a hurry and never expects visitors (line 3). The researcher asks for interpretation of this situation, by framing the question with a mental state of "thinking" (line 4). The interviewee uses the words "I wouldn't know" (line 5), implying that it is something she should not know about and that it is not important for her to know.

The reason given to account for this is that she has "never asked her why" (line 7). A lot of work is being done in this sentence as it situates the interviewee as someone who has the power to ask but has chosen not to approach her employer. The words chosen in this statement position the interviewee differently than if she had said that she *could never* ask her employer about the situation. This would imply restriction in the relationship and the inability to talk to her employer.

Being locked in a house and not addressing it with the employer could be viewed as being inactive and powerless. But by saying "I've never asked her why" (line 7) the participant demonstrates that her mental state is not negatively affected by the situation. The interviewee's mental state is questioned by the researcher in relation to the context by asking what she thinks (line 11) and feels (line 10), which the interviewee may have received as an accusation of passivity. She admits that the situation worried her at first (line 11) but then counter argues by using a 3 part list, which is comprised of "it's never occurred to me" (line 16), "as time went by I forgot about it" (lines16-17) and "I've never been upset with her" (line

19). This positions her as someone who has the power to influence her context but is not significantly psychologically bothered and does not feel the need to do something. Thus her passivity should not be interpreted as being determined by her employer or context but instead should be viewed as self-determination.

From the external to the internal: Producing self-justification

While the above extracts show various strategies used by the black employees to construct themselves as powerful in a seemingly disempowering context, the white employers are faced with a different dilemma. Due to South Africa's history of white dominance and racism, white employers in the post-apartheid era must position themselves as not abusing their power and not being prejudice against other races. The employers use various strategies to manage their position by rhetorically constructing certain versions of the world and of others' minds. In extract 3, the interviewee accounts for why she does not eat with her employee by constructing her life as busy, thereby making her behaviour accountable through external factors and not by any internal prejudice.

Extract 3 (employer interview 1)

1 R: Um so she doesn't eat at the same time as you.

2 I: No.

3 R: Why why do you think that is?

4 I: I don't know just because (.) I don't really have a time where I sit down and <u>eat</u>

5 R: Mm.

6 I: I will usually just <u>grab</u> an apple

7 R: Mm.

8 I: or <u>grab</u> a slice of toast and a cup of coffee and I would sit on my bed and

9   watch some TV and eat it.

10   R: Okay.

11   I: But it wouldn't be

12   (.)

13   anywhere near <u>her</u> just I don't know it's just never worked out that way.

The extract begins by the researcher asking about the eating practices of the interviewee and her employee, to which the interviewee gives a short reply without elaboration. The

researcher probes further by requesting an explanation. The interviewee bases part of her account on expressions of knowing, beginning and ending the account with "I don't know" (lines 4 and 13). This 'not knowing' positions her as not having thought about or planned the separate eating practices. This is emphasised when she says "just because" (line 4), indicating that she cannot account for the situation by drawing on her internal psychology.

The interviewee gives an externalised account for her eating practices. This is achieved by rhetorically constructing her world and life as busy, as is seen when she says that she doesn't "really have a time where I sit down and eat" (line 4). This world of busyness makes it possible and even necessary for her to use 'mobile food' which is readily available, such as "an apple" (line 6), "a slice of toast" (line 8) or a "cup of coffee" (line 8). These items create a three-part list which rhetorically emphasises her busyness. The repetition of "grab" (lines 6 and 8) implies that her eating practices are spontaneous, thereby constructing her actions in a way which implicitly argues against any prejudiced avoidance of contact with her employee. By the interviewee saying that she sits on her bed (a private space) and watches TV (being passive) (lines 8-9), she is constructing herself as needing a well-deserved escape from her active lifestyle.

It is not until line 13 that the employee even features in this account. This is important because it then seems that the interviewee's eating practices are not dependent on the employee, but instead it just happens that she wouldn't be "anywhere near her [employee]" (line 13) during her lunch. This norm is naturalised in that the behaviour is not coming from within the employer but is simply part of the context, as is seen in her utterance of "it's just never worked out that way" (line 696). The interviewee thus positions herself as being passive in the situation as opposed to actively deciding to eat separately from her employee. Therefore the interviewee justifies herself, in that she is not choosing not to eat with her employee (an action which would be internally motivated) but "it's just never worked out that way" (line 696) (an external situation).

The interviewee in extract 4 uses a different strategy to position herself. By constructing the mind of her employee as being favourable to her working context and the employer, the interviewee constructs herself as a tolerant white employer.

Extract 4 (employer interview 2)

1 R: Okay. And how do you think she feels about you guys. It would be nice asking

2   but…

3 I: We, I spoken about it. It's come up in some sort of conversation and naturally

4   she is very happy.

