Conversations about Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs: Educational Psychologists' Facilitation of a Collaborative Joint Consultation Process.

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List of Abbreviations

CA……...Conversation analysis

DfE……..Department for Education

DoH…….Department of Health

DP……Discursive Psychology

EP……Educational Psychologist

HoY……..Head of Year

NHS…….National Health Service

SEMH……..Social, Emotional and Mental Health

SEN…….Special Educational Needs

SENDCo…….Special Educational Needs Coordinator

TEP……..…Trainee Educational Psychologist

Abstract

With increasing rates of social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs in UK schools (NHS Digital, 2020) and expectations for school staff to support them (DfE, 2018), educational psychologists (EPs) are often called on for support (Sharpe et al., 2016). Although consultation is a key approach to EPs' casework (Leadbetter, 2006), relying on interpersonal skills (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020), little qualitative research focusing on the interactions within consultations exists (Newman & Clare, 2016). Furthermore, despite recognition of the impact school and home environments can have on children and young people, little research exists into joint consultations (involving home and school) within the UK.

Positioned within a social constructionist epistemology, this study considers how language is used to facilitate collaborative consultations. The interactions within three SEMH-focused consultations in primary and secondary schools are analysed using a discourse analysis approach, drawing on Discursive Psychology and Conversation Analysis. The way in which parents and school staff describe situations associated with young people's SEMH needs and their roles within them are considered. The study then focuses on EPs' use of language when seeking to facilitate collaboration. Collaboration was considered to be observed when the consultation group appeared to be reaching a shared understanding of the situation, and strategies to support a young person were developed jointly (co-produced) (Wagner, 2008; Gutkin & Curtis, 2009). The analysis highlighted the effects of the EPs' use of a solution-focused approach to containment and scaffolding strategies within the interactions. This appeared to lead to changes in the way events and others are described (developing a shared understanding) and led to agreements over next steps, including strategies to support the individual.

It is hoped this study will support EPs seeking to reflect on and develop their use of consultation as an approach to supporting children and young people's SEMH needs, while adding to the bank of qualitative research into joint consultations in the UK.

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1. Introduction

This study explores the interactions between EPs, parents and school staff who have come together for a consultation that centres around a child or young person described as having 'social, emotional and mental health needs' (SEMH). The aim of these 'joint consultations' (involving home and school) is to develop collaboration when seeking shared understandings of needs or situations and co-producing strategies or 'next steps' to bring about positive change for a child or young person (Dowling & Osborne, 1994; Nolan & Moreland, 2014). This study therefore focuses on the impact of EPs' language within these joint (home-school) consultations when seeking to facilitate collaboration. This includes analysing how shared understandings are developed, as well as how approaches and strategies to support the young person are 'co-produced'. Falling within a social constructionist epistemology, the study also focuses on how parents and school staff use language to construct descriptions of situations and their roles within them. An exploration of the umbrella term 'SEMH needs' and the reasons for its use in this study can be found in section 1.2.iii.

It is hoped this research will help EPs reflect on their use of consultation in this area, while adding to the qualitative research base into consultation in the UK. This study builds on existing research through a discourse analysis approach to exploring joint consultations. Before features of the research are presented, the author's motivation for the study is outlined and key terms defined.

1.1 Motivation for research

The author's motivation for this research was sparked through her experiences as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP), a parent and a 15-year career as a primary school teacher prior to embarking on the doctoral training programme. This included reflecting on the limited amount of whole school training into supporting children and young people identified as having 'SEMH needs', and teachers' differing levels of confidence and perceptions of their role in this area.

Furthermore, the author reflected on the use of language during discussions about SEMH needs she had been involved in on a personal and professional level and the challenges faced at times in developing understandings of situations and agreeing next steps. Research suggests that although teachers are able to identify possible SEMH needs in children – particularly when working in partnership with parents (Matthews et al., 2020) - they do not always feel confident in supporting these needs and report wanting help from other professionals (Shelamy et al., 2019). This led the author to consider the role of the EP in working with school staff to support possible SEMH needs in children and young people, particularly through consultation - a key part of EPs' casework (Leadbetter, 2006).

The authors' interest in this area was further piqued when, as a Year Two TEP, she was on placement during the COVID-19 pandemic in a Local Authority in a geographical location reported to have had one of the highest rates of adolescent SEMH needs in the United Kingdom (NHS Digital, 2020). During this placement, the author identified calls to the EP service helpline increased from both parents and school staff seeking advice on how to support children and young people with SEMH needs, while much of the work commissioned by schools focused on these needs. As direct work was not possible due to restrictions on face-to-face work, online consultation with school staff and parents was used to indirectly support the young people. This led to an interest in exploring EPs' use of joint consultation, involving key adults from home and school, as an approach to supporting possible SEMH needs. When considering the research in this area there appeared to be a lack of research into joint consultation in the UK, particularly when this involves discussing young people who are described as having 'SEMH needs'.

The home and school systems both impact children and young people (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), particularly with regard to their mental health (Hutchings, 2015, Gutman et al., 2015). Bringing these two systems together can have a positive impact on outcomes for children and young people (Miller,

2003). As one role of the EP is to bring about positive change for children and young people indirectly by working with key adults (Caplan, 1970) it is important to consider how they may facilitate positive interactions during joint home-school consultations focusing on possible SEMH needs.

Finally, as a former journalist, the author had a particular interest in the use of language and the social constructionist view that language can create reality (Burr, 2015). This interest developed further when learning about discourse analysis during the doctorate course and as the author reflected on the use of language during her own consultations. A brief exploration of the literature revealed few contemporary, qualitative studies from the UK focused on the use of language in joint consultations – particularly how it can be used to facilitate the collaboration needed to develop shared understandings and supportive next steps.

1.2 Terminology defined

1.2.i Consultation

Although no single definition of the term consultation exists (Gutkin & Curtis, 1996), Wagner (2000) suggests they are "conversations that make a difference" (p. 14) with at least two people working together to improve the situation for a focus client (Caplan, 1970). The defining characteristic of EPs' consultation appears to be the indirect approach to supporting children and young people (Gutkin & Curtis, 1996) by helping the adults around them develop their knowledge and skills to deal with situations in school (West & Idol, 1987). In this study, consultations were therefore assumed to be conversations between EPs and key adults around a child or young person with the aim of collaboratively identifying strategies to create positive change.

1.2.ii Interactions

Interactions are considered to be "two or more people or things communicating with or reacting to each other" (Cambridge Online Dictionary, 2022). As

language is the most pervasive form of interaction between people (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p9) and consultations rely on verbal exchanges (Martens et al., 1992), focusing on the use of language to explore interactions in this context appears important. As this study is situated within a social constructionist epistemology, interactions will be considered in terms of the way in which language is used to construct meaning, justify actions, or achieve certain responses and how others react in return (Burr, 2005). This will be explained further in the Methodology.

1.2.iii Social Emotional and Mental Health needs

This study is set within an interpretivist ontology which assumes individuals have different versions of reality, constructed through their own experiences. As a result it is acknowledged that individuals may view the behaviours associated with 'SEMH needs' in this definition differently. Throughout this study, therefore, any SEMH needs referred to are considered to be "possible" needs – it is not assumed they are fact.

The term 'social, emotional and mental health' (SEMH) is used throughout this study. This term is used in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice (2015) and states:

> *"Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour." (Section 6.32, p. 98)*

This umbrella term of 'SEMH' replaced the term 'behavioural, social and emotional development' as part of the 2014 SEND reforms (DfES, 2001; DfE, 2015). Although the word "behaviour" was removed from the definition, the term 'SEMH' continues to refer to children and young people displaying behaviours which challenge others (Norwich & Eaton, 2015). For example, the

current Code of Practice definition states these “challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviours” may be associated with a young person experiencing “emotional difficulties” (Section 6.32, p. 98). Nasen (2015) suggests the change in terminology from “behaviour” to “SEMH” aims to reframe these behaviours as symptomatic of unmet needs.

Government documents and existing research often refer to ‘SEMH needs’ as ‘mental health’ or ‘emotional wellbeing’. Definitions of the term ‘mental health’ can be problematic due to the differences in norms of time, society and culture which can influence whether they are described positively or negatively (Pilgrim, 2020). For example, the World Health Organisation (1951) suggests mental health is a positive state of psychological wellbeing, while other definitions refer to mental health ‘problems’ which can be stigmatising, although preferential to terms such as ‘mental illness’ or ‘disorder’ (Pilgrim, 2020). The term ‘emotional wellbeing’ is often used instead which may be best understood as a psychosocial phenomenon linked to objective conditions (material possessions) and internal states derived from relationships (Pilgrim, 2020).

In summary, different terms and definitions may be used when discussing a child’s social, emotional or mental health, depending on an individual’s experiences or perceptions. In this study, the term ‘SEMH needs’ will be used to encompass these different perspectives. As highlighted above, this term has been considered to be important in reframing people’s understanding of ‘challenging behaviour’ as unmet needs (Nasen, 2015). Furthermore, this is consistent with the term most likely to be used in the context of schools and EPs’ casework, as it is used in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015).

1.2.iv Primary and secondary schools

This research will focus on students in primary and secondary schools. Primary schools support children in the final year of the Early Years Foundation Stage (ages 4 and 5 years), Key Stage One (ages 5 to 7 years) and Key Stage Two (ages 7 to 11 years). Secondary schools support young people in Key Stage

Three (ages 11 to 14-years) and Key Stage Four (ages 13 to16 years) (Gov.UK, 2021). These key stages were chosen due to the increasing rates of probable mental health disorders in these age groups (NHS Digital, 2020). Statistics released by NHS Digital in 2020 suggested 14.4 per cent of all primary school aged children (5- to 10-year-olds) had a probable 'mental disorder'. This figure increased among young people of secondary school aged with 17.6 per cent of 11- to 16-year-olds being identified with a probable 'mental disorder'. The term 'mental disorder' implies a condition that can be medically diagnosed, which may reflect the research authors' affiliation with the National Health Service (NHS). These rates and their implications are outlined in more detail below.

2. Literature Review

This literature review considers why research into supporting SEMH needs is important, why consultation may be a useful approach for EPs' work in this area and what is already known about interactions during consultations.

2.1 Prevalence, influences and Implications of SEMH

2.1.i Prevalence

One in six 5-16-year-olds are thought to have a "probable mental health disorder", identified as difficulties with their emotions, behaviour, relationships, hyperactivity and concentration impacting on their daily life – an increase from one in nine in 2017 (NHS Digital, 2020, p. 1). Increases have been seen in both sexes and across all ages. For girls, the rates increased from 10.3 per cent in 2017 to 15.2 per cent in 2020. For boys, rates rose from 11.4 per cent in 2017 to 16.7 per cent in 2020.

The increase in prevalence may reflect the timing of the NHS Digital (2020) research, as data was gathered in July 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, over 40 per cent of children and young people reported their mental health had worsened due to the national lockdowns and school closures (NHS Digital, 2020; Waite et al., 2020). The figures may also reflect increases in reporting due to national campaigns, such as 'Heads Together' (2017) designed to raise awareness of mental health issues.

Although identifying and categorising SEMH issues can be challenging due to the complex combination of behaviours, underlying factors and threshold issues (Clark et al., 2017; Boyle & Johnstone, 2020; NHS Digital, 2020), various factors are though to impact the SEMH of children and young people. These are considered below.

2.1.ii Factors influencing SEMH needs

It is important to consider the many factors affecting SEMH needs in children and young people to identify where best to target support. Children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are four times more likely to experience mental health difficulties than their peers (Lavis et al., 2019). The socio-economic status of families is also thought to have an impact, with children and young people from families of workless parents and those from families in the lowest 20 per cent for rates of income being most likely to experience SEMH challenges (Gutman, et al., 2015). Other influencing factors include mental health difficulties faced by parents (Gutman et al., 2015) and intensive social media use (Young Minds & Children's Society, 2018).

School environments are also thought to impact the SEMH of children and young people including academic demands of the curriculum and exams (Hutchings, 2015) and inflexible behaviour policies focusing on sanctions and rewards rather than meeting needs (Grimaldi, 2012). The importance of addressing these risk factors when seeking to prevent and support SEMH needs to avoid long term difficulties is discussed below.

2.1.iii Implications of SEMH needs

Research suggests unmet SEMH needs may impact on later life experience, with children's emotional health the most powerful predictor of adult life satisfaction (Lanyard et al., 2014). Early intervention, meanwhile, can lead to improved health, well-being and employment (Goodman et al., 2015; Mental Health Foundation, 2020). Children and young people with SEMH needs are more likely to be excluded from school (NHS Digital, 2018). Figures from the Department for Education (2016) suggest in 2013-2014 one in five students with an identified SEMH difficulty received at least one fixed-term exclusion. One exclusion places young people at an increased risk of further exclusions (Carroll & Hurry, 2018) which, in turn, are linked to long-term mental health problems (Ford et al., 2017). The importance of supporting these needs and the impact of early intervention on the avoidance of later difficulties has led to a growing

recognition of the role school staff can play in supporting children and young people's SEMH needs (Weare & Nind, 2011; DfE, 2017; DfE, 2018). This is considered below.

2.2 Political perspectives

Supporting children and young people's SEMH needs appears to be high on UK Government's agenda and the role of schools in this clearly outlined. In the 2017 Green Paper "Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision" (DfE, 2017) it was suggested schools and colleges should be "at the heart" of early identification and prevention (p. 3). The DfE's 'Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools' document (2018) also identifies schools and colleges as having a responsibility for "prevention, identification, early support and providing access to specialist support" (p. 6).

Initiatives introduced to address this include 'Time to Change' (Department of Health & Social Care, 2007) which aimed to reduce the stigma associated with mental health needs and change the way people thought about them. This was followed by the 'Future in Mind' (DoH, 2015) which aimed to improve the delivery of child and adolescent mental health services in the UK. Additional initiatives continue to be introduced, such as plans to introduce support teams and designated mental health leads in all English schools and colleges by 2025 (DfE, 2017). Charity groups are also raising the profile of teachers supporting SEMH needs, through initiatives such as the 'Mentally Healthy Schools' website (2018) – a collaboration between the Anna Freud Centre, Place2Be and Young Minds – offering teachers free advice and resources.

However, questions have been raised about teachers' knowledge of SEMH needs, with the Mental Health Foundation (2018) calling for designated leads to 'cascade' training to other staff to address "the gap in the capacity of teachers to support the mental health of pupils" (p. 1). This, in turn, raises questions about teachers' perceptions of their ability to support children's SEMH needs effectively. This is discussed below.

2.3 The role of school staff and EPs in supporting SEMH needs

2.3.i Teacher perspectives

School staff are considered well-placed to identify their students' SEMH needs and support them to develop the resources needed to cope (Weare & Nind, 2011, p. 29). Teachers are cited as the most common source of support for SEMH needs (NHS Digital, 2018) and, through discussion with parents, are often able to identify the early signs of difficulties in their pupils (Matthews et al., 2020). This is despite an acknowledgement that school staff are not mental health experts (Education & Health Committee, 2017).

Research exploring the views of teachers in primary, secondary and special schools in the UK identify varying views about their role in supporting SEMH needs. While some teachers accept that providing this support is "part and parcel of teaching" (Kidger et al., 2009, p. 1; Rothi et al., 2008), others report needing more training - particularly in identifying signs of SEMH difficulties and practical strategies to prevent escalations (Shelamy et al., 2019). Furthermore, although some teachers recognise signs of distress may manifest as changes in behaviour, academic progress and relationships, they report concerns about missing opportunities to support children due to an "ignorance" in distinguishing needs from behavioural difficulties (Rothi et al., 2008, p. 1221). Some teachers who had accessed training suggested they were unable to act on it due to curriculum demands (Rothi et al., 2008). Others reported needing emotional support to ensure they had the capacity to help students (Kidger et al., 2009).

Research also found some teachers report wanting to focus on academic success and not act as therapists with others suggest their role is to refer students for specialist support rather than support them directly (Shelemy et al., 2019[1)]. However, concern is also expressed that mental health specialists do not know enough about the education environment to be able to provide effective support (Rothi et al., 2008).

A study exploring primary school teachers' ability to recognise mental health difficulties in children, found staff reported having had little training to identify SEMH needs, with half of the teachers reporting rarely or never having taught children with mental health difficulties (Gowers et al., 2004). Given the prevalence of SEMH needs among primary school pupils, this may indicate the teachers were not able to identify signs, rather than there being no children with difficulties in their class (Gowers et al., 2004).

Although these studies suggest school staff need help to meet their responsibilities in supporting children's SEMH needs, it should be noted some of this research took place more than 12 years ago. It may be assumed that, with Government initiatives introduced over the past three years targeting support in this area, their view would have changed. However, more recent studies suggest, despite these policies, teachers continue to report needing more support in this area (Shelamy et al., 2019). Although EPs are often overlooked in key Government documents outlining plans for supporting SEMH needs in schools (MacKay 2007; DoH, 2015; DfE, 2017; Public Health England, 2021), they have been identified by teachers as the key providers of specialist support (Sharpe et al., 2016; Rothi et al., 2008). A consideration of the ways in which EPs can help is outlined below.

2.3.ii The EP's role

EPs recognise the key role they can play in supporting children and young people's SEMH needs (Atkinson et al., 2011). However, a lack of research exists into "routine mental health casework in schools" other than generic consultation skills in supporting adults to manage challenging behaviour (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020, p. 3).

In a survey of 455 EPs in the UK, many reported being confident in providing this support through working with schools to develop mental health policies and in delivering staff training and interventions to parents (Atkinson et al., 2011).

Most EPs reported confidently delivering therapeutic interventions to individual children, with Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT), Personal Construct Psychology and Motivational Interviewing most often used (Atkinson et al., 2011). The EPs in this study did not refer to consultation as an approach to their work in this area. Furthermore, in a study of two partially traded UK-based Local Authority EP services, Lee and Woods (2017) reported although teachers valued EP support to develop a psychological understanding of a child or young person's situation, there was a reduced demand for consultation as a discrete element. Purewal (2020), however, found EPs reported high use of consultation when supporting mental health needs, with their consultative and systemic approach being unique to the EP role.