5 R: Okay

6 I: I think hearing how it was for her before, and hearing how she is treated, she

7   basically said she felt like she was a dog eh the way that these people treated

8   her.

9 R: Yes

10 I: And I think over here she must feel like she is a queen.

11 R: Yes.

12 I: He he he ((laughing)) or just about.

13 R: ((inaudible))

14 I: Eh no, no she is made to feel very comfortable and what have you. Eh ya I

15   think she is very very happy.

The researcher initially asks the interviewee to construct the mind of her employee by asking "how do you think she feels about you" (line 1). The interviewee responds by stating that "naturally she is very happy" (lines 3-4). This rhetorically constructs the employee's working context as favourable, thereby implying that she is an ideal employer to work for. In addition, by saying that they have spoken about how the employee feels (line 3), she is positioning herself as a caring employer.

The employer justifies herself by contrasting "how it was for her [the employee] before" (line 6) with her previous employer and "how she is treated" (line 6) now by the interviewee. The comparison is made extreme by saying that the employee "felt like she was a dog" (line 7) before, whereas "she must feel like she is a queen" (line 10) in her current employment. This works to demonstrate that the interviewee *treats* her employee better than other employers and therefore constructs her as *being* better than other employers. By using "must" (line 10), the interviewee is implying that the employee is compelled to appreciate her change in circumstances. However, in her following turn, the interviewee laughs and adds "or just about" (line 12). This functions as an admission that comparing the employee to a queen is an exaggeration that does not reflect reality.

In line 14 the interviewee frames the context and the employee by saying that the employee "is made to feel very comfortable". This constructs the employers as actively making the employee's working environment pleasant. She then turns to her own mental state to describe the employee's condition or feelings by saying "I think she is very very happy" (lines 14-15). The repetition of "very" (line 15) positions the employee as an extremely satisfied and well-looked after worker, which can be attributed to the type of employer that the interviewee is.

While the interviewee in extract 4 rhetorically constructs her employee's mind to account for herself as a white employer, the following interviewee constructs the minds of numerous others to position herself normatively or as not being any different from other white employers. This occurs whilst describing the relationship between employers and employees.

Extract 5 (employer interview 3)

1 I: I think any employer keeps their domestics to a (.) a/a distance to them they
2   don't/don't become friends (.)
3 R: Mhmm
4 I: There's no real relationship as such (.) because (.) umm (.) I don't know
5   actually why but (.) there's very few people that would say my employer my
6   domestic and I sit and have a cup of tea together (.)
7 R: Mmm
8 I: You don't do that (.) it's (.) it's not done well not that I know of anyway (.)
9   ummm(.) ja the relationship is/is very formal very formal very: (.) superficial
10 R: Mmm
11 I: Umm: you just how you how's your mom etcetera etcetera (.) you don't go into
12   detail umm but they they quick to ask to lend money (.) from you when there's
13   a shortage but she does always pay the money back which is good (.) ja so: I
14   mean I think I think very/very much a (.) a formal type setting
15 R: Mmm who do you think keeps it (.) formal (.) the domestics and the
16   employers=
17 I: =I think both (.) I think both to a point (.) the domestic feels (.) umm (1) I don't
18   think she would feel comfortable sitting having a cup of tea with me (.) or (.)
19   even myself I don't think I would feel comfortable (.) umm ja no
20 R: Do you (.) have any reasons why ((laughs))

21 I: I think it's just a (.) just a (.) I mean I have a lot of I have a lot of black friends

22   or black colleagues that I/ that I work with um we sit and have a cup of tea but

23   we're on the same wavelength.

The interviewee begins by framing domestic labour relationships in terms of norms by saying that "any employer" (line 1) keeps some sort of "distance" (line 1) from their employee. This rhetorically normalises the lack of intimacy and implies that any and all employers act in similar ways, making her relationship unremarkable and average. In her following turn, the she begins to account for the lack of "real relationship" (line 4). Initially she states that she is not sure of the reasons (lines 4-5), which is followed by a "but" (line 5). After the "but", the interviewee proceeds to give another normative account to justify herself, indicating that "very few people" (line 5) have intimate relationships in domestic labour, rhetorically indicating the deviance of such behaviour.

The notion of deviance is developed in the following turn when the interviewee states that "you don't do that [have a cup of tea together]" (line 8) and "it's not done well not that I know of anyway" (line 8). These expressions create the sense that these practices are not internally motivated but are more contextual and normative. Intimacy with her employee is not something that she alone does not engage in, but instead it is not something that is done generally. She implies that this is simply common sense about the nature of the social world in South Africa, which rhetorically frames the account as uncontroversial and generally knowable (Edward, 2004).

The interviewee's next turn introduces what could be classified as racist language, using pronouns such as "they" (line 12). She uses a form of categorisation and particularisation (Billig, 1996), saying that "they" may lend money (categorisation) but "she [employee]" (line 13) always pays the money back (particularisation). This rhetorically implies that "they" do not usually return money, drawing on a racial stereotype. This example, which is similar to a 'script formulation' (Edwards, 2004), is framed as a regular pattern and as a "dispositional tendency that can be attributed to actors" (Edwards, 2004, p. 39). It works to explain or partially account for why there is distant and "formal" (line 14) relationship.

When asked by the researcher who is largely to blame for this formality and distance, the interviewee responds with "I think both" (line 17), thereby neither claiming complete

innocence nor complete guilt. The blame is distributed between the parties by saying that neither party "would feel comfortable" (lines 18 and 19) in an intimate relationship with the other. There are two interesting aspects of this argument. Firstly, the repeated use of "would" (lines 18 and 19) indicates that this is not a localised or exceptional case but that it is something that is generally true, as is argued by Potter (1996). Secondly, the interviewee says that "even" (line 19) she would feel uncomfortable, implying that, despite her wishes to feel comfortable with her employee, it would still be difficult for her, which is "reluctantly arrived at" (Edwards, 2004, p. 42) conclusion.

The researcher probes by asking for "reasons" (line 20), followed by a laugh. The interviewee could have heard this as an accusation of irrationality, which would imply prejudice (Billig, 1991). In response, she introduces the idea that she has "a lot of black friends and black colleagues" (lines 21-22) whom she is intimate with. This is accounted for by saying that they are "on the same wavelength" (line 23), rhetorically implying that she does not share that feature with her employee. Thus the distance between the employee and employer is not attributed to race, since the interviewee has black friends and colleagues, but is instead attributed to not being able to relate to each other.

Therefore, in this extract the white employer has constructed the minds of others (other employers and her employee specifically) and reality (what is or is not done and the disposition of domestic employees) to rhetorically position herself as neither prejudiced nor irrational when justifying the distance between herself and her employee. This is particularly interesting in post-apartheid South Africa because it is a rationalisation of continued separation from other races or specific members of other races. Yet such argument is seemingly based on elements other than race itself or as originating within the mind of the subject.

Conclusions

Previous research on domestic labour in post-apartheid South Africa has focussed on exploitation and improvement in domestic labour relations since the apartheid era. It has been found that, while new laws have been created, those laws are difficult to enforce and monitor. Therefore change in identities and attitudes about the self and the other have been difficult to achieve. As a result, there are many remnants of the past within present domestic labour

relationships. The aim of this qualitative study was to investigate the mind-world relationship constructions produced in the talk of employers and employees in domestic labour.

The talk about domestic labour among all interviewees was laced with racial implications but yet race was never explicitly mentioned. However, because of the racialised nature of the topic of the interview, much of the talk was implicitly oriented against the stereotypes commonly held about both white employers and black employees. These also contained notions that in post-apartheid South Africa, it is no longer appropriate to treat others (in the case of white employers) or to be treated by others (in the case of black employees) in a way that fulfils those racial stereotypes.

Within the sample of employees, it often occurred that they were in circumstances where they seemed disempowered and where their situation was being determined for them. This would then confirm the stereotype which states that black domestic labourers are being exploited and have very little voice within the relationship with their employers. However, in post-apartheid South Africa, this stereotype is not longer supposed to carry any currency or reflect what happens in domestic labour because of labour laws. To manage this dilemma, the interviewees constructed their mind to show that they have freedom to choose and determine their circumstances and position. In so doing, this shows that they have some degree of power, rhetorically implying that their employers do not have control in determining their working environment and their identity as a person or a worker. This management was achieved through different strategies, either through active deciding or through deciding not to act. In both employee cases, the interviewees rhetorically demonstrated their ability to produce self-determination in their talk.

Among the employers, there was evidence of a need for justification of their practices in relation to employees to position themselves as tolerant. To achieve this self-justification, interviewees constructed the context or minds of others, either specifically or normatively. This is similar to Billig's (1991) notion that the new racism makes it necessary that those who hold prejudice ensure that such attitudes, opinions and idealogies are located external to the self, either through 'facts' about the other or about the context in which the self and other are located. This rhetoric ensures that the interviewee is not implicated as prejudiced because of their avoidance of intimacy with the employee or as holding prejudice about other races within the context of post-apartheid South Africa.

Although the data do not allow for the formation of definitive conclusions, it could be argued that what has been found within this study is a crystallised picture of what is presently happening in South Africa more generally. Because of the ambivalent positions of both race groups during this time of social transformation, it is interesting to see how both black and white South Africans are rhetorically managing their own identity and the identity of the other. Although black and white positions and rhetorical productions differ (as whites aim for self-justification and blacks aim for self-determination), both demonstrate a continued need to define themselves in relation to the other. This can be viewed as a product of South Africa's racialised past, wherein race was (and thus continues to be) a concept which must be managed and in which much is at stake, both for individuals and groups.