If EPs are to use consultation as an approach to help school staff support possible SEMH needs in schools, it is important to consider how this can be achieved by ensuring collaboration. This is particularly important as collaboration – the process of the consultant and consultee working together and sharing decision-making (Wagner, 2008) - may be the "most essential element of consultation" (Gutkin & Curtis, 2009, p. 600). This research focuses on examples of consultation in action, with the interactions within them observed to consider the impact they may have on collaboration. An analysis of the impact of the language used will identify the way in which "linguistic devices" influence them (Leadbetter, 2006), and the way in which language can be a "crucible of change" (Burr, 1995, p. 43). This will provide EPs with an opportunity to consider how a collaborative consultative approach may be used to full effect when supporting possible SEMH needs.

Existing research into EPs' use of consultation is now considered.

2.4 Consultation

For decades, consultation has been recognised as a key model of delivering EP services (Leadbetter, 2006) and a key approach for EPs when supporting SEMH needs in children and young people (Dunsmuir & Cobbald, 2016). This involves EPs drawing on their interpersonal skills and knowledge of child development and organisations to work with overwhelmed adults to consider the SEMH needs of the young people they support (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020).

2.4.i Defining consultation

Wagner (2000, p. 14) defines EPs' consultations as "conversations that make a difference" by helping the adults around a child or young person to develop the knowledge, skills and self-efficacy needed to support them (West & Idol, 1987). The aim is to reach a better understanding of a child and their situation and to develop an agreed plan to improve this (Nolan & Moreland, 2014). Wagner (2016) suggests it must be made clear that the process involves a collaborative partnership with everyone working together to ensure the EP is not seen as the expert – rather they value the "unique expertise" of everyone involved (Wagner, 2016, p. 194; Gutkin & Curtis, 2009). Involving teachers in planning interventions can ensure the approaches are suited to individual schools or classrooms (Noell & Witt, 1996), and develop feelings of self-efficacy, increasing motivation to implement the strategies (Bandura, 1994; Deci & Ryan, 2012).

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 EPs in many countries stopped most, if not all, face-to-face activities and turned to online delivery of their work – including consultation (Reupert et al., 2021). Concerns have been raised about online consultations negatively impacting rapport building and empathy (Callicott et al., 2021) due to non-verbal cues being partly "filtered out" (Grondin et al., 2019, p. 1) and technological issues such as intermittent connectivity (Callicott et al., 2021). However, research appears to suggest online consultations are just as effective as those taking place face-to-face

(BPS Division of Clinical Psychologists, 2020; Fischer et al, 2017;) with teachers reporting high levels of satisfaction (Bice-Urbach & Kratochwill, 2016).

2.4.ii Types of consultation

Although the defining characteristic appears to be the indirect approach to supporting children and young people, no single definition of the term consultation exists, leading to different models being developed (Gutkin & Curtis, 2009). EP consultation may therefore take various forms, with Conoley and Conoley (1990) outlining the three major approaches as: mental health, behavioural and process consultation. These are considered below.

Behavioural consultation

In behavioural consultations, teachers are helped to respond to student behaviour (Conoley & Conoley, 1990) through a four-step process (Martens et al., 2015). This involves the problem being identified and analysed before interventions are devised and evaluated (Bergan & Tombori, 1975). In this "prescriptive" process (Noell & Witt, 1996, p.195) the consultant guides the process and offers advice and solutions (Knotek & Sandoval, 2003).

Mental health consultation

The Mental Health model of consultation, sometimes referred to as consultee-centred consultation, derived from the work of Caplan (1963). This "non-hierarchical" approach is focused on a collaborative relationship between a consultant and consultee (Newman & Ingraham, 2016, p. 1) when help has been sought in relation to a work-based problem (Caplan, 1963). The EP, as the consultant, aims to help the teacher, as the consultee, to develop problem-solving skills by listening, clarifying and reframing the situation and discussing interventions that may be effective in their classroom (Hylander, 2012). The problem is considered solved when the consultee feels they know how to cope independently (Hylander, 2012).

Process consultation

Process consultation is focused on an organisational level, and considers contextual factors behind behaviour (Farouk, 2007). EPs use this approach by facilitating group consultations in which teachers support each other while developing their expertise (Hanko, 2002). It has been suggested that, working with staff teams enables consultees to be involved in identifying problems and solutions, developing their motivation to implement the suggested interventions (Schein, 1978).

Other forms of consultation exist in addition to these main models, one of which is joint systems consultation. Given the impact home and school can have on a young person, (Pelligrini, 2009), particularly on their SEMH needs (Newland, 2014), involving parents and school staff in consultations is considered important (Osborne, 1994) and best practice for EPs (Dunsmuir et al., 2014; SEND Code of Practice, DfE, 2015). The use of this approach is considered below.

Joint systems consultation

Based on systems theory, this approach assumes behaviour occurs in context, and acknowledges that what happens in one environment or 'system' can affect another (Dowling & Osborne, 1994; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Also referred to as eco-systemic consultation, this approach brings families and schools together to enable the different perspectives and impact of each to be explored (Osborne, 1994) through the creation of a temporary system (Miller, 2003). This supports collaborative working by engaging parents in what support the school is providing while drawing on parents' experiences and expert knowledge of their child (Wagner, 2016). Dowling (1994, p. 15) suggests this can lead to a joint understanding of situations by:

1. Facilitating communication between school staff and parents.
2. Clarifying differences in perception (focus on how it occurs rather than why).
3. Negotiating commonly agreed goals.

4. Exploring specific steps towards change.

When this approach is taken to discuss a young person identified as having SEMH needs – particularly behaviour that is challenging adults - it requires skill on the part of the consultant to manage the range of emotions felt by school staff and parents (Miller, 2003). For example, EPs exploring different perceptions and sharing possible hypotheses can lead to "escalation and expression of negative emotions" (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020, p. 10). Furthermore, EPs must recognise parents may feel daunted engaging with schools when there are concerns given that they want to feel proud of their children yet can feel criticised by questions that may imply it is their fault (Wagner, 2016). However, this approach enables power imbalances between home, school and EPs to be addressed (Wagner, 2016). For example, Wagner (2016) suggests EPs can consider the constructionist nature of language and discourse and, given language can create reality, can build a more positive discourse which avoids the language of labelling and deficits. Given the aim of consultation is seeking to reach a shared understanding of a child and their situation (Nolan & Moreland, 2014), a consideration of the language used in joint systems consultations appears to be particularly useful for EPs, and worthy of being explored in the present study.

2.4.iii Researching the use of language in collaborative consultation

As consultations rely on conversations (Wagner, 2000), it is important to consider the way "linguistic devices" influence them (Leadbetter, 2006, p. 27), therefore studying language is an important feature of consultation research (Erchul et al., 2018). Although the interactions within consultations have been the subject of research in the USA, this has been largely quantitative in nature, producing codes to categorise and quantify responses (Bergan & Tombari, 1975; Benn et al., 2008) rather than considering the dynamics of the relationships (Newman & Clare, 2016). Research has also largely focused on behavioural (Erchul et al., 2018) or client-centred consultations in the USA

(Newman et al., 2016) with a lack of research into alternative approaches (Benn et al., 2008).

A small number of studies and unpublished doctoral theses exploring language use in consultations has been carried out in the UK. O'Brien (2000) drew on Gutkin's (1999) four-dimensional model, previously used to analyse consultations carried out in the USA, to consider whether EPs' consultations in a British context, were collaborative, directive, coercive or a combination. The research suggests consultants were directive in terms of controlling interviews and decisions and collaborative with regard to being receptive to input from consultees. Furthermore, a positive correlation was found between collaboration and perceptions of teacher influence (O'Brien, 2000), therefore suggesting this is an important feature of consultations.

Later research focused on the constructive nature of language used within consultations. For example, Hobley (2005) used a mixed methods approach drawing on Content Analysis, Conversation Analysis and Discursive Psychology to analyse a series of six consultations discussing three children who had been described by their parents and teachers as having challenging behaviour. This study considered the way in which story-telling is used when constructing pupil identities and identified features of institutional talk within consultations, including the use of institutional knowledge as a turn holding device, and fluctuating patterns of process and content leadership. A Discursive Psychology approach was also drawn on by O'Brien and Miller (2006) to explore how challenging behaviour can be described and maintained as a within-child construct during a consultation between a teacher, learning mentor and an EP.

More recently, Giles (2020) used a sequence analysis approach to explore sequences of motivational talk in consultations and the impact on others. An analysis of the number of times transitions occurred within reciprocal interactions and identifying predictable patterns (Ivanouw, 2007), led to the

identification of the type of motivational talk that occurred in consultations and found different kinds of EP talk evoke different responses in predictable ways from consultees. For example, open questions by the EP often elicited change talk from teachers, while facilitative statements often elicited problem-descriptions (Giles, 2020).

Although a small number of studies exist, overall there has been little qualitative research into different models of consultation in the UK – particularly joint-systems consultations. Research into this model is important as school psychology is "at its core a relational enterprise", relying on interpersonal connections within interpersonally complex organisations – families and schools (Newman & Clare, 2016, p. 327).

Furthermore, although the consultation process is said to be the key to making a difference rather than the actions implemented afterwards (Wagner, 2017) few qualitative, process-orientated studies exist (Nolan & Moreland, 2014; Newman et al., 2016; Kennedy et al., 2008). The 'process' of consultation can be explored by focusing on the interpersonal communication and collaborative relationships (Newman et al., 2015.

Although there is no clear agreement on what collaboration in consultations with school staff may look like (Graham, 1998), Wagner (2008) suggests it involves the consultant and consultee working together. Consultants are thought to 'downplay' their status to ensure an equal relationship (Knotek & Sandovil, 2003) while consultees share the problem and are supported to develop coping skills (Conoley et al., 1981). This is in contrast to an 'expert' model in which the consultant uses their knowledge and status to lead the process and offer possible solutions (Knotek & Sandoval (2003). It has been suggested this shared decision-making is "the most essential element of consultation" (Gutkin & Curtis, 2009, p. 600). Research suggests EPs facilitate collaboration through their communication and interaction skills (West & Idol, 1987) such as building

rapport and encouraging talk in the role of a “skilled helper” (Egan, 2014). Gutkin (1999) suggests this can be achieved by consultants drawing on expert knowledge to direct conversations while using their interpersonal skills to determine what the consultee wishes to discuss and recognise when they are ready to move on. A focus on language use suggests this involves consultants asking more questions than consultees (Gutkin & Curtis, 2009), making more bids to control conversations (Erchul, 1987) or deciding topics to be addressed (Witt, 1987). While quantitative approaches have largely been used to research such interactions, qualitative approaches, enable verbal behaviour and processes to be explored (Gutkin, 1999) and identify the way language is used as the “crucible of change” (Burr, 1995, p. 43).

If EPs are to rely on consultation in their everyday work, including supporting possible SEMH needs, they have a professional obligation to understand how it works to help them develop their consultative skills (Nolan & Moreland, 2014; Leadbetter, 2006). Furthermore, as teachers have reported knowing more about the processes involved may make consultations more effective (O’Farrell & Kinsella, 2018), EPs must be able to offer helpful, well-informed explanations. Without understanding the processes involved in consultation, EPs risk embracing vague approaches (Miller & Frederickson, 2006). It is hoped the present study may support both EPs’ and teachers’ understanding of the processes within consultations - particularly within the interactions taking place.

3. Systematic Literature Review

This study aims to explore how EPs facilitate collaboration during joint consultations involving parents and school staff when supporting children and young people described as having SEMH needs. One element of this will include an exploration of language use – including features of EPs' language when seeking to develop shared understandings and co-produce approaches to support. Before this is explored it is helpful to consider the findings from other empirical studies researching EPs' language in collaborative consultations. The systematic review of available literature that follows seeks to explore this. Both qualitative and quantitative research papers will be included to ensure a range of approaches to exploring this topic can be considered.

3.1 Review question

Initial searches of the literature suggest little qualitative research exists exploring language use within collaborative joint-systems consultations. The following question will therefore form the basis of a systematic review of the literature which allows for a more general exploration of the processes within collaborative consultations, including the interactions and language used.

"What interactions take place within collaborative school-based consultations?"

3.2 Systematic review procedure

Various approaches to synthesising quantitative and qualitative data were considered for this systematic review. A results-based convergent synthesis design was not appropriate as it addresses a review question with sub-questions (Hong et al., 2017). In addition, although a data-based convergent synthesis design is most commonly used (Hong et al., 2017), this was discounted as it involves using one synthesis method to analyse both quantitative and qualitative data, therefore requires all data to be transformed into either numerical values or categories and themes. This review adopted a

parallel-results convergent synthesis design (Noyes et al., 2019) in which qualitative and quantitative data is analysed individually and then discussed in a summary. This ensures a range of empirical data can be considered which the author felt was useful given the complexity involved in studying relational interactions.

Systematic searches were carried out across a range of electronic databases (SCOPUS, ERIC, PsycINFO). Key search terms included: consultation, consultant, consultee, school, language, psychologist, interactions). Searches were limited to peer-reviewed studies published between 2002 and 2022 to provide an overview of contemporary research. Pertinent research into language use and collaboration in consultations prior to 2002 has been included within Section 2.4.ii, including debates around whether EPs use an 'expert' or 'collaborative' approach in consultation (Gutkin, 1999).

Due to the relatively low number of relevant articles identified in this search, and to ensure no key studies were missed, a hand search of journals related to educational psychology and consultation was carried out in addition to the initial systematic searches. This included Educational Psychology in Practice and the Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation. Different combinations of the search terms were used for some databases as initial searches produced no results on some occasions. Table 1 shows the initial and alternative search terms used and the number of results produced for each database.

Table 1: Table to show search terms used for databases and journals

Database/ journal	Initial search terms used	Results	Alternative terms used	Results
ERIC	Consultation Consultee Consultant School Psychologist Language Interactions	153	n/a	n/a

SCOPUS	Consultation Consultant Consultee School Language Psychologist Interactions	0	Consultation Consultant Consultee School Language	4
Educational Psychology in Practice	Consultation Consultant Consultee School Language Psychologist Interactions	21	Consultation Consultant Consultee School Language	30
Journal of Educational and Psychological consultation.	Consultation Consultant Consultee School Language Psychologist Interactions	100	n/a	

Results from the database (n=157) and soft searches (n=130) were combined and duplicates removed. Studies were screened at an abstract level and evaluated for eligibility against the inclusion criteria which can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Table to show inclusion and exclusion criteria for systematic literature review

Feature	Inclusion	Exclusion
Model of Consultation	Must include a school-based consultation with a consultant and at least one consultee.	Studies that do not include school-based consultations. Consultations at a whole school, or multi-disciplinary team level.
Date	2002-2022	Prior to 2002
Language of Publication	English	Not in English
Participants	Must include an educational (or school) Psychologist as the consultant.	Consultations that do not involve either school staff or parents.

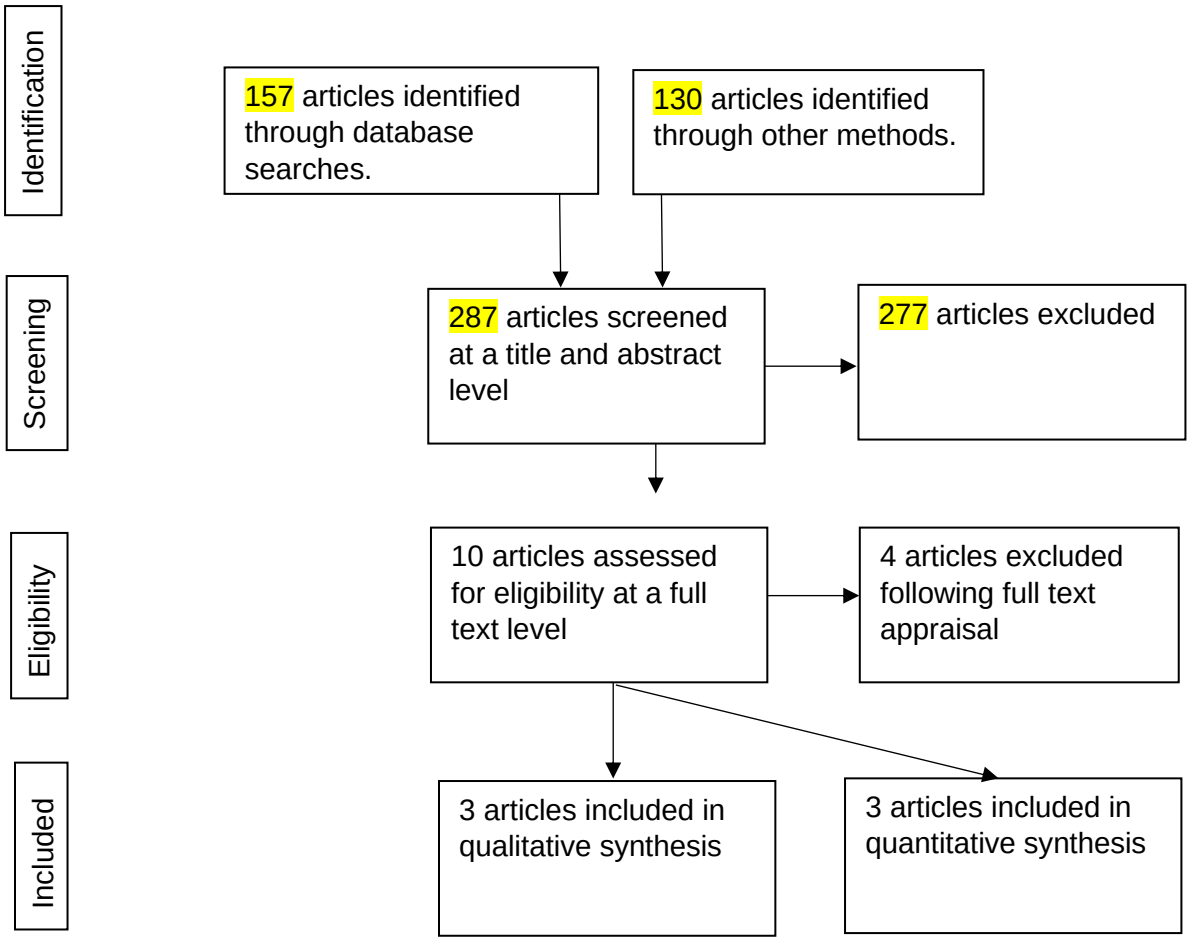
	Consultees must include teachers, SENCOs or parents.	
Setting	Naturalistic consultations in schools or other education settings, either in person or online.	Clinical settings such as CAMHS, hospitals. Artificially created consultations for training purposes.
Focus	Strategies and language used within school-based consultations to develop relationships and collaboration.	Focus of research on factors other than the language and interactions within school-based consultations (e.g. impact of cultural factors; use of consultation in teacher training; reviews of existing literature; evaluation of implementations of programmes through consultation)

These criteria were selected to ensure the chosen studies were relatively recent (within the past 20 years) and closely linked to the study in question, in terms of participants, settings and focus. It was hoped this would ensure the relevance and helpfulness of the findings.

From the 187 studies generated through this systematic literature review, most of these did not meet the inclusion criteria. Some papers excluded from the review, considered the effectiveness of particular models of consultation rather than collaboration. Some focused on the use of consultation to support specific issues such as training consultants, culturally responsive consultation or particular populations such as early years, bilingual learners, those with reading difficulties or diagnoses of ASD or ADHD, rather than a focus on the use of collaborative language. This review focused on studies exploring language use and how it is used to facilitate collaboration when seeking to develop shared understandings and develop supportive interventions therefore studies were selected which were relevant to this topic.

Once the initial sample of studies was identified, 10 papers were screened at full-text level and identified for two separate reviews of quantitative and qualitative studies. In total, 3 qualitative papers and 3 quantitative papers were included in the final review. Figure 3.i below shows the process by which this was carried out.

Figure 3.i. Flow diagram (PRISMA, Moher et al., 2009)



Articles were assessed in line with the initial inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 2 above). Reasons for exclusion following full text analysis include:

- *Setting*
    - One quantitative study involved observations of consultations taking place as part of consultant training, therefore participants were, in effect, role playing rather than engaging in naturally occurring consultations as part of every-day casework (Guiney et al., 2020).
- *Focus of study*
    - One quantitative study (Barrett et al., 2019) observed the amount of coding needed for reliable estimates of communication, rather than a focus on the features of the communication.
    - One quantitative study (Ruble et al., 2011) included a specific form of consultation aimed at information gathering, with a focus on the quality of children's Individual Education Plan (IEP) subsequently developed, and the child's outcomes as a result, rather than features of collaboration.
    - One mixed-methods study (Lewis & Miller, 2011) was excluded as this focused on the language used by both the parent and the EP at different points in the conversation and the power imbalances within this. A large section of this research outlined which participant had control at each stage of the consultation rather than how the EP facilitated collaboration.

Exclusion of grey literature

Several unpublished Doctoral theses exploring consultation were identified during hand searches of the literature, yet not included in this review, for example Giles (2020), Langford (2021) and others cited and discussed in section 2.4.iii (p. 25), including Hobley (2005) and O'Brien (2000). The decision was made to include only peer reviewed studies in this review to ensure consistency and methodological quality of the research.

Appraisal procedure

Following this initial screening process, the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT - Hong et al., 2018) was used to consider the methodological quality of

the selected studies. This tool enables qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods empirical studies to be appraised. It is recommended that two reviewers are involved in this appraisal process as it can be a subjective process (Hong et al., 2018), therefore the author discussed the analysis during a tutorial. An overview of the analysis can be found in Appendix 1.

3.2.i Qualitative data extraction

Table 3 identifies the characteristics of each qualitative study, including the aims, methodology, consultation approach, participants and a summary of the paper, including factors identified as supporting collaboration. The nature of qualitative research means it can be difficult to assess the reliability and validity of the data therefore, instead, the trustworthiness and credibility of the study was considered.

Table 3: Table to show characteristics and key findings of included qualitative study

Study (Author, year, location)	Aims	Methodology	Approach to Consultation	Sample	Credibility / Transferability	Factors supporting collaboration	Key themes / findings
The process of psychological consultation. (Nolan & Moreland, 2014 – UK).	To describe what happens in consultation and explore how change can be facilitated by observing relationships through the language used. To fill the gap in research into the process of consultation.	Case studies of 7 consultations, facilitated by pairs of EPs. They were observed, recorded and analysed using qualitative discourse analysis to consider the function of words used, positioning and identification of ideologies. Observations of non-verbal communication strategies were taken. Semi structured interviews were carried out with parents and teachers 1 week	Consultee-centred consultation. Consultations included pairs of EPs, school staff, parents and sometimes other family members with a focus on school aged child (often primary) and concerns regarding academic progress or well-being of the child – social, emotional, behavioural or learning.	5 EPs 7 teachers 4 parents.	Naturalistic consultations taking place as part of EPs' daily casework. The researcher did not take part in the consultation however they did observe which may have affected participants' behaviour. The results may not be generalisable due to small sample sizes. The range of discourse analysis strategies used means the study would not be replicable.	-directed collaboration - demonstrated empathy - questioned, wondered and challenged - focused and refocused - summarised reformulated points - suggesting and explaining - restating and revising outcomes - offering a follow-up	- EPs used a range of strategies - EPs reported the need to foster collaboration by walking alongside people, being respectful and non-judgemental. - EPs reported needing to keep the child at the heart of the process and not pathologizing needs. - Teachers and parents reported appreciating having the opportunity of a

		and 3 months after consultation.					follow up, the use of questions to encourage problems being approached differently, "comfortable" questioning (69)
A grounded theory of EPs' mental health casework in schools (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020 - UK)	To consider the contribution of EPs in supporting children and young people's mental health needs during their casework working with school staff and parents or carers.	Grounded theory to generate a new theory regarding EPs applied practice in mental health casework. Data for analysis was gathered through semi-structured interviews.	EPs' casework consultations with parents and school staff focusing on child's mental health.	5 Educational Psychologists	EPs' perceptions of their casework	- being prepared to listen - empathising - offering containment - remove blame and normalise feelings - use of invitational language - looking for evidence to formulate hypotheses and apply psychological knowledge - flexible approach - challenge perceptions and	EPs were conceptualised as creating a context of caregiving through a positive, solution-focused approach, building collaboration and helping adults to reconstruct the situation.

						reframing behaviour - upskilling adults	
Research exploring parents', teachers' and educational psychologists' perceptions of consultation in a changing Irish context. (O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018 - Ireland)	To explore EPs' teachers and parents' perceptions of consultation.	A case study approach using semi-structured interviews to explore perceptions.	EPs' casework consultations with parents and school staff about academic or behavioural concerns.	3 EPs 3 parents 3 teachers	Such as small-scale sample may not be generalisable. However, it may be useful for all EPs to be aware of the themes – particularly those identified to improve consultation.	The overarching themes were: -support (observed through improvements for children; parents feeling supported; teachers feeling empowered; good use of time for EP) - understanding (teachers and EPs had different understandings of consultation. Teachers reported wanting more information about consultation; EPs	- EPs viewed consultation as a good use of time and resources - Disconnect between teacher and EPs' understanding of consultation - Collaboration and relationship were important - need to empower the partners in the consultation process by providing training and information so they can engage on a more equal basis.

						acknowledged they assumed teachers were clear on what consultation was) - valuing consultation (teachers and parents noted the benefits of everyone being together to gain a balanced view. EPs reported teachers were sometimes hard to engage and the relationship with parents and teachers was key).	
Synthesised Themes:	- Communication - All parties collaborating and valuing the process (aware of power imbalances) - EPs ensuring a supportive 'caregiving' approach						

3.2.ii Participants and methodology

A total of 32 participants from the UK and Ireland were included in the four qualitative studies. This included 14 EPs, 4 parents and 10 teachers. One study included direct observations of consultations about behaviour or academic concerns taking place naturally as part of EPs' daily casework (Nolan & Moreland, 2014). Two studies involve semi-structured interviews with either EPs (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020), or EPs, parents and teachers (O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018) about consultations that had previously taken place as part of casework to support students' academic, behavioural or mental health.

3.2.iii Synthesis of results

The themes and findings from these studies were synthesised to identify cross study themes. These are identified, in Table 4.

Table 4: Table to show synthesis of qualitative themes

Main Theme (Synthesis)	Subthemes	Examples from studies (synthesis)
1. Effective communication	Ensuring understanding	• EPs mentioned the entry process as vital to setting expectations (O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018) • When teachers did not feel positive about consultations, or were hard to engage, they reported not knowing enough about the process and what was involved (O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018)
	Careful use of language	• Questioning and wondering to facilitate conversations and check perceptions (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) • Asking questions that felt "comfortable, not like being probed" (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 69) • Avoiding use of jargon; using metaphors to engage teachers and parents (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 68) • Use of invitational language (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020) • Use of "open phrasing" such as 'let's' (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020, p. 8)
	Recognising and addressing issues	• Identifying and responding to gaps in knowledge to provide skills and strategies and deflect criticism (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020)

2. All parties involved and valuing the process	Downgrading status and addressing power imbalances	• Being explicit about the consultation being collaborative (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) • Recognising others' ability to bring knowledge and skills (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) • Downgrading expert status by suggesting topics of conversation, saying "I don't know but I'm wondering" (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 68) • Using the language of we/us (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) • Focusing and refocusing to consider different perspectives of the situation, such as asking "what shall we focus on today?" and keeping everyone "on track" (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 70) • Making suggesting and explaining reasons while inviting others to make suggestions to ensure shared understanding and strategy planning (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) • Using questions to build on everyone's contributions – particularly when addressing criticism or power imbalances (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) • Summarising and reformulating points, asking "have I missed anything?" to ensure everyone felt heard and to prompt consultees to share more information (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 70) • Being aware of power imbalances, including the consultee's feelings of reduced status in asking for help, and avoiding falling into "expert or parent" role (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 71)
	Upskilling adults	• Helping in a way that enables consultees to make changes rather than fixing situations (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) • Teachers feeling empowered (O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018)

		• Parents feeling supported, feeling “you’re not on your own and that there are things that can be done that do help” (O’Farrell & Kinsella, 2018, p. 321) • Upskilling adults – also addresses adults’ need for relatedness (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020) • Developing adults’ sense of self-efficacy by making decisions jointly – exploring and identifying skills and building on them (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020)
	Encouraging and valuing different perspectives	• Giving the teacher ownership to come up with strategies (O’Farrell & Kinsella, 2018) • Challenging perceptions and reframing behaviour to enable people to look at situations from different perspectives (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020) • Teachers and parents being together to gain a balanced view (O’Farrell & Kinsella, 2018)
3. EPs providing a supportive approach	Use of interpersonal skills	• Parents report the EP’s warmth and understanding made it a less “clinical and cold” approach, making it “a much easier process” (O’Farrell & Kinsella, 2018, p. 321) • Demonstrating empathy and deep listening –asking questions to check understanding and responding with ‘mmm’ (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p69; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020) • Ensuring consultees’ emotional safety by reassuring them they would be heard and helped (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) • Ensuring a gentle pace and using a warm tone of voice (Nolan & Moreland, 2014)

	• Tuning in to others' emotions, asking about them and showing it was good to talk about them without judging (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) – normalising feelings (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020) • Offering containment - when seeking help teachers are in a state of alarm, emotional fatigue, anxiety or feeling overwhelmed (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020) • Offering containment when challenging perceptions as this can lead to the escalation and expression of negative emotions (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020) • Ensuring adults' psychological needs were met to reduce feelings of anger, reduce care-seeking and allow open attitudes to change and learning (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020)
Positive approach focusing on the child and solutions, deflecting criticism from adults	• Keeping child central to conversations (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) • Ensuring child's needs were not pathologized (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) • Deflecting negative attention away from parents when teacher criticised (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) – removing blame (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020) • Using a solution-focused approach (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020)

3.3 Qualitative synthesis

Through the process of data extraction from the qualitative literature, the researcher identified a range of themes across the studies. These were organised into main themes: effective communication; all parties valuing the consultation; EPs providing a supportive approach. The findings from the studies relating to each of these themes will now be discussed.

3.3.i Theme 1: Communication

Throughout all studies, there was evidence of the need for EPs to demonstrate effective communication when facilitating collaboration by ensuring consultee's understanding of the process, the careful use of language and recognising and addressing issues. This appears to be important from the initial stages of consultation and throughout for the process to be collaborative. For example, O'Farrell and Kinsella (2018) suggest the "entry process" plays a "vital part in shaping parents' and teachers' expectations" (p. 323). When teachers were more difficult to engage, they reported not knowing enough about the process and what was involved in consultation (O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018). For example, one teacher said: "If we knew the processes involved … I think it could make the consultation process a bit more effective, if we knew what was happening" (p. 321). This suggests effective communication is important from the early stages.

EPs used language carefully in all consultations, demonstrating effective communication. For example, to encourage consultees to talk, EPs were observed asking questions and "wondering" about issues to facilitate conversations and check perceptions, while ensuring these felt "comfortable, not like being probed" (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p69). EPs also reported using invitational language, indicated in the tone of voice and open phrasing, including words such as "let's" (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020, p. 8). Further evidence of effective communication comes EPs' avoidance of jargon and providing examples which were accessible to everyone (Nolan & Moreland, 2014). For example, in one consultation, Nolan and Moreland (2014) report the EP

explained a hypothesis about a child's learning by comparing it to a jigsaw for all consultees to visualise (p. 68).

EPs' communication skills were also evident in their ability to quickly recognise issues to address and do so effectively. For example, they refer to the importance of identifying gaps in consultees' knowledge and providing them with skills and strategies to address this (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). Furthermore, EPs reported using more strength and solution-based approaches (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) and recognised the need to deflect teachers' criticism away from parents (Nolan & Moreland, 2014; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020).

3.3.ii Theme 2: All parties valuing the consultation process

Previous research has suggested consultees are more likely to view consultations positively if they value the process and goals (Erchul & Martens, 2010). This appears to have been the case in the studies presented in this review, with EPs achieving this in various ways including downgrading status and addressing power imbalances, upskilling adults and encouraging and valuing different perspectives.

There were various examples in the studies of EPs downgrading their 'expert' status which, it has been suggested, makes consultees feel more involved in the process (Gutkin, 1999). For example, they told consultees explicitly that consultation was a collaborative process and demonstrated this by using language such as "we" and "us" (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 68; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). In addition, they were observed suggesting topics of conversation, saying "I don't know but I'm wondering" (Nolan & Moreland, 3014, p. 68) rather than being directive. Furthermore, they appeared be aware of the knowledge and skills others brought the conversation and ensured this was acknowledged by, for example, making suggestions and explaining reasons while inviting others to make suggestions (Nolan & Moreland, 2014). EPs also used questions to build on the contributions of others, deflecting their expert

status, by summarising and reformulating points and focusing and refocusing conversations (Nolan & Moreland, 2014). For example, asking “have I missed anything?” ensured everyone felt heard and understood while prompting further information sharing, while “what shall we focus on today?” ensured everyone was involved (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 70).

There was also evidence of EPs addressing power imbalances within these consultations (Wagner, 2016) to ensure they did not fall into the “expert or parent role” (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 71). Nolan and Moreland (2014) suggest this is important given the consultee may feel they have a reduced status since they are asking for help.

Consultees reported valuing consultations due to EPs’ ability to support them in learning new skills and being given ownership to come up with new strategies, leaving teachers feeling “empowered” (O’Farrell & Kinsella, 2018, p. 321). Parents also reported feeling supported, saying “you could come out realizing you’re not on your own and that there are things that can be done that do help” (O’Farrell & Kinsella, 2018, p. 321). EPs also reported helping in a way that “enables consultees to make the changes to make things better (not simply fixing it for them)” (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 72). “Upskilling adults” in this way was also reported to address consultees’ need for relatedness while developing their knowledge base and competence (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020, p. 12). Furthermore, being involved in joint decision-making develops their sense of self-efficacy, through EPs identifying and building on their skills (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020).

Finally, EPs ensured the consultation process was valued by all consultees by encouraging and valuing different perspectives. Teachers and parents in O’Farrell and Kinsella’s study (2018) reported everyone meeting together led to a balanced view being formed of the situation. Furthermore, in Zafeiriou and Gulliford’s study (2020), EPs reported challenging perceptions and reframing

behaviours enabled everyone to consider situations from different perspectives which, in turn, could lead to new behaviours and skills to be internalized and effective support being put in place for children and young people.

3.3.iii Theme 3: EPs providing a supportive approach

Throughout the studies there was evidence of EPs supporting consultees through the use of their interpersonal skills. This is evident in a parents' comment suggesting the EP's warmth and understanding made it a less "clinical and cold" approach, making it "a much easier process" (O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018, p. 321). This "warmth" appears to have been achieved through tone of voice and gentle pace along with "appropriate body language, such as leaning towards the consultees, nodding and smiling" (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 69). Two studies also referred to the EPs demonstrating empathy and deep listening, such as by asking questions to check understanding and responding with "mmm" (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 69; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020).

The use of interpersonal skills and a "warm, professional confidence" from the EP appears to have been important to enable collaboration within the consultations (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 69. They suggest "for the consultees to be able to genuinely share and work on their concerns together they needed to feel emotionally safe, to be reassured that they would be heard and helped" (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 69). This idea was also supported in Zafeiriou and Gulliford's (2020) research which reported ensuring adults' emotional needs were met reduced feelings of anger, a reduction in "care-seeking behaviours" and ensured they were open to change and new learning (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). EPs in this study also referred to the need to offer containment to overwhelmed teachers who are often in a state of "alarm, emotional fatigue (and) anxiety" (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020, p. 10). Containment was also needed when challenging perceptions, to prevent the escalation and expression of negative emotions (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). This was also demonstrated through the suggestion that EPs tuned in to others' emotions to "normalise

them” (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020, p. 8) by asking about them and accepting them without judgement (Nolan & Moreland, 2014).