Before concluding, it is important to address issues of reliability and validity within this study. According to Silverman (2005), there are a number of issues when considering the quality of qualitative research. One such element is that of comprehensive data treatment, where anecdotalism is avoided by selecting a variety of cases as opposed to a narrow set of cases to which the argument of the study can be generalised. Comprehensive data treatment was achieved in this study by choosing a variety of cases which show different strategies, but which ultimately lead to the production of what we have termed "self-determination" on the part of employees or "self-justification" on the part of employers. By providing this variety of strategies, a form of deviant cases is presented as part of comprehensive data treatment to strengthen the validity of the study. However, in all of the extracts provided, one can clearly see the presence of the various forms of the mind-world relationship.

In addition, by presenting extended transcripts which include the researchers' preceding questions and continuers, the reader is allowed to draw inferences from the extracts and compare them with the analysis provided (Silverman, 2005). This is similar to Seale's (1999, in Silverman, 2005) notion of low-inference descriptors. As part of the study, inter-coder agreement was also crucial as our analysis was done in a pair and therefore allowed for the testing of reliability from the beginning of our study. Thus it can be argued that this study fulfils many criteria for validity and reliability within qualitative research.

There are a number of limitations in this study that must be attended to. One limitation is that the interviews were conducted in English and yet most of the employees were not fluent in

this language. This may have prevented them from being able to fully express themselves as they would in their first language. Another issue, which can be viewed as both a strength and a weakness, relates to the focus of the study on both employers and employees. This is a strength because it is interesting and necessary to compare how both of these two groups talk about issues of domestic labour and race. However, this narrow focus split the analysis and did not allow for full attention to be paid to one group or the other. This may be due to the topic which was set and requirements given for this study. A suggestion for future research would be to focus in-depth on one group to see a wider variety of talk around the topic of domestic labour within one group.

References

Antaki, C., Billig, M., Edwards, D., & Potter, J. (2003). Discourse analysis means doing analysis: a critique of six analytic shortcomings. Discourse Analysis Online*, 1*. Retrieved from http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ss/centres/darg/DAOLpaper.pdf

Baker, C. D. (2003). Ethnomethodological analyses of interviews. In J. A. Holstein & J. F. Gubrium (Eds.), *Inside interviewing: new lenses, new concerns* (pp. 395-412). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Davies, C. B. (1989). In their own words: life and work in South Africa. *51(1)*, 88-94.

Dickey, S. (2000). Permeable homes: domestic service, household space, and the vulnerability of class boundaries in urban India. *American Ethnologist, 27(2)*, 462-489.

Durrheim, K. (under review) *Stereotyping by implication: The discourse of implicit stereotyping*.

Edwards, D. (2004). Analysing racist discourse: the discursive psychology of mind-world relationships. In H. Van den Berg, H. Houtcoup & M. Wetherell (Eds.), *Analysing interviews on racial issues* (pp. 31-48). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Edwards, D., & Potter, J. (1992). *Discursive psychology*. London: Sage.

Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2000). The interview: from structured questions to negotiated text. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 645-672). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Gaitskell, D., Kimble, J., Macohachie, M., & Unterhalter, E. (1983). Class, race and gender: domestic workers in South Africa. *Review of African Political Economy, 27*, 86-108.

King, A. J. (2007). *Domestic service in post-apartheid South Africa: deference and disdain*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

MacDonald, M. (2006). *Why race matters in South Africa.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park: Sage.

Potter, J. (1996). *Representing reality: discourse, rhetoric and social construction*. London: Sage.

Silverman, D. (2005). *Doing qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Wetherell, M. (1998). Positioning and interpretative repetoires: conversation analysis and post-structuralism in dialogue. *Discourse and Society, 9*, 387-412.

Wetherell, M., & Potter, J. (1992). *Mapping the language of racism: discourse and the legitimation of exploitation*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Appendix: Transcript conventions

(Adapted from Silverman, 2005, p. 376)

[Left brackets indicate the point at which a current speaker's talk is overlapped by another's talk.

=   Equal signs, one at the end of a line and one at the beginning, indicate no gap between the two lines.

(.)   A dot in parentheses within a line indicates a tiny gap, probably no more than one-tenth of a second.

A dot in parentheses on its one line indicates a relatively 'pregnant pause'

___   Underscoring indicates some form of stress, via pitch and/or amplitude.

::   Colons indicate prologation of the immediately prior sound.

(( )) Double parenthese contain the author's descriptions rather than transcriptions.