Evidence of EPs’ supportive approaches is evident in the way in which they were reported to ensure conversations were focused on the child (Nolan & Moreland, 2014) and using a solution-focused approach to deflecting conversations away from negative topics (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). For example, EPs removing “blame” from adults by offering empathy and sympathy to “acknowledge how difficult the situation was and that it was okay that she was finding it really tough” (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020, p. 8). Furthermore, they ensured the child was at the centre of the conversation and ensuring their needs were not pathologized (Nolan & Moreland, 2014).

3.4 Quantitative data extraction

Characteristics and key findings of the quantitative study can be seen in Table 5. The methodology, consultation approach and reliability and validity were all considered. The studies were not assessed using a weight of evidence model, as the focus was on language use, rather than statistical significance of their impact.

Table 5: Table to show the summary of characteristics and key findings from included quantitative studies

Study (Author, year, location)	Aims	Methodology	Approach to Consultation	Sample	Measures and Analysis	Validity / Reliability	Findings
Language in consultation: the effect of affect and verb tense. (Newman et al., 2017 – USA).	To consider whether verb tense and emotion words during the problem identification stage and analysis stage in instructional consultation. (Follow-up to the 2015 study).	Analysis of 116 transcriptions of consultations. using Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software.	Instructional Consultation (indirect academic and behavioural support to students by supporting teachers through relational support). These took place in the 2012-2013 academic year. The focus was on academic and/or behavioural concerns.	N=36: 18 consultants (second year graduate trainee school psychologists working at school-based sites where they completed consultation work and other experiences). 18 consultees – teachers requesting support for one or more difficulties with a student/group in their K-5th Grade or 8th Grade class.	Linguistic Inquiry Word Count software was used to analyse consultations for verb tenses and emotion words. Collaboration, consultee outcomes and client outcomes were measured by researchers using magnitude coding through a 3-point scale to quantify qualitative data taken from consultants' reflection logs and own analysis.	Care should be taken when generalising results due to the relatively small sample size and the fact that consultants were trainee school psychologists. The words used may have been affected by their level of confidence. Analysis was completed from archival data at least 4 years after the original consultations, therefore no self-report measures could be taken for collaboration	Emotion words made a difference to consultation. The consultants' use of positive words affected the consultee's use of words, improved skills and their perception of students. Consultee present tense verb use correlated with positive outcomes. Consultant past tense verb use correlated negatively with ratings of the consultation relationship.

						and client outcomes. These were therefore based on researcher judgement which may not be accurate. Transcriptions involved up to 30 minutes of consultations for analysis rather than the whole consultation which may affect results. Language use may have differed at other stages of the consultation. Language use may differ between consultation approaches.	
Language use in consultation: Can “we” help teachers and	To examine how language is used by consultants in	Analysis of 116 transcriptions of consultations using Linguistic	Instructional Consultation (indirect academic and	N=36: 18 consultants (second year graduate trainee	LIWC software was used to analyse 116 transcripts for	Care should be taken when generalising results due to	Consultants and consultees communicate in different ways

students? (Newman et al., 2015 – USA).	training and consultees and to explore the relation between language use and the collaborative relationship, consultee outcomes and client outcomes.	Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software to calculate pronoun use and Language Style Matching (LSM) features.	behavioural support to students by supporting teachers through relational support). These took place in the 2012-2013 academic year. The focus was on academic and/or behavioural concerns.	school psychologists working at school-based sites where they completed consultation work and other experiences). 18 consultees – teachers who voluntarily requested support for one or more difficulties with a student/group in their K-5th Grade or 8th Grade class.	pronoun use and LSM features. This included pronouns, articles, conjunctions, prepositions, auxiliary verbs, high frequency adverbs, negations and quantifiers. Collaboration and client outcomes were measured by researchers using magnitude coding through a 3-point scale to quantify qualitative data taken from consultants' reflection logs and own analysis.	the relatively small sample size and the fact that consultants were trainee school psychologists. The words used may have been affected by their level of confidence. Analysis was completed from archival data at least 2 years after the original consultations, therefore no self-report measures could be taken for collaboration and client outcomes. These were therefore based on researcher judgement which may not be accurate.	during consultations and this impacts on the process, the collaboration and consultee and client outcomes. Consultees speak more. Consultants use the word 'we more. Consultees use 'I', 'he' and 'she' and 'they' When both parties used 'we' it positively correlated with consultee outcomes, improved skills and their perceptions of students. This may suggest both parties seeing it as "our" problem may be linked to the

						Transcriptions involved up to 30 minutes of consultations for analysis rather than the whole consultation which may affect results. Language use may have differed at other stages of the consultation. Language use may differ between consultation approaches.	potential for behaviour change.
Unpacking, Conjoint behavioural consultation: A latent profile analysis of parent-teacher interactions. Holmes et al (2021). 31 (3), p307-333 – USA.	To explore the interactions between parents and teachers in conjoint behavioural consultations. This study builds on other studies which have focused on either speech	Analysis of recordings of consultations. Using Latent profiling to identify common characteristics between groups.	Conjoint Behavioural Consultation (a four-stage process)	193 parents (and their children) 114 teachers 21 consultants (school psychologists, counselling psychologists, educational administrators, special	Interactional Sense-Making (ISM) measured using an adapted version of the ISM rating scales. Parent-teacher relationships measured using the parent-teacher	Naturalistic consultations. This involved a specific four stage process – different strategies may be used when the consultation approach is more flexible.	Communication is an important feature of teacher-parent relationships, enabling collaboration, information sharing and problem solving. Engagement, turn-taking, perspective-

	acts or outcomes.			education consultants) Participants were drawn from the treatment group across 2 large-scale randomised controlled trials examining CBC efficacy. Participants in this study were randomly selected subject to criteria being met: took part in CBC and recordings available; reported demographic characteristics; teachers reported on relationship following CBC.	relationship scale. Observations to explore the use of interactional sense making behaviours (engagement, turn-taking, perspective-taking, coherence). Latent Profiling Analysis used to observe discrete patters of ISM between parents and teachers. These were assessed for their statistical significance.	Not all consultants were school psychologists, therefore it is not clear whether they had the same training or understanding of the processes involved. The results may therefore not reflect EP practice. Participants were predominantly white, therefore does not consider any cultural differences in interaction.	taking and coherence are important features of this. Consultants should aim to ensure these are facilitated during consultation.

3.4.i Participants

A total of 364 participants were involved in the consultations in these studies. This included 39 school consultants, although not all were school psychologists, 132 teachers and 193 parents. Two studies presented analyses from the same consultations therefore the same participants were involved. All studies took place in the USA.

3.4.ii Methodologies

Two studies used Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count Software to analyse transcriptions made by consultants of their own interactional consultations. These studies used the same 'interactional' consultations, with the focus of analysis different in each study. One study involved an analysis of recordings of conjoint behavioural consultations to explore the relationship between parents and teachers and their interactional sense making behaviours. Latent Profiling Analysis was used to determine patterns of behaviours between teachers and parents.

3.5 Quantitative research summary

The quantitative studies produced information about various topics which can be summarised as: use of language: pronouns, verbs and emotion words; use of interaction strategies. It should be noted these studies were all from the USA where the term 'school psychologist' is used rather than EP and one study featured other professionals as consultants. The terms 'consultant' and 'school psychologist' will therefore be used interchangeably throughout this summary to reflect this. The way in which these findings were presented in the studies will now be outlined.

3.5.i Use of language: pronouns, verb tense, emotion words

Newman et al. (2015) studied transcripts of consultations between trainee school psychologists and teachers. They observed differences in the way consultants and consultees communicated during consultations, such as the

consultee talking more, which is consistent with existing research (Gutkin & Curtis, 2009). Differences were also observed in the use of the word 'we', with the consultant using this significantly more than consultees. When consultees use the word 'we' consultants perceived the relationship to be more collaborative, although their own use of the word did not affect this perception. Furthermore, the more 'we" was used by both the consultant and consultee, the better the outcomes for students and consultees, including "improved skills or positive changes in the teacher's perception of the student" (Newman et al., 2015, p21). This may reflect the importance of both parties viewing the problem as joint and to be worked on together (Newman et al., 2015). These findings also suggest "it is more likely that interpersonal dynamics influence language than it is that deliberate use of certain language patterns affect how people perceive one another" (Newman et al., 2015, p. 21). On the other hand, use of the word "they" was negatively correlated with perceptions of collaboration and outcomes, suggesting the focus is less on joint working, with the problem no longer shared, but someone else's (Newman et al., 2015).

The second study by Newman et al. (2017) found verb tenses affected perceptions of collaboration in consultations. For example, when a high number of past tense verbs were used, relationships were perceived as less collaborative and both consultants and consultees used fewer future tense verbs. This may suggest "the more a consultant enquires about the past, the less the dyad is focused on solutions or interventions" (Newman et al., 2017, p. 12). Consultants in this study also used significantly more positive emotion words than consultees and this correlated significantly with consultees' use. This may indicate consultants were talking positively about issues, reporting: "you said he was having a *good* day!"; "So he has a good memory."; "He's where he should be,"; "He's in the average range" (Newman et al., 2017, p. 13). This may be because it is easier for consultees to be positive about situations, compared to the "frustrated consultee" or an attempt to reframe the situation more positively (Newman et al., 2017, p. 13).

Although consultee and client outcomes were not affected when both the consultant and consultee used positive emotion words, consultees' use was positively correlated with their outcomes (Newman et al., 2017). This suggests "they were more likely to exhibit skill improvement or positive changes in their perceptions of clients" when problems were positively constructed during the problem identification and analysis stage of the consultation (Newman et al., 2017, p. 13).

3.5.ii Use of interaction strategies

Holmes et al.'s (2021) study found communication can impact collaboration during consultation. When examining audio-recordings of consultations, researchers considered parents' and teachers' interactional sense-making behaviours. These are defined within the study as including: "(a) engaging interactions (both parents and teachers show interest in the process and communicate in a warm manner); (b) turn-taking (interactions are fluid and dynamic and turns are evenly distributed); (c) perspective-taking (parents and teachers attend to and confirm others' perspective); and (d) coherent communication (parents and teachers share information that is integrated and cohesive) (Holmes et al., 2021, p. 316).

Teachers in this study reported higher quality relationships with parents during consultations where high to moderately high levels of interactional sense-making behaviours were observed. In addition, both parents and teachers reported the quality of communication was better during these consultations. Holmes et al. (2021) conclude engagement, perspective-taking and turn-taking are important features for communication between parents and teachers. They suggest it is important for consultants to facilitate these behaviours during interactions. Findings from this study cannot provide a comprehensive view of interactions within consultations given that it involves conjoint behavioural consultations - a prescriptive approach focusing on specific needs, and not always facilitated by school psychologists. Furthermore, the analysis focused on one aspect of these consultations – formal problem-problem solving -

therefore does not consider interactions during other stages of the process such as needs identification. However, the results suggest it may be useful to consider whether EPs facilitating the interactional strategies identified in this research leads to collaboration in other forms of consultation.

3.6 Summary

This systematic review aimed to explore the interactions taking place within collaborative school-based consultations identified in research carried out over the past 20 years. Both quantitative and qualitative research presented examples of behaviours displayed by teachers, parents and EPs which may facilitate collaboration. When the data from all six studies is combined, the overarching theme appears to be the importance of the EP making use of their communication and interpersonal skills, through careful use of language, to create a supportive environment enabling everyone to engage fully in the process. This supports earlier research from Gutkin (1999) and West and Idol (1987).

3.6.i Use of language

Careful use of language, including pronoun use, can help EPs to understand perspectives of a problem (Newman et al., 2015) and create a sense of working together by downgrading their status (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020; Nolan & Moreland, 2014). This is further supported by the use of open phrasing, questioning and wondering (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020; Nolan & Moreland, 2014). Keeping conversations in the present-tense while ensuring they are positive and solution-focused also appeared to be important features of consultations in both the qualitative and quantitative research (Newman et al., 2017; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020; Nolan & Moreland, 2014).

Consultants clearly communicating the consultation process to parents and teachers (O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018; Nolan & Moreland, 2014) and ensuring they were involved and valued as part of the shared problem-solving process, also assisted collaboration (Holmes et al., 2021; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020;

Nolan & Moreland, 2014). Effective communication between parents and teachers may also support this, demonstrated by turn-taking, a "warm manner" (Holmes et al., 2021, p. 316) and listening to and valuing others' perspectives (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020; O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018). This was supported by EPs providing summaries to ensure perspectives are understood by everyone (Holmes et al., 2021; Nolan & Moreland, 2014; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). However, Newman et al. (2015) suggest it is more likely interpersonal dynamics affect language rather than the deliberate use of language affecting how people perceive one another, indicating EPs' interpersonal skills are an essential factor in facilitating effective communication.

3.6.ii A supportive environment

The use of a consultants' interpersonal skills also appeared to be essential in creating the warm, supportive environment needed to ensure the open attitudes necessary for collaboration (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020; O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018). As above, this appeared to be achieved through keeping conversations in the present-tense while ensuring they are positive and solution-focused (Newman et al., 2017; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020; Nolan & Moreland, 2014). Consultants acknowledging, responding to and containing emotions while deflecting criticism and removing blame also appeared important (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020; Nolan & Moreland, 2014). This appeared to create an atmosphere in which adults felt supported and ready to learn the skills needed to improve outcomes for children and young people (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020; Nolan & Moreland, 2014; O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018; Holmes et al,, 2021; Newman et al., 2015, 2017).

3.6.iii Engagement in the process

Finally, consultants' interpersonal skills appeared to be important in ensuring all consultees actively engaged in the process. For example, when both consultees and consultants used 'we' language, possibly indicating a sense of working together, outcomes improved for children and young people (Newman et al., 2015). Active engagement was demonstrated through parents and

teachers showing an interest in conversations (Holmes et al., 2021) and appeared to be facilitated by consultants inviting everyone to contribute and building on their suggestions (Nolan & Moreland, 2014).

3.7 Conclusion

This review identifies various interactions taking place within collaborative consultations. It appears to suggest that the careful use of language can play an important role in collaborative consultation. A detailed analysis of the interactions and language used by EPs when attempting to facilitate collaboration in consultation is therefore deemed to be warranted.

4. Research Question

The research presented previously, indicates EPs may use consultation when working with school staff to support rising rates of children and young people described as having SEMH needs in UK schools. There appears to be a need for further qualitative research into collaborative joint home-school consultations and the language used within them, given the role that this can play in indirectly supporting children and young people. This is particularly important as collaboration is considered to be the most essential element of consultation (Gutkin and Curtis, 209, p. 600). If EPs are to use consultation as a way of supporting possible SEMH needs, it is important to be aware of the impact of language when attempting to facilitate collaboration.

This research will therefore consider how EPs facilitate collaborative joint consultations to help school staff and parents work together to support possible SEMH needs in schools, by exploring the language used and the effect it has on interactions. Therefore, the research question guiding this research is:

How do EPs use language to facilitate collaboration with parents and school staff within joint consultations focusing on possible SEMH needs in primary and secondary schools?

The study aims to:

- Identify the language used by teachers and parents in joint consultations when constructing accounts of events and positioning their roles within them. This will enable possible changes in these constructions to be observed through interaction with the EPs as they seek to facilitate collaboration. It may also identify the development of shared understandings and the co-production of strategies through a focus on turn-taking and pronoun use, as identified in the Systematic Literature Review (Section 3).

- Identify EPs' use of language when seeking to facilitate collaboration during consultations to develop shared understandings of a young person's needs and co-produce strategies to support them.

The aims of this study have been presented separately to reflect that research presented in this chapter regarding teachers' roles in supporting SEMH needs and EPs' use of language in joint consultations will be considered. However, the aims are intrinsically linked as the way in which parents and teachers construct events and their roles may affect interactions within the consultations and therefore EPs' responses. It is hoped this research will support EPs to better understand the language that can influence collaboration within joint home-school consultations. It will also add to the qualitative research base into consultation in the UK, building on existing research by exploring joint consultations and looking specifically at those concerning children and young people described as having SEMH needs.

5. Methodology

This chapter considers the main paradigms guiding applied research before outlining the paradigm this study falls under, and its ontological and epistemological position. Possible approaches to researching language use within consultations are outlined, including their strengths and limitations, before explaining the rationale for the use of Conversation Analysis and Discursive Psychology in this study. The ethical considerations underpinning this research are presented followed by a description of the research design and the analytic procedure used.

5.1 Research paradigms

Research paradigms refer to the "basic beliefs" or "worldview" that guide a researcher's thinking and actions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; p. 105). A researcher's worldview affects their ontological views (the nature of reality and what can be known about it) and their epistemological views (the nature of knowledge and individuals' relationship with it) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In turn, this influences how the researcher explores a phenomenon, including the methods used (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Early psychological research was guided by traditional positivist and postpositivist paradigms, seeking to identify a universal truth (Mertens, 2020). In contrast, postmodern paradigms, including constructionism and interpretivism focus on how individuals perceive and interpret their experiences, therefore assume multiple realities exist (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This has enabled human experiences to be researched further, allowing phenomena such as thoughts and feelings to be studied in addition to directly observable behaviour (Robson & McCarten, 2016).

An interest in alternative paradigms, it has been suggested, stemmed from a dissatisfaction with the positivist overemphasis on quantitative methods and has

led to an increase in qualitative methods being used or a combination of the two (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). Although some research methods may be more suited to specific philosophical beliefs, researchers in all paradigms increasingly make use of the range of research methods available (Robson & McCartan, 2016). It has been suggested this can make the distinction between paradigms unclear, with shared views about the nature of reality and the rationale for research methods (Mertens, 2020). However, Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest paradigms are crucial for guiding research, therefore a researchers' ontology and epistemology should be clearly identified and described before research begins. The next section therefore outlines the philosophical underpinnings of the present research.

5.1.i Philosophical underpinnings of the present study

Paradigm

This study aims to explore interactions within EPs' consultations with school staff and parents, with a focus on the way in which language is used. It is assumed individuals will have different experiences and interpretations of situations with language used to construct this (Burr, 1995). As a result, there are multiple understandings, rather than single, observable truth (Gray, 2009, p29). This places this research within an interpretivist paradigm.

Ontology

Ontology is concerned with the nature of existence. This study assumes individuals construct their own version of reality through social interactions with others. This implies there are many possible realities rather than a single, identifiable 'truth' (Gray, 2009, p. 29), placing the research within relativist ontology. The researcher's job is to explore the multiple ways in which meaning and knowledge have been constructed (Mertens, 2020).

Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge. This study assumes within consultations, individuals structure accounts of events to achieve certain effects (Burr, 1995, p. 47; Willig, 2013). This standpoint assumes accounts may therefore vary through interaction with others placing the research firmly within a social constructionist epistemology (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). There are two main forms of social constructionist theory and research. Micro approaches focus on the structure of language use within interactions and the way in which knowledge is constructed through everyday discourse to achieve interactional goals (Burr, 2015). Some analysts suggest distinctions can be made between types of everyday discourse – particularly 'ordinary' conversations and those in institutional settings in which there may not be equal opportunities to speak (Heritage, 1988; Drew, 1991). Macro approaches acknowledge the concept of power in social structures, social relations and institutional practices (Burr, 2015).

This study takes a micro social constructionist approach, exploring interactions between the EP, school staff and parents through a discourse analysis to identify how events are constructed throughout joint consultations. This includes consideration of the function of language use (Phillips and Hardy, 2011; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Burr, 1995; Willig, 2013). As the researcher becomes part of this construction when analysing discourse, constant reflexivity is needed throughout the process (Philips & Hardy, 2011).

Methods of research and analysis

The research method selected for the present study has been influenced by the constructionist paradigm with a qualitative approach, discourse analysis, selected. The rationale for this is considered below.

5.2 Research approaches

This section considers approaches used in previous research into consultation before explaining why a qualitative approach focusing on the use of language was selected in the present study.

5.2.i Quantitative approaches

Existing consultation research has recognised the importance of studying language use, drawing largely on quantitative approaches (Erchul et al., 2018). Quantitative research has positivist underpinnings and the experimental control it provides ensures valid inferences can be drawn – a major goal of research (Gresham, 2014),

Early research by Bergan and Tombari (1975) introduced the Consultation Analysis Record (CAR) to observe the use of verbal statements in behavioural consultations and later, problem-solving consultations (Erchul, et al., 2018). The CAR involves producing codes to categorise and quantify responses by classifying units of talk. These codes include *Source* (who is speaking); *Content* (coding the nature of topics discussed); *Process* (functions performed by the speaker) and *Control* (requesting action or seeking information) (Bergan & Tombari, 1975). Erchul et al. (2018) suggest the CAR enables features of effective consultations to be identified, with at least 20 published studies using this approach. This has included the use of consultants' clear, specific messages (Tombari & Bergan, 1978); consultants use of language to seek rather than give information (Gutkin, 1996); actively seeking consultees' opinions (Martens & Lewandowski, 1989); conversations remaining on topic (Curtis & Watson, 1980);

It has, however, been criticised for observing statements in isolation (Erchul, et al. (1999). As this study involves exploring interactions between EPs, parents and school staff, the use of language cannot be seen in isolation due to complexity of these interactions (Newman & Clare, 2016). As a result the CAR

was not considered appropriate. Alternative coding systems have been developed to acknowledge the relational nature of consultation (Erchul et al., 1999). This has led to observations of conversational patterns such as dominance and control (Erchul et al., 1999) the effect of pronouns, affective language and verb tense use (Newman et al., 2015, 2017). These approaches were also rejected for this study, however, due to the possibility of losing important details within interactions by quantifying specific features of language.

A review of the literature, outlined in chapters three and four, suggests a gap exists in consultation research for both qualitative research and studies of language in situ, influencing the approach to this study. Qualitative methods enabling this to be explored were therefore considered and outlined below.

5.2.ii Qualitative approaches

Qualitative approaches are increasingly used to study consultation, providing insight into complex interactions that are difficult to quantify, such as interpersonal and problem-solving processes and socio-political contexts (Meyers et al., 2014). Furthermore, Meyers et al. (2014) suggest qualitative methods enable interactions to be studied in context, with a focus on how participants can be engaged and their perceptions understood. A qualitative approach was therefore considered appropriate for this study which seeks to explore interactions in joint consultations. A variety of methods to study this have been used in existing research and are now considered.

O'Farrell and Kinsella (2018) conducted semi-structured interviews with parents, teachers and EPs to explore perceptions of effective consultations. Semi-structured interviews are widely used and offer researchers the flexibility to develop conversations in ways that may not have been anticipated (Brown & Danaher, 2019). However, they have been criticised for "obscuring the importance of how people 'do things'" (Silverman, 2000). As this approach relies on participants' reflective accounts of consultations, it was not felt

appropriate for the present study. It is hoped exploring language use as it happens will ensure a more accurate picture of interactions without any bias through questions asked (Pomerantz, 2008).

Zafeiriou and Gulliford (2020) took a grounded theory approach to explore how EPs use consultation when working with school staff to support students' SEMH needs. Grounded theory involves the researcher constructing theory from data to offer "insight and solutions" to participants' issues (Corbin, 2017, p. 302). It seeks to understand participants' perceptions and experiences by focusing on language, meaning and actions (Charmaz, 2019) by asking open-ended interview questions (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012). Whereas most qualitative research answers questions about "what and how" grounded theory can both identify and answer "why" questions (Charmaz, 2017, p. 299). Grounded theory is one of the most widely used approaches to qualitative research (Charmaz, 2019). However, it was not appropriate for use in the present study as the author is seeking to observe the use of language when facilitating collaboration within joint consultations, therefore an approach focusing on the use of language in situ was considered more appropriate.

Nolan and Moreland (2014) used discourse analysis to explore the processes of consultation. This approach aims to observe how language is used in everyday interactions to create specific actions (Burr, 2015) though identifying the function of talk, including justification, explaining, excusing, blaming and ideological purposes such as legitimising power (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). This approach was thought to be appropriate for use in this research to support an analysis of how collaboration may be facilitated within joint consultations and is considered in more detail in section 5.3.

5.2.iii Mixed methods

Some researchers have combined qualitative and quantitative approaches in consultation research – drawing on the strengths of both while accounting for

some of the weaknesses. When exploring institutional talk within a conversation between an EP and a mother, Lewis and Miller (2011) explored quantitative data including the number of facts, opinions and requests for information along with a qualitative analysis of the use of storytelling and strategies to persuade and justify. Benn et al. (2008) examined language use in role-play problem-identification consultations between consultants and teachers. Quantitative data was gathered to explore the frequency of questions and the content of verbalisations while a qualitative analysis explored the consultants' communication skills. Benn et al. (2008) concluded qualitative analysis provided "richer and more meaningful results" than coding individual verbalisations (Benn et al., 2008, p. 78). A mixed methods approach was considered for the present study, however it was rejected to ensure a focus on the qualitative aspect of interactions, reflecting interpersonal and relational dynamics of joint consultation (Newman and Clare, 2016).

5.2.iv Summary and rationale for this research

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research can provide helpful information when exploring interactions within consultations. This study is set within the context of EPs working with parents and school staff to support young people's SEMH needs. A qualitative approach was therefore considered most appropriate to explore the complex interactions occurring in these joint consultations in which EPs seek to facilitate collaboration when developing shared understandings and co-produce supportive strategies. A consideration of qualitative approaches to analysing discourse which were considered for this research is presented below.

5.3 Analysing discourse

This section begins by presenting an overview of the approaches available to researchers seeking to analyse discourse and considered for use in this study. An explanation of the two approaches which were chosen to draw on - Conversation Analysis and Discursive Psychology - is then presented, including

a consideration of their strengths and weaknesses and the rationale for their use.

5.3.i Discourse Analysis

The importance of analysing the language in interactions has been acknowledged as it is “the most pervasive form of interaction between people” (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p9). Discourse analysts take a social constructionist view that people use language to construct versions of the social world, rather than language being a route to understanding internal thoughts (Burr, 2015). As a result, language is considered a form of action and leads to knowledge being created through interactions (Burr, 2015). This approach lends itself to this study which seeks to explore language use from a social constructionist perspective. Potter and Wetherell (1987) suggest constructions of the world through interactions is not always conscious and emerges as people try to make sense of the phenomena being discussed. Language use can therefore vary between situations, depending on the actions the speaker hopes to achieve (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

Potter and Wetherell (1987) summarise this by suggesting discourse analysis is based on the following guiding principles:

1. Language is used for a variety of functions and its use has consequences.
2. Language is both constructed and constructive.
3. The same phenomenon can be described in a number of different ways.
4. There will be considerable variation in accounts.
5. There is no fool-proof way to deal with this variation.
6. The constructive and flexible ways in which language is used should themselves become a central topic of study.
   (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 35).

Discourse analysis provides a framework to enable the function of every-day language use to be explored (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). This involves analysis of either the broad, ideological aspects of discourse or a micro analysis, focusing on the organisation of the conversation (Wiggins, 2017). The approach has been used to analyse the content of interactions and power relationships between EPs and parents or school staff (Billington, 1995; Lewis & Miller, 2011; Nolan & Moreland, 2014).

Some analysts debate whether EPs' consultations can be considered natural interactions and therefore whether the language within them could be considered 'every-day' language (Billig, 1999). As previously stated, Heritage (1988) suggests a distinction should be made between 'ordinary' conversations and those specific to specialized or institutional settings, such as schools – referred to as 'institutional talk'. Drew (1991) suggests while participants share equal rights to speak in conversations, this may not be the case with talk in institutional settings. However, EP consultations are often referred to as "conversations that make a difference" (Wagner, 2000, p. 14) and are a common feature of their work. Furthermore, research suggests EPs aim to facilitate opportunities for everyone to talk by recognising and building on their knowledge and contributions (Nolan & Moreland, 2014). Therefore, while debates around the potential power issues present within interactions in institutional settings are acknowledged, EPs' consultations are considered a recognised form of every-day language for the purpose of this research. The use of discourse analysis to explore interactions within joint consultations therefore appears appropriate.

Definitions and forms of discourse analysis have changed over the past 30 years and are likely to continue to do so as the approach develops further (Wiggins, 2017). However, at the time of writing, five main approaches exist, outlined in Table 6.

Table 6: Table summarising the five main approaches to discourse analysis (Adapted from Wiggins, 2017, p. 33)

Form of discourse analysis	Key Aim	Example Data	Examples of Analytic Tools
Conversation Analysis	To identify the organisational structure of talk underpinning interactions in natural settings and the categories used to perform actions.	- Naturalistic interactions - Online interactions (text)	-Turn-taking organisation - Sequences of interactions - Paired actions - Repair organisations - Deviant organisation (departures from the average pattern)
Discursive Psychology	To examine how psychological concepts are used and managed in discourse and the implications of these for our understanding of social interaction and psychology.	- Naturalistic interactions - Interviews - Focus groups - Online interactions (text)	- Category entitlements - Disclaimers - Extreme case formulations - Scripting - Footing shifts
Critical Discursive Psychology	To identify the culturally available repertoires that shape our understanding of a topic and define the subject positions available within that topic.	- Interviews - Focus Groups - News media text	- Interpretative repertoires - Ideological dilemmas - Subject positions
Foucauldian Psychology	To examine how truths about the world are revealed through discourse and how these influence people's ways of being in and experiencing the world.	- Interviews - Focus groups - Written texts (government documents, adverts, historical documents - Visual images	- Discourses -Subject positions and positioning - Subjectivity - Genealogical analysis
Critical Discourse Analysis	To reveal the hidden ideologies that marginalise or oppress individuals or groups in society and to undermine these ideologies.	-Media text and images (advertisements, policy documents, webpages) - Political speeches and debates	- Lexical choice - Absences - Over-lexicalisation - Ideological opposites

Each of the five approaches outlined in Table 6 provide a different perspective on discourse. Foucauldian and Critical Discourse Analysis consider how issues of power and influence are revealed through talk, while Conversation Analysis

and Discursive Psychology focus on the details of the structure and organisation of language. Critical Discursive Psychology is said to lie somewhere in between, acknowledging both broad and detailed information (Wiggins, 2017).

Although it is important for EPs to be aware of how language can be used to create or reinforce positions of power during meetings between parents and school staff, this is not the focus for the present study. As a result, Foucauldian and critical discourse analytic approaches were discounted. Critical discursive psychology was discounted as issues around culture within the consultation is not a focus for this study. As this study is concerned with exploring EPs' facilitation of collaboration within joint consultations, including how events are constructed and how EPs seek to develop shared understandings and co-produce next steps, a detailed analysis of the structure of language used is needed. A consideration of the approaches offering this insight, Conversation Analysis and Discursive Psychology, is outlined below.

5.3.ii Conversation Analysis

Conversation Analysis (CA) is considered the most "micro" of all discourse analysis approaches (Burr, 1995, p. 181). It focuses on the "structure and organisation of talk and how actions are achieved through the careful arrangement of talk, gesture, eye gaze and objects," (Wiggins, 2017, p. 36). This involves analysing sequences of interactions, including turn-taking and a microanalysis of features such as intonation and pauses (Wooffitt, 2005). It assumes utterances perform actions which, in turn, invite or limit further actions (Wooffitt, 2005), therefore actions such as turn-taking are explored by identifying adjacency pairs – actions inviting subsequent responses such as how someone is selected to be the next speaker (Schegloff, 2007). This includes consideration of actions such as questions and answers; complaints and apologies, excuses or denials and when turns appear to be coming to an end. These are considered further in figure 5.iii, page 95. A detailed analysis of

the transcription of conversations, capturing what was said and how, is also considered including hesitations, false starts and repairs (Burr, 2015).

Observing these “building blocks of interaction” (Wiggins, 2017, p. 36) can lead to an understanding of how social order and social norms develop. This approach is therefore often used to explore talk in institutional settings, including schools (Lewis & Miller, 2011) suggesting it would be a useful method when researching EPs’ joint consultations. Burr (2015) reports CA originated from a sociology background through the work of Harvey Sacks in the 1960s as a method of studying naturally occurring interactions. Conversation analysts do not attempt to look “beyond the text”, or consider power relations, instead focusing the more objective features of the interaction and how people use language for certain effect (Burr, 2015, p. 183).

Strengths and limitations of Conversation Analysis

Wooffitt (2005) suggests “conversation analysis offers the most sophisticated and robust account of language in action” (p. 2), with a consistent method for analysis. As a result, it offers a highly sensitive way of understanding social life (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2017). Furthermore, the focus on what can be observed objectively within interactions means CA is more aligned with traditional paradigms of social science, with results being more objective, reliable and valid than other forms of DA (Burr, 2015).

Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2017), however, suggest as discrete interactions are observed, analysis can only explain what is happening in that setting and therefore caution against generalisation. Furthermore, the approach needs to be developed further as there remains a lot to learn about the features of interaction (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2017). A further limitation is the time-consuming nature of CA as researchers need to learn the detailed analytic approach to ensure it is carried out effectively which can be a barrier to its use (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2017).

CA offers much to the understanding of interactions and is often drawn on when using other forms of discourse analysis, including Discursive Psychology. This influenced the combination of approaches used in this study which will be explored further below.

5.3.iii Discursive Psychology

Discursive Psychology (DP) developed from Potter and Wetherell's (1987) discourse analysis approach and is based on the principles that discourse is:

- constructed and constructive – it is constructed of "linguistic building blocks" including words and categories which are used in a particular way to create a version of the world (Wiggins and Potter, 2017, p. 77).
- action oriented.
- situated within a specific environment in which words can be understood in terms of what precedes or follows them.

DP is based on the view that talk should be studied in terms of how it is constructed and organised to create actions. Potter and Edwards, (1999, p. 2) define actions as the "practical, technical, and interpersonal tasks that people perform" in their every-day life. Detailed transcription methods are used to capture micro features about how words are spoken in naturally occurring interactions (Burr, 2015), which could include EPs' consultations. In these respects, there are similarities with CA. However, whereas CA is based on a "principled reluctance" to draw on the characteristics of the setting and participants (Wooffitt, 2005, p. 63), discursive psychologists suggest to fully understand language use, it must be examined in situ and as it happens with the situational context being a key feature (Wiggins & Potter, 2017). Language must therefore be analysed in terms of the interactional context (the formality of the situation and individual's status within it), the rhetorical framework (how discourse shapes versions of events) and turn-by-turn interactions (what comes before and after utterances) (Wiggins, 2017). It therefore appears to be a helpful approach when studying the interactions within joint consultations, including the way individuals describe events associated with SEMH needs and

their roles within them, and how EPs seek to facilitate collaboration and develop shared understandings.

DP assumes individuals act within a moral, local framework of conventions and rules about right or wrong (Burr, 2015). When constructing accounts, Burr (2015) suggests individuals position themselves in certain ways by constructing descriptions of their actions as morally justifiable. Discursive psychologists therefore focus on how people describe themselves, others and events as "factual" and how they "legitimise their actions (Burr, 2015, p. 184). This involves a consideration of 'rhetorical organisation' – how accounts are framed to build credibility and to defend against possible objections (Burr, 2015).

Potter and Edwards (2003) suggest there is a complex relationship between the construction of descriptions of people and events in interactions and the speaker's mental state. However, the DP approach rejects traditional theories of cognitive psychology which suggest language is a vehicle for thought (Wiggins, 2017). As Burr (2015) suggests knowledge is constructed during interactions and language is used to achieve specific actions, this implies emotions cannot be inferred from what people say. DP suggests instead, expressions of emotions, such as anger and jealousy, are actions or resources that are used to achieve a social act such as blaming others or justifying actions (Burr, 2015). DP analysis therefore focuses on the use of "discursive devices and rhetorical skills used in interactions, such as justifications, disclaimers, attribution and blamings" and the effect they have (Burr, 2015, p. 146). Furthermore, interpretative repertoires including the use of metaphors are observed to consider how events are described and evaluated (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

Discursive psychologists suggest features of talk may not be used consciously or reflect the speaker's true opinions – they are "tools" used to construct descriptions of people and events in a given situation (Burr, 2015). As a result,

variations in accounts often occur, which need to be considered in terms of the action being achieved, whether the change occurs in response to other speakers and what the impact is. (Burr, 2015; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Given the social constructionist epistemology of the current study, a Discursive Psychology approach was thought to be appropriate to explore how teachers and parents construct situations and their roles within them and the possible impact of features of the EPs' talk.

Strengths of Discursive Psychology

Critical Psychologists, including Billington and Williams (2017) have praised approaches such as DP for appreciating the power and influence of language in constructing perceptions of reality. Further support for DP comes from the analysis of interactions taking place in 'naturalistic' settings and capturing talk in day-to-day interactions (Wiggins & Potter, 2017, p. 78). This ensures interactions and conversation topics are not influenced by the researcher's questions – a criticism directed at Potter and Wetherell's (1987) earlier work based on the analysis of semi-structured interviews. Capturing life "as it happens" also enables the research to be guided by issues that may not have been anticipated by the researcher (Wiggins & Potter, 2017, p. 79). Pomerantz (2008) suggests taking interactions and discourse as the data in this way is more insightful than analysing interview and questionnaires which involve taking words out of context and analysing them to determine an underlying reality. Furthermore, the use of video and audio recordings as a basis for analysis enables the researcher to focus further on the way in which words are spoken, including the intonation and overlap of speech (Wiggins & Potter, 2017).

A DP approach to analysing audio recordings of joint consultations occurring as part of their EPs' day-to-day casework was therefore considered appropriate for the present study to explore language use in the context of interactions within joint consultations.

Limitations of DP

DP has been criticised for its strong focus on text and disregard of the wider social context in which the conversation occurs (Willig, 2013). As a result, research may appear to trivialise participants' experiences (Taylor, 2013). However, Taylor (2013) suggests many approaches to social research do this, for example surveys which reduce people to categories and statistics and suggests the usefulness of DP in offering an understanding of current social issues, can outweigh such criticisms (Taylor, 2013). The increasing prevalence of SEMH needs in UK school children is currently an important social issue, due to the long-term implications of these needs not being met (Lanyard et al., 2014). It was therefore hoped using a DP approach to explore the interactions taking place within SEMH focused joint consultations and how EPs facilitate collaboration within them, could support EPs' professional development and reflections on their work in this area.

A further limitation lies in the suggestion that analysis may be influenced by the researcher's own beliefs and experiences (Pomerantz, 2008) as researchers may select which parts of the discourse they analyse to prove pre-existing ideas (Willig, 2013). Taylor (2013) suggests all research involves selecting phenomenon to study, therefore this should not be directed towards DP alone. However, to overcome the possibility of the researcher influencing analysis, they must be aware that the analysis of discourse is, in itself a construction (Burr, 2015), and ensure reflexivity (Phillips & Hardy, 2011).

5.3.iv Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis is method of identifying and reporting patterns of meaning in data, with important information relating to the research question being captured as 'themes' (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest this flexible approach to analysis, which can be used along with other research methods, can broadly take one of two forms.

Semantic thematic analysis involves themes being identified in the explicit or surface meanings of the data, with the analyst not looking beyond what has been said. The significance of these themes are then considered in light of their broader meaning and implications in relation to previous literature. Latent thematic analysis is thought to go beyond this by identifying assumptions and ideologies that shape the semantic content. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest many forms of analysis are thematic, therefore overlaps can be identified between this approach and many others, including DA.

Thematic analysis has the advantage of being a relatively straightforward form of qualitative analysis which does not require the same technical knowledge as approaches such as DA or CA. However, in contrast to DA and CA, the approach does not allow the researcher to make claims about the language use or the functionality of the talk (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest the flexibility of the approach can lead to it being either claimed as something else (such as DA) or not identified as any particular method at all. A structure to carrying out thematic analysis has therefore been presented by Braun and Clarke (2006), enabling analysts to describe how the process was conducted and themes identified. By following these clear steps they suggest the approach can be identified as a research method in its own right.

Although a thematic analysis approach has not been adopted as a method of analysis in this research, some similarities can be identified. For example, the patterns of talk may be identified in each consultation as discursive devices may be used several times within the same consultation or between consultations. Furthermore, they may be identified as being used in a similar way to achieve a similar action. As the author aims to identify structural features of language and its impact on collaboration rather looking beyond this to identify underlying ideologies, this reflects a semantic thematic analysis approach. For example, consultations will be analysed separately, before considering frequently

occurring linguistic strategies used by the EPs, which reflect a thematic analysis approach of identifying themes in data.

Despite the similarities that may exist between the analysis of data in this research and a semantic thematic analysis approach, there are distinct differences as this study will not follow the detailed approach to research presented by Braun and Clarke (2006). As this study aims to consider what EPs do when seeking to facilitate collaboration within three separate consultations, it was felt appropriate to identify and present language use separately for each consultation, with comparisons then being made, rather than the results of the three being combined. As a result, thematic analysis is not adopted as a main approach to analysis.

5.3.v Summary of CA, DA and TA

In outlining key features of CA, DA and TA, similarities, differences and the way in which they can be used together have been identified. For example, CA identifies the structure of talk by analysing sequences of interactions, enabling a consideration of turn-taking and the way in which words are said. DP builds on this and overcomes the criticism that CA needs developing to acknowledge other features of interaction, by considering the way in which language is used to achieve action and the context of the conversation. In the present study, this enables a consideration of how teachers and parents describe situations around young people's SEMH needs in schools and their role in supporting them. DP is thought to be a helpful approach to capture talk in naturalistic interactions, including EP consultations, although relies on the analyst to be aware of their role in the construction. As linguistic features often occur more than once, patterns may be identified and discussed, drawing on elements of a semantic thematic analysis approach.

5.3.vi Rationale for the use of Discourse Analysis in the present study

Based on the detailed consideration of approaches to studying discourse and the focus of the current study of exploring the interactions taking place within joint consultations, a DP approach, drawing on features of CA, was chosen for this research. DP enables an exploration of the way in which parents and school staff use language to describe themselves, others and events associated with SEMH needs and how they position their role within them. The use of CA enables a more detailed exploration of these processes by looking at features of talk such as pauses, intonation and adjacency pairs, including questions and invitations. A DP lens can then be applied again to consider changes in school staffs' and parents' constructions of situations in response to language use.

A DP approach has been used to analyse interactions within consultations in existing research. For example, Nolan and Moreland (2014) identified discursive strategies used by EPs in primary school consultations, including collaboration, empathy, questioning, refocusing, summarising, explaining and restating outcomes, (Nolan & Moreland, 2014, p. 67). The present study builds on this research by analysing joint consultations within both primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, it focuses on one area of need, SEMH – for which teachers often turn to EPs for support (Sharpe et al., 2016; Rothi et al., 2008). This study is set within the wider context of increasing rates of SEMH needs in young people, with the responsibility of supporting them increasingly lying with teachers. The way in which parents and teachers talk about their role within these situations and how the EP responds is also considered.

5.4 Research design

A flexible research design was used (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This enabled the researcher to constantly review the research question and approaches to analysis in response to issues raised in the selected consultations. This was considered to be an appropriate design for this research due to the range of SEMH related issues which could have been discussed and different ways in which EPs may have addressed them. This approach was chosen over a Case

Study approach as, while this would have provided more information about the context and setting of each consultation (Robson & McCartan, 2016) this level of detail was not considered necessary for this study which aimed to focus on language use. Further information about other aspects of the research design are now considered.

5.4.i Sample.

When selecting the sample of participants for this research, the researcher carefully considered how they would be chosen (sampling method), the number (sample size) and from where (gaining access). An outline of these factors is presented below.

Sampling method

The present study involved selecting a sample of joint consultations, focusing on SEMH needs, undertaken as part of EPs' normal caseloads. A "purposive sample" was selected, enabling the researcher to use her judgement when selecting which consultations to use (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p. 281). This provided flexibility to ensure the consultations met the selection criteria. This included:

- **SEMH needs driving the request for consultation**
    - These were identified by the school or the EP's initial hypothesis in line with the SEND Code of Practice (2015) definition of SEMH needs.
- **Consultations involving an EP, at least one parent and one or more members of school staff.**
    - Any school staff were accepted as it was felt this may provide information about who in schools support SEMH needs.
- **Consultations involving primary or secondary schools.**
    - Initially, only consultations taking place for young people of secondary school age were planned for inclusion. However, due to challenges in recruiting participants, consultations involving primary

school age children were also included. One consultation for a post-16 student was rejected as it did not involve parents. Consultations for children in Early Years settings were not included as research into rising rates focus on children from five-years-of-age.

- **Consultations at any point in EPs' involvement.**
    - Initially, the author planned to include only initial consultations to account for potential differences in interactions due to relationships having been built between everyone involved. Due to difficulties in recruiting participants, consultations occurring at any point during an EPs' involvement were accepted. The author reflected that as the focus on the analysis was the use of language in situ and the social constructionist epistemology accepts that every interaction is a construction relevant to that specific time and place, therefore all joint consultations would be suitable for analysis.

Although purposive samples do not offer generalisability beyond the original study (Thomas, 2017), it was thought to be the most appropriate approach on this occasion to ensure the selection criteria were met and adapted when needed. As issues of generalisability also arise with small sample sizes in general a purposive sample was not considered to be problematic.

Gaining access

An initial invitation to participate in this research was shared with EPs within the Local Authority in which the researcher was on placement (Appendix 2). Due to a limited uptake among EPs working with secondary schools at the time of the study, the invitation to participate was extended to other Local Authorities within the region. Invitations were sent via email along with an information letter to Principal Educational Psychologists who were asked to distribute it within their team (Appendix 3). Due to a small response, a second email was sent out to a wider range of Local Authority EP services and a private practice, and the study extended to include primary school consultations. The author spoke to the EPs who expressed an interest to confirm the nature and aims of the research and

their role. They were asked to liaise with their school contact to seek permission first from the headteacher, and then from parents and school staff involved in consultations. The EP was sent information letters (Appendix 4) and data protection information and consent forms (Appendix 5) to distribute. The EP was also given a script to use at the beginning of the consultation and to debrief participants (Appendix 6).

Sample size

Three consultations were used, each involving an EP, at least one member of school staff and one parent. This provided a range of language to analyse while ensuring a manageable amount for a sole researcher. Including three consultations, enabled variations and similarities in language use across consultations to be identified, providing opportunities for a range of approaches to facilitating collaboration to be considered. Potter and Wetherell (1987) suggest the success of the study is not dependent on sample size as large numbers of linguistic features are likely to be used by a small number of people. They suggest large numbers of interviews risk the researcher being overwhelmed in data, therefore adding to the workload without adding anything to the analysis. Further details about the number of people present in each consultation and their roles are outlined below.

5.4.ii Participants

Consultations were recorded by two EPs within two Local Authorities in the Midlands. At the time of the research it was not clear what model of consultation the EPs used nor the experience the members of staff had of being involved in Educational Psychologists' consultations. The EPs were both qualified and would have been exposed to different models as part of their training which may have influenced their use of language in consultation. However, as Argyris and Schön (1974) suggest, during complex patterns of interpersonal action, such as EPs' consultations, actual behaviour (theory in use) may not always be congruent with their espoused theory (the justification of behaviour). The language and styles of interaction the EPs were observed

using in each consultation was therefore the focus for analysis. An overview of each consultation, acknowledging the participants' characteristics, can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7: Table to show information about participants and nature of consultations

	Consultation One	**Consultation Two**	**Consultation Three**
Number and roles of people present	1 EP 2 school staff – Class Teacher and SENCO 1 parent (mother)	1 EP 1 School Staff- Head of Year 1 parent (Mother)	1 EP 1 school staff – Head of Year 1 parent (mother)
Year group of students	Year 5	Year 8	Year 8
Key concerns raised by adults	Emotional wellbeing and behaviour challenging adults.	Emotionally based school avoidance.	Behaviour challenging adults.
Timing of EP involvement	First consultation following observation of and direct work with child.	Second consultation as part of ongoing involvement.	First consultation focusing on young person, however she had been mentioned in ongoing consultations discussing her sister (Consultation Two)
Nature of recording	Face-to-face consultation (audio recording).	Microsoft Teams video consultation (mother not visible).	Microsoft Teams video consultation (mother and Head of Year not visible).

Due to challenges in recruiting participants, two consultations involved the same EP, parent and member of school staff. This was considered acceptable because, as Potter and Wetherell (1987) suggest, it is language that is of interest in discourse analysis, rather than the individuals generating it. This is because, as previously outlined, this study assumes conversations take place within a social context, therefore the choice of language used is relevant at that

moment within that interaction and therefore may be different on other occasions. It could therefore be expected that different language features would be present in every conversation – even with the same participants.

The order in which the consultations are presented in this research does not correspond with the way in which they were received by the researcher. A recording of Consultation Two was provided first, followed by consultation One, then Three. As Consultations Two and Three were both facilitated by the same EP and both took place via an online Teams video meeting rather than face-to-face, they have been presented side by side in the analysis. The way in which they are presented did not influence the analysis.

5.4.iii Data collection

Consultations in this study took place either via Microsoft Teams or face to face. The differences of approach reflect changes in EPs' practice due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One consultation was recorded at a time when many EP consultations were taking place online. Two consultations took place once social distancing restrictions had been lifted, with opportunities for them to be held either face-to-face or online. The author was not present during any of the consultations in an attempt to reduce the effects of observer bias (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

An audio recording of the first consultation was recorded on the EP's work mobile phone and shared to the author's secure password protected One Drive account using a secure, password-protected link. The recording was then deleted by the EP. For the second and third consultations, the Microsoft Teams video consultation was recorded by the Head of Year and shared securely with the researcher using a password protected link. Only the audio information was analysed as, due to social distancing requirements, not all participants could be clearly seen.

5.4.iv Ethics

A consideration of possible ethical issues arising throughout this study was an intrinsic part of the research process. This included abiding by the University of Nottingham's research guidelines (2020) and the British Psychological Society's Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2021). Consideration was also given to the general ethical principles guiding all EPs' work, set out in the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (BPS, 2018) and the Health and Care Professions Council's standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (HCPC, 2021). Before beginning the research, the author received approval from the University of Nottingham's ethics committee to ensure all ethical issues had been considered (Appendix 7).

Informed consent

Steps were taken to ensure participants were able to give their informed consent. For example, they were informed of the purpose of the research, the main features of the design, possible risks to the participants in taking part and the benefits of the study (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2017). This was explained in the information letters, sent to everyone involved in the study including Principal EPs and headteachers as gatekeepers, school staff and parents or carers, prior to them agreeing to taking part (Appendix 4). Furthermore, they were asked to sign a consent form before the consultation to confirm they understood and were happy to take part (Appendix 5). It was not felt the young people being discussed needed to give their consent as they were not present in the consultation and, as they were not beyond Year 8 and all under 16 years old, their parents provided consent on their behalf. Had they been older than 16 years old, they would have been asked for their consent as every young person has the right to make decisions about issues involving them (Mental Capacity Act, 2005)

Participants were informed, in the information letter, that the study aimed to explore the language used in interactions between EPs, parents or carers and school staff during consultations. Due to the nature of Discourse Analysis,

further areas warranting analysis can become evident during the process which would not have been communicated to participants at the outset. To account for this, participants were invited to discuss the study further and informed of their right to withdraw at any time and have some or all their data deleted.

Data handling

Participants were informed of how information gathered during the study, including recordings and transcriptions, would be used and stored. Furthermore, University's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidelines were attached to the information letter for transparency (Appendix 5). Although by informing participants the consultation would be recorded there was a risk their behaviour would change in some way (Robson & McCartan, 2016), it was felt this was outweighed by the ethical obligation to ensure participants were fully informed about the research process (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2017).

Confidentiality

Steps were taken to ensure the confidentiality of participants by following guidelines set out by the Data Protection Act (2018) and the University's code of research ethics (2020). This involved not using names of participants, schools, or children in any notes, transcriptions or final reports, and pseudonyms being used where necessary. Transcriptions were stored on the researcher's personal computer with no names used to ensure anonymity. All information gathered was only used for the purposes for which it was gathered and will be destroyed on completion of this research and reports connected to it (Thomas, 2017).

Participant welfare

As this research involved SEMH focused consultations, there was a risk parents and carers may reveal sensitive information about home experiences. Out of

respect for their dignity, anything which may be construed as being particularly sensitive, such as medical issues or personal traumatic experiences, was omitted from the research. A note was made on the transcript to highlight where sensitive data was missing. In addition, as SEMH issues may present as behaviour which may challenge others (SEND Code of Practice, 2015), this may produce intense feelings (Miller, 2003). In acknowledgement of this, participants were treated with respect and positive regard throughout the analysis and the discourse is not presented as being representative of discourse in other contexts. As the consultations took place as part of the EPs' casework and as the author was not present, it was not felt the researcher needed to consider the need to signpost participants to other services for support following the consultations. This is something the EP would have done. However, as the researcher has a responsibility for the welfare of all participants (Robson & McCartan, 2016), contact details were shared in the information letters prior to the consultations taking place (Appendix 4) to ensure all participants, including the EP, had the opportunity to discuss any aspect of the consultation following the recording.

5.4.v Focus for analysis

This study aims to explore how EPs facilitate collaboration within joint consultations. This includes identifying the language used by teachers and parents in consultations to construct accounts of events and position their roles within them, along with the EPs' language use when seeking to facilitate collaboration, develop shared understandings and co-produce supportive strategies. The author's understanding of these terms and the way in which they guide the analysis is now explained.

Construction of events

This study is positioned within a social constructionist epistemology and assumes knowledge is constructed through interactions with others. The use of language by parents, school staff and EPs when describing events was therefore considered throughout the analysis. As DP highlights the active role

of language to construct meaning (Burr, 2015), the analysis also attempted to observe the impact language use appeared to have on descriptions of events and others and the effect on others' language in response.

Positioning of roles

Throughout the analysis, consultees' descriptions of their actions were observed to identify the way in which they positioned themselves within situations. This included observations of the way in which they appeared to explain, excuse and justify their actions or blame and accuse others (Burr, 2015). This study is set within the context of school staff having increasing responsibility to identify and support SEMH needs, with varying levels of self-efficacy in doing this (Shelemy et al, 2019). It was hoped an analysis of positioning may enable a consideration of the way in which they described their role in supporting these needs and the impact this may have had on interactions with joint consultations.

Collaboration and shared understandings

Developing collaboration when seeking shared understandings and co-producing strategies are the goals of joint consultations (Dowling & Osborne, 1994; Nolan & Moreland, 2014). The analysis in this study therefore focuses on the EPs' use of language as they seek to achieve this. Understandings cannot be directly observed, therefore the analysis includes observations of apparent changes in descriptions of events and whether agreements appear to have been reached.

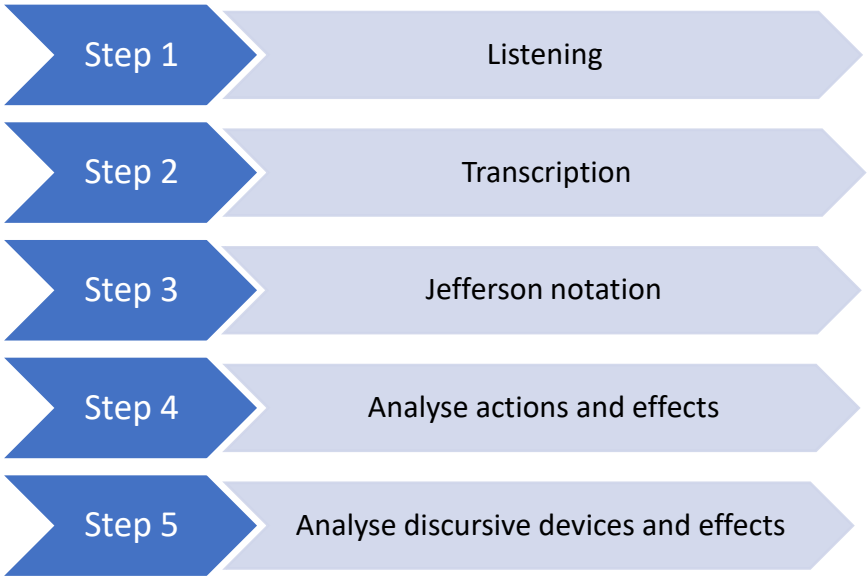
5.4.vi Analysis procedure

The consultations were analysed one at a time with the findings of each summarised separately to reflect the specific context of each. When analysing the second and third recordings, the researcher focused only on what was happening in that consultation to ensure she was not influenced by the findings

from others. This reduced the possibility of the researcher constructing the analysis based on what she expected to find. Patterns in all three data sets, including commonly occurring discursive devices and similar actions the speakers appeared to be seeking or achieving through their language was considered in the discussion section. This provided an opportunity for them to be considered in light of existing research into consultations. This is similar to a semantic thematic analysis approach, however, the three consultations were independent events. As a result, a semantic analysis approach of identifying in detail how the similar themes were identified was not considered necessary.

Although there is no set procedure for analysis using Discursive Psychology, Wiggins (2017) suggests a series of steps which were drawn on in this study. The process used is outlined in Figure 5.i.

Figure 5.i: Stages of the process of analysis.



These steps were worked through sequentially and the process repeated several times, however, at times, stages overlapped. For example, obvious examples of Conversation Analysis, such as loud speech, were added during the initial transcription, along with some key comments about the use of specific words. Each step of the analysis is explained in more detail below.

Listening

The recorded consultation was listened to by the researcher before transcribing to begin to establish familiarity with voices. This was important as only audio information was available for two of the three consultations. This also enabled the researcher to begin to develop an understanding of the issues being discussed. This was helpful as the researcher had not had an in-depth discussion about the issues with any of the participants prior to or immediately following the consultations, to ensure the analysis was not influenced by the EPs' construction or interpretation of the interaction.

Transcription

Once the consultations had been listened to initially, transcriptions were created by the researcher. Although this was a time-consuming process, the researcher chose this option rather than using online transcription services to allow for immersion in the data and constant identification and review of key features of language use.

The majority of the consultation was transcribed in case it proved to be important at some stage during the analysis. Research suggests that the way in which EPs introduce consultations, including being explicit about the collaborative nature, can impact their effectiveness (Nolan & Moreland, 2014), therefore the beginning of each consultation was transcribed in this study. However, as the researcher was not present when the consultations were recorded, it is not known what conversations were had before the recordings were started. This is a potential limitation as initial interactions between participants could have impacted on the collaboration. General conversations at the beginning or end of the consultations around organising arrangements for recording the consultations were not included or analysed, nor any incidental conversations, such as interruptions by other parties. Notes were made on the transcription to indicate where this had occurred. Following standard transcription guidelines, a new line was used for each speaker and all lines

were numbered, with time references made for significant passages (Wiggins, 2017). This made it easier to refer to and search for key information during the analysis stage.

Words were transcribed as they were said, with no capital letters, commas or full stops and words not spelled 'correctly' to ensure it reflected how things were said and not how the researcher expected to see them in writing (Wiggins, 2017). Pseudonyms were used instead of real names to ensure anonymity. The transcription was then re-read and comments made using the Microsoft Word comments feature, to indicate information which may need further analysis. This included tentative comments on positioning and attempted actions and effects.

Jefferson Notation

As Discursive Psychology draws on Conversational Analysis, Potter (1996) suggests a basic understanding of CA is essential before carrying out any form of discourse analysis. Furthermore, Willig (2013) suggests transcriptions should contain at least some information about the non-linguistic aspects of the conversation, including delay, hesitation and emphasis because the way in which something is said affects its meaning.

In this study it was hoped considering the use of language may indicate whether participants were in agreement and how events were constructed through an emphasis on specific words. A detailed transcription of each consultation was made by the researcher, including information about the way words were said, using the "gold standard" Jefferson transcription method (Goodman, 2017, p. 147). This level of detail was applied to key extracts rather than the whole transcription due to the time-consuming nature of this analysis. Key notation symbols used can be seen in Figure 5.ii.

Figure 5.ii: Jefferson transcription notation (taken from Jefferson, 2004 & Wiggins (2017).

(.)	micropause (less than two-tenths of a second)
(1.2)	a pause or silence measured in tenths of seconds.
=	Latched talk (when no hearable gap between words - within a turn or between speakers)
::	Stretched sounds in talk – the more colons the longer the sound.
°	Degree symbols around talk that is noticeably quieter. Double symbols °° indicate whispering.
><	Greater than and less than symbols enclose talk that is at a slower pace
< >	Less than and greater than symbols enclose talk that is speeded up.
↑↓	Upward arrows indicate rising pitch. Downward arrows indicate falling pitch.
-	Sharp cut off
#	A creaky voice when someone is upset.
£	Smiling voice
[ ]	The start and end of overlapping talk.
hhh	Audible breaths – with a dot is an in breath (.hhh) and without a dot is an out breath (hhh)
ha.	Laughter out breath
?	Strongly rising intonation (not necessarily asking a question)
, .	Commas indicate slightly rising intonation while full-stops indicate falling intonation at the end of words.
' '	Single quotation marks indicate reported speech or thought
(( ))	Details about other features that have not been transcribed.
( )	The transcriber's best guess at what was being said. Also used to indicate (unclear) or (inaudible).
CAPITALS	Talk that is noticeably louder than surrounding talk.
<u>Underline</u>	Emphasis on words or parts of words

Although non-verbal information, such as eye-gaze and gestures, can be included in a Conversation Analysis approach, this was not included in this study for two reasons. Firstly, a video recording was only made of two consultations therefore information was not available for all participants in the

study. Secondly, due to COVID-19 related social distancing requirements, in the two video recordings available, not all participants could be seen on the screen.

Actions and effects

Wiggins (2017) suggests DP offers a lens through which sense can be made of the information gathered. Following transcription therefore, the document was printed out, for ease of reading and annotation, and codes were applied to identify possible actions that participants were trying to achieve. As this research aimed to explore the interactions taking place within joint consultations, this analysis focused on:

- The way in which school staff and parents constructed situations (including describing events and positioning their role within them).
- The EPs' use of language in response to this when seeking to develop shared understandings (including questioning, reframing, facilitating discussion).
- The way in which the EP facilitated discussion and collaboration to co-produce supportive strategies.

Areas of the consultation which had been previously highlighted with notes by the researcher were considered first, before observing what came before and after these events. This enabled a consideration of the use of language in context including the purpose and apparent impact of utterances. This process was repeated multiple times to ensure no information was missed, with codes being adapted and new codes being create as needed. The recordings of consultations were then referred to, and the time at which the actions occurred noted, to ensure it could be easily located if aspects of talk needed to be re-examined. For example, the researcher may have needed to establish exact timings of pauses or specific intonation as this may have affected meaning.

Codes were created by considering the action the speaker may have been trying to achieve and were marked on the transcript. Evidence of discursive devices were also coded to support later analysis. The codes and their descriptions can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8: Table to show codes of actions used in consultations.

Action	Code	Description of use
Exploring Solutions	ES	The EP asking for opinions about solutions they suggest. The EP encouraging consultees' involvement in identifying or considering possible solutions.
Exploring Problem	EP	The EP exploring the presenting problem – this includes focuses on exploring possible functions of the behaviour.
Reflections	R	The EP directly reflecting on comments made within this consultation or during other conversations with parents or school staff. The EP encouraging others to reflect on information previously presented.
Alternative narratives	AN	The EP reframing behaviour or suggesting or seeking alternative explanations.
Offering contrasts	OC	When contrasting 'realities' were presented by the EP to discuss.
Constructing Meaning	CM	School staff or parent describing their view of situation.
Agreement	A	When agreements appear to have been acknowledged.
Scaffolding	S	Presenting a possible intervention/approach and offering ideas of how to do it.
Discursive Device	DD	Identified to direct research to areas needing further analysis.

During this analysis, additional comments were added to the transcription to direct the researcher to possible features of discourse analysis, such as

variations in accounts (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). These are now considered in more detail.

Conversation Analysis, Discursive Devices and Effects

A Conversation Analysis approach was used to explore features of the language used. This included a consideration of a number of features, shown in Figure 5.iii, as described by Liddicoat (2011):

Figure 5.iii: Features of Conversation Analysis

Adjacency Pairs	Turns of talk occurring as pairs, including questions (open or closed) and answers; repairs or corrections.
Gaps in talk	Pauses during talk or at the end of turns. Can indicate transition between speakers; can be attributed to individual speakers or no-one.
Overlapping talk	Can indicate problems if occurring too frequently when they are considered to be interruptions.
Repair	Processes through which problems arising in talk are dealt with. Can be made by the speaker or others. Can include actions such as lengthening a vowel to hold a turn while searching for a relevant word.

DP offers a framework to guide analysis, rather than a clear analytical method. Features of talk in consultations were therefore considered in terms of the action the speaker may have been attempting to create as well as the effect it had on others – indicated through their response. A range of discursive devices were considered, based on those identified by Wiggins (2017) and include devices suggested by Potter and Wetherell (1987) such as justification, blame

and variations in narrative. These are outlined in Table 9. More details, including examples of devices, can be found in Appendix 8.

Table 9: Table to show discursive devices identified in transcriptions.

Discursive Device	Description and example of function
Pronoun use and footing shifts	- Change in speaking as individual to speaking on behalf others. - Manage the identity of speaker and their accountability for what is said. - Can be used to position the speaker as believable or reporting facts.
Assessments and second assessments	- Description making judgement. - Followed by second assessment - expressed with no hesitation and upgraded if agree.
Silences, pauses and hesitations	- Precedes disliked second assessment. - Highlights delicacy of issue. - Can indicate trouble if too many pauses or a long gap between speakers.
Hedging	- Manages speaker's accountability - avoids making specific claims about something - Can be softened or retracted in case of disagreement.
Extreme case formulation	- Extreme phrases or words to justify or strengthen an argument, add credibility or manage one's identity.
Minimisation	-Treat accounts as minimal to downplay significance or to manage accountability.
Lists and contrasts	- Often in three parts - Add strength to an argument. - Indicate end of turn - Contrasts set up an either/or state; contrast intentions/desires with alternative "reality".
Affect displays	- Apparent displays of emotion (laugh, sigh, cry). - Precedes or follows interaction. - Consider where/when it occurs and how it is made relevant.
Consensus and collaboration	- Suggesting everyone agrees or someone else provides an independent witness. - Ways of encouraging others to support a claim, attend to facts, reduce sense of own investment in accounts.
Detail vs vagueness	- Manages investment in account and speaker's entitlement to tell it - Suggests observational skills of speaker. - Too much detail may indicate too much investment.

Disclaimer	- Inserted before a main account to mitigate speaker's stance on issue. - Often used when identity or category membership is under question therefore opens issues of agency and blame.
Metaphor	- Frames an account in a particular way –to produce categories. - Highlight some features/blur others/ oversimplify distinctions between categories.
Narrative structure	- Presents account in sequential order - highlights what listener needs to know first.
Reported Speech	- Adds authenticity to an account - minimises accountability for content.
Script formulations	- Makes account appear as if regular or frequent occurrence.

Wiggins (2017) categorises these devices as basic and intermediate as they occur within daily interactions and can be straightforward to identify. Wiggins (2017) also identifies advanced devices: agent-subject distinction, emotion categories, category entitlements, modal verbs and stake inoculation, which require more experience of DP to use effectively. Further information about these can be found in Appendix 8. As the author was new to DP analysis, basic and intermediate devices were used to ensure effective analysis.

The DP lens was then applied to reflect on the action being achieved or attempted through the device and the impact it appeared to have on others. Information gathered through the Conversation Analysis approach was drawn on to consider how words were said, including the length of pauses suggesting disagreement and breaths in and out or laughter. Examples of annotated and coded transcriptions can be found in Appendix 9. Sections of the consultation in which discursive devices had been identified and the impact they appeared to have observed were extracted from the transcription and saved in a separate Word document to ensure they could be found easily during analysis (Appendix 9).

5.4.vii Evaluating quality

Measures of reliability and validity are not considered appropriate in qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003; Thomas, 2017) and particularly social constructionist research (Burr, 2015). This is due to the data not attempting to identify objective facts or making claims about truth as it assumes 'reality' is constructed through discourse (Burr, 2015, p. 177). Various criteria and have been proposed (Taylor, 2001) to justify analyses and enhance the rigour and systematic nature of social constructionist research, (Burr, 2015). However, much of the advice given to qualitative researchers in general can be applied to social constructionist research and was therefore considered throughout this research. This involves focusing on its credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Tobin & Begley, 2014).

To ensure credibility, the author discussed parts of the analysis with an academic tutor, placement colleagues and other TEPs. This provided opportunities for reflection and to ensure the author's experiences and beliefs were not influencing interpretations (Phillips & Hardy, 2011). Furthermore, 'member checking' was also carried out, with the author discussing initial analyses for each consultation with the EP involved.

Throughout the analysis process, notes were kept when changes to the analysis were made which influenced further interpretations. The author also made notes in a research diary to reflect thoughts at various stages of the analysis, including points at which the analysis needed to be reconsidered in case her own interpretations of the data may have influenced observations (Appendix 11). This included reflections on parents' and teachers' responses to situations the author related to personally or professionally.

To ensure dependability, the research process has been described clearly in this report and records of letters and emails sent and extracts of detailed transcriptions kept (see Appendix 8 and 9), enabling readers to reflect on how

participants were recruited and decisions about analysis reached (Potter, 1996). The confirmability of the research was addressed through detailed reporting of the results to demonstrate how conclusions and interpretations were reached (Koch, 1994). It is hoped this will demonstrate the 'usefulness and fruitfulness' of the research including the extent to which it casts further light on previous research (Burr, 2015, p. 178) and enable readers to evaluate the transferability of the data (Nowell et al., 2017).

5.4.viii Summary

This section has established the processes involved in selecting and analysing the joint consultations included in this research. The use of CA and DP to observe the way in which language is used to construct meaning and achieve actions during these consultations is examined in more detail in the results and discussion sections.

6. Analysis of Data

6.1 Presentation of analysis

Analysis of the three joint consultations is now presented and attempts to answer the research question of how EPs use language to facilitate collaboration within joint home and school consultations. In line with the first research aim, the way in which school staff and parents describe situations and their roles within them are outlined first for each consultation. These initial constructions and positions are then considered throughout the analysis process to identify whether any changes occur through interactions with others (Burr, 2015). This analysis draws on Discursive Psychology to explore the use of discursive devices when constructing these accounts. Conversation Analysis is used to consider information about the way words and phrases are spoken and features of the talk such as turn-taking.

The EPs' use of language when seeking to facilitate collaboration and develop shared understandings and co-produce interventions – the goal of joint consultations (*Dowling & Osborne, 1994*) - is then considered to address the second research aim. As understandings cannot be directly observed, the analysis focuses on features of the EP's language and the effect it appears to have on collaboration within interactions. Points at which agreements appear to be reached are identified. This analysis draws Conversation Analysis to consider the use and effect of features of talk such as questions and invitations. Considering language used through a Discursive Psychology lens enables observations of the way in which EPs construct events and whether this appears to impact others' language.

To consider the way in which the analysis has answered the research question, examples of the EPs' language use and the impact it appeared to have on parents and school staff in each consultation are then summarised in a table.

A brief overview of the consultations analysed can be seen in Table 10. Pseudonyms have been used throughout to ensure anonymity.

Table 10: Table to show summary of consultations analysed

	Consultation One	**Consultation Two**	**Consultation Three**
Adults present	EP – Louise Class Teacher - Zara SENDCO - Anne Parent - Diane	EP – Emma Head of Year (HoY) - Megan Parent – Charlotte	EP – Emma Head of Year (HoY) – Megan Parent - Charlotte
Young Person and Year Group	Ethan - Year 5	Mia - Year 8	Demi - Year 8
Key concerns raised by adults	Emotional wellbeing and behaviour challenging adults.	Emotionally based school avoidance.	Behaviour challenging adults.

6.2 Consultation One – Ethan

This consultation focuses on Ethan, a Year 5 boy reported to experience challenges regulating his emotions, leading to presenting behaviours which challenged adults at home and in school. The EP (Louise), Ethan's teacher (Zara) the school SENDCo (Anne) and his mother (Diane) were present in this face-to-face consultation. Ethan's mother, Diane, a medical professional, had requested the school involve the EP due to her concerns about his behaviour. Constructions and positions of school staff and Diane are outlined before the EP's use of language is considered.

6.2.i Initial constructions

Parent's constructions

Diane suggests, although she has found Ethan's behaviour challenging "*in the past*" (L74), her current concerns are with his dysregulation in school, stating: "*it completely seemed to change over where it was more definitely school rather than home. <so I guess it's that> unpredictability*" (L206-8). She justifies her concerns by stating she is *"worried about ↑high ↑school?"* (L224), suggesting "*we just need to nip it in the bud"* (L234). This active metaphor suggests there are causes and solutions that can be found quickly to stop Ethan's challenging behaviours. She describes what she has already done to help her son, reporting: "*the mai:n- the ↑biggest thing that >I've done,< is get a behavioural optometry assessment"* (L113). Emphasising '*main'* and '*biggest'* implies she has done more. Through a DP positioning lens, Diane is explaining her actions to establish that she has sought help for her son.

Diane uses the words "*quite*" (L23), "*really*" (L27), "*very*" (L729) and "*totally*" (775) to establish how "*normal*" some the behaviours Ethan displays are for his age (L28). She appears to suggest other challenges are within-child, as she reports they have improved with medical intervention such as "*life-changing*" melatonin to help sleep (L153) and coloured lenses and light therapy which *"made a massive. difference" (*L137*)* to his behaviour. Diane expresses uncertainty about Ethan's ADHD diagnosis, emphasising "*he ↑may ↑do he may*

↑*not" (L152),* suggesting there are other explanations to explore. Later in the consultation, Diane questions whether Ethan may have dyscalculia or dyslexia, minimising her accountability for the suggestion by reporting "*he came home with it last year*….'*have I got dis↑calcula"*", confirming "*it's ↑not come from ↓me*" (L1229-34). She then asks if dyslexia is something he could "*have*" (L1246), suggesting a within-child cause. From a positioning point of view, this suggests Diane may attribute reasons for Ethan's behaviours to him, possibly defending herself from blame or justifying why her help-seeking has not always been successful.

Teacher's constructions and positioning

Ethan's teacher, Zara, presents a narrative description of his 'journey' in Year Five (L250) (*see Appendix 9i)* beginning by loudly stating there has been a *"↑BIG ↑IMPROVEMENT*." (L251), suggesting this is important information. She refers to Ethan's previous teacher as an independent witness to establish that his behaviour follows a predictable pattern - a settled start, followed by a period of challenge, then improvement. Zara the describes that "*school just (.) we sort of got to ↑crisis with him*" to emphasise how challenging things had been and using the word "*we*" as though speaking on behalf of all staff, reducing her own accountability (L258). She states: "*I couldn't control him*" (L262), emphasising the word "*I*" to position herself as being the person who can support Ethan. However, she states the situation has improved to "*a level pegging*" (L265), emphasising the school's role in this by reporting "*we've done lots of things in school*" and "*we've put lots of support in place*" (L266). She then establishes her role in supporting Ethan effectively, reporting:

> *"there's been one blip which was totally out of routine for him and I wasn't here to regulate (.) <you know> or help him with his emotions? >which is to be understood,< and totally <you know> understandable*," (L291-4).

Zara uses the words "*you know*" as if speaking on behalf of everyone to establish she needs to help Ethan to regulate and help with his emotions. Through a DP positioning lens, Zara appears to be explaining and justifying

what she has done to help, which suggests she sees it as her role to support Ethan's emotional needs and is able to do so.

Zara then suggests Ethan is currently *"↑really ↑good" at regulating himself*" (L271), emphasising this with rising intonation. She suggests "*he's got more capacity and tolerance to deal with things*" (L279), implying he can use strategies when finding things challenging. She then states "↑*we've (.) had ↑lots of ref↓usal,*" (L303), clarifying some issues remain, and adds "*you know ↑him saying that he ↑doesn't want to com↓plete ↑things, and there ↑have been some (.) inappropriate. comments. but no swearing? no rudeness towards staff?*" (L308-10). Emphasising the behaviours that have stopped reinforces the fact that things have improved, supporting her description of the current situation.

Summary

These constructions suggest Diane appears to have more concerns than school staff about Ethan's behaviour. There appears to be agreement that, although there have been challenges at times, Ethan's behaviour has improved both at home and in school.

6.2.ii EP's use of language

Throughout this consultation, various issues are discussed, including possible factors which may be maintaining Ethan's behaviour and his motivation to change. This analysis will draw on elements of this discussion, to identify features of the EP's language when exploring these concerns and when changes in the construction of the situation, or agreement of strategies appear to occur.

Introducing the consultation

The EP (Louise) introduces the consultation by stating:

"Thank you everyone for coming and thanks for coming along,erm so I'm Louise I'm the link EP for ((school name withheld)) erm and Anne asked me to get involved with Ethan em due to concerns that I understand both home and school ha:ve," (L1-4).

By stating *"thanks everyone for coming*" Louise appears to imply that she has requested the consultation. She then establishes that concerns are held by "*both home and school".* Emphasising the joint nature of concerns may encourage a sense joint responsibility for support in both settings. She then adds: *"I guess everyone ↑knows each other?"* (L6) to establish that key adults around Ethan have already been working together.

Exploring concerns

Louise responds to Zara's description of the current situation by acknowledging the improvements that have been made:

Extract 1		
342	Teacher	And whether it's a co↑incidence or whether it's something but it's >all good news< isn't it [it's all a ↑massive improvement.]
345	EP	I think the fact that things have improved shows that he does have the capacity: for that improvement

347	Teacher	◦yeah [yeah]◦
348	EP	[and so] ↑whatever it is, (.) the fact that he's demonstrated that for (.) ↑quite ↑a ↑prolonged period of ↑time. and when you said like the blips have been= you can kind of pinpoint perhaps [why]
352	Teacher	[a trigger]
353	EP	Yeah
354	Teacher	exactly
355	EP	why [that's happened]
356	Teacher	[exactly]
357	EP	erm is a really positive ↑thing and I guess it's just about looking into the future and seeing if (.) that will con↑tinue?
359	Teacher	<and getting him to do that> independently regulating on his own yeah

Louise encourages a positive outlook for Ethan by suggesting: "*he does have the capacity: for that improvement*". She highlights adults' skills in supporting this improvement, suggesting when there have been "*blips", adults could "kind of pinpoint perhaps [why]*". Zara's repeated use of the word "*exactly*" in response, suggests she agrees that she can identify the "*trigger*". Louise then sets the scene for the rest of the consultation, referring to a need to look into the future to see if it will continue. Zara appears to suggest an area to develop: "*regulating on his own"*. This appears to be a slight change in her description, as she previously suggested

After inviting Diane and school staff to explain their current concerns and views of Ethan and his current situation, as outlined above, Louise facilitates discussion to explore these further. At times, she presents two possibilities which may explain Ethan's behaviour and invites Diane and the school staff to share their opinions. In the example, below, Louise implicitly invites discussion around strategies Ethan uses.

Extract 2		
466	EP	I talked to him about kind of what do you ↓do:: when you ↑are feeling ↓angry what strategies do you u::se and he ↑wasn't able to donate any and I <wasn't sure whether that was just> me you know (.) talking to him or whether he (.) does have those strategies that ↑he can independently initiate, or whether it is largely (.) adult-led in terms of ↑managing [those ↓times]
473	Parent	nnn (hhhh) in the past I've tried sort of the self-help books,
474	EP	Mmmm
475	Parent	like the ↑volcano one

Louise outlines the challenge Ethan faced in talking about strategies he used, then offers two suggestions which may explain this - either he does have strategies but could not explain them or he needs adult support. Rather than directly asking for an opinion, Louise begins by stating "*I <wasn't sure whether that was just> me you know (.) talking to him or whether...".* Stating her uncertainty about the situation appears to downplay her status, establishing an equal relationship and be an implicit invitation for others to discuss these ideas. Diane takes and holds the turn to speak with "*nnnn (hhhh*)" before describing strategies she has tried and then stating "*but (hhhhh)*" (L494). The word "but" suggests she was not able to achieve this.

Zara then takes the turn to speak, stating "*and in ↓school we've got strategies*" (L495) outlining these as a non-verbal sign for space and a wellbeing box, including emotion cards. She explains: *"Umm and they're laminated and put in there for him umm but he 'as only ever accessed that once and >[that was adult led*]< "(L510/11). She then adds: *"we ↑do have strategies but >he just ↑tends< to say no to them because he doesn't feel like he (.) needs them [in that ↓moment]"* (L544).

This discussion, facilitated by Louise downplaying her status and offering two possible explanations for the challenge Ethan faced and implicitly inviting opinions, appears to have led to a variation in the teacher's construction of the current situation. She initially stated Ethan was "*really good at regulating himself*" (L271), then suggesting he needed to be able to do it "*independently*" (L359) and now confirms his use of strategies is adult led. Louise explores this further, this time explicitly asking for an opinion:

Extract 3		
547	EP	yeah <I'm trying] to work out whether it's that> he:: doesn't ↑recognise ↑that ↑he <u>needs</u> them ↓whereas as adult ↑<u>ca:n</u> or whether <u>he::</u> doesn't <u>want</u> to use them because either he's not motivated, or he: there's a <u>barrier</u> to that <you know either> <u>children</u> what other people might >↑think of hi:m< (.hh) I don't know what your: >take would be on that.<
553	Teacher	**(0.95)** <I don't think he's worried about what other people think of ↓him>

Louise sets the scene for collaborative discussion by suggesting: "*I'm trying to work out*", suggesting uncertainty and downplaying her status as someone who has been called on for help. She provides three possible explanations as to why Ethan does not use the strategies he has been introduced to then states: "*I don't know what your >take would be on that<*". Slowing down this last statement, emphasising the word "*take*", appears to indicate to Zara it is her turn to speak and give her opinion, resulting in a discussion between Zara and the SENDCo (Anne) who offer another explanation for Ethan's behaviour:

Extract 4		
560	SENDCo	Do you think he wants to stay in the classroom though becau:se if he <u>does</u> ↓lose it he's getting that <u>atten↓tion</u> and other people are seeing ↓it whereas if he took himself ↓off
563	Teacher	Potentially because [he does like]
564	SENDCo	[<u>he's</u> not getting any attention] is he

Louise responds by suggesting a need to “unpick a bit more” (L581-3) whether he is seeking or avoiding situations, explaining the ‘cycle of change’:

Extract 5		
600	EP	I think he is probably more in a precontemplation phase where he doesn’t see the negatives of ↓this, (.) he can actively see some of the ↑positives, ↑<everyone ar↑ound him can see the ↑negatives> and obviously you’ve got a lot of <u>concern</u> for him and concern around his future. but for ↑him in the ↓moment erm he doesn’t se:e what’s to be ↓lost so the idea is that you shift him ↑<u>round</u> that cycle of change into a stage of contemplation <so not saying you need to be ready to change your behaviour> but starting to acknowledge that ↑actually there ↑<u>are</u> some ↓downsides to my behaviour and-
603	Parent	yeah-
604	Teacher	↑because I ↑think a lot of the time as well. if he’s been asked to <u>do</u> something ↑he’ll ↑sometimes ↑be ↑in ↑a ↑mood because ↑e<u>es</u> been asked to do something he doesn’t want to do whether it be ↓maths or a certain ↓thing
608	EP	yeah
609	Teacher	and if he ↑stays in that <u>mo:↑od (.)</u> he doesn’t have to not- <he doesn’t have to do the work> erm but he feels as if ‘>↓I ↓can ↓sit ↓here ↓and ↓<u>sta:re<</u> whereas if I go out? <I’ll have ↑regulated come back in in ↓five ↑minutes and I’ll ‘ave to do the work.>
614	Parent	([*laughing*])
615	EP	[yeah).
616	Teacher	so maybe its sort of in ↑some way ↑also a bit of avoidance [of and]
618	SENDCo	[avoidance and control]
619	Parent	[control]
620	Teacher	[control over it]

621	SENDCo	[ees got <u>control</u> over it]
622	Parent	he loves a bit of control

Louise appears to use the cycle of change concept (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983), drawing on psychological theory as a way of supporting adults to see things from Ethan's perspective – acknowledging they have "a lot of concern for him" while explaining how he may not recognise this. She also suggests: "*you shift him round that cycle"* to establish their role in supporting him to be aware of his behaviour. When Diane expresses her agreement, Zara takes the turn to talk, starting with the word "*because*" as if continuing what Louise was saying, suggesting agreement. She appears to justify why he may not use the current strategies before suggesting he may be avoiding work. She explains this as though talking on behalf of Ethan, suggesting she is already looking at the situation from his perspective, then suggests a further reason explaining Ethan's behaviour – a feeling of control. This is accepted without hesitation by the Diane and Anne, with overlapping talk expressing their agreement.

Following this agreement, Louise suggests the "control thing is interesting" with regard to his feelings about maths. Referring to control as a "thing" appears to present it as tangible and therefore something that can be removed, before appearing to reframe it as "motivation":

Extract 6		
638	EP	erm and (.) whether that's you know you said that actually he's within his age related expec↑tations around maths ↓but it's more his motivation and engagement that is the barrier around that
642	Teacher	yeah
643	EP	and whether he's choosing because well it's not- for ↑<u>me</u> it's not im↑portant ↓it's not interesting to me. so I'm not going to kind of [make any]
646	Teacher	[and I think a lot] of it is if he doesn't have to work at it

Louise starts by focusing on the positives that Ethan is within age-related expectations, attributing this expression of fact to the teacher by stating: "*you said that actually*". She then suggests motivation and engagement may be a barrier. This appears to lead the teacher to reflect positively on Ethan's engagement in maths, reporting he engages when he "*doesn't have to work at it*". She later reports that day he had done "*amazingly*" and "that actually happens quite regularly" (L654) because "*he didn't struggle with it*" (L667). A positive change appears to have occurred at this point as the teacher previously suggested Ethan does not want to do maths (Extract 5). The word 'control' was not used again. Louise summarises explanations discussed to this point, reinforcing the idea of motivation and the need to support Ethan to reflect on his behaviour.

Louise then revisits the issue of Ethan's ability to verbalise and label his feelings, directly asking Diane if he can do this. She responds: "*at home he'll say I'm really worried*" (L824) – particularly about things he sees on the news. Louise then asks school staff, offering two contrasting possibilities which leads to a deeper conversation:

Extract 7		
848	EP	and-and in school does he would you say he's able to label those feelings or is it more 'I-I wonder if you're feeling this or £I noticed that'£
851	Teacher	I think that he's a bit nervous (.)
852	EP	mmm
853	Teacher	at school to label his feelings
854	EP	[mmm
855	Teacher	he will] point to something-
856	EP	OK-
857	Teacher	>but he won't ever say it out loud.<

By asking "*would you say*" Louise appears to establish collaboration – inviting others to share their views and continue to talk using "*mmm*". By slowing down her final statement, Zara appears to draw attention to what she is saying, while stating "*he won't*" presents it as fact. This conversation continues with the Anne validating the Zara's claims who then suggests Ethan does not talk about situations and that *"↑sometimes he isn't actually able to ↑verbalise especially when he's hurt somebody's feelings"* (L892-3). Louise provides space for Zara to talk about this further:

Extract 8		
910	Teacher	but with Ethan I genuinely think that he doesn't [know,]
911	EP	ye:ah [yeah]
912	Teacher	[and that he doesn't] know whether he's hurt somebody's [feelings?]
914	EP	[somebody's] feelings
915	Teacher	[erm] because I-I-I used to just leave it when we were [doing these]
917	EP	mmmm
918	Teacher	reflections because I knew that he wouldn't be able to tell me and then I'd tell [him]
920	EP	[mmm]
921	Teacher	I'd say 'right you've really upset miss [so and so's feelings]
922	EP	[mmm yeah]
923	Teacher	or this child's [feelings,]
924	EP	[mmm]
925	Teacher	and we do need to put that right,
926	EP	mmm
927 928	Teacher	and then he'd sort of understand but it would take an adult's [intervention,]
929	EP	[mmm mmm]
930	Teacher	to ↑tell him because [it was]
931	EP	[mmm]
932	Teacher	his emotional literacy

933	EP	mmm
934 935	Teacher	and his empathy is really low um (.) not because he's (.) a nasty child,
936	EP	no
937	Teacher	because he genuinely can't (.)

The use of "mmmm" appears to indicate Louise was listening and accepting what the teacher was saying, appearing to act as an invitation to continue speaking. Zara appears to justify why she has not used certain strategies, suggesting "*I just used to leave it*" because "*I knew he wouldn't be able to tell me.*" Through talking, Zara's construction of the challenge Ethan faces in regulating his emotions changes from "*he's nervous to label his feelings*" (L851) to "*I genuinely think* (…) *he doesn't know whether he's hurt somebody's feelings*" to "*he genuinely can't*" recognise it. This appears to have occurred through Louise presenting two possibilities and providing space to discuss them.

Collaborative intervention planning

Having established areas of need for Ethan, Louise suggests a possible intervention:

Extract 9		
955	EP	I wonder if something (.) comic strip conversations, might be a helpful way to [help with his reflections?]
957	Teacher	[oh he loves comic] strips doesn't he (.) £he draws them all [the time£]

Louise states: "*I wonder if*", thereby implicitly seeking opinions about whether it would be "*helpful*". Zara agrees and upgrades this by stating he "*loves*" them. She reinforces this by seeking consensus and reporting "*he draws them all the time*".

Louise downplays her status by asking "*are you familiar with that type of approach*?" (L959) before explaining it "*generally has three boxes*" (L961) and explain what is in each. Zara responds, reporting: "*oh I like that*" (L968) and confirms again later with: "*yeah that's a good idea actually*" (L999). The use of the word '*oh'* emphasises her approval, while the word '*actually*" is often used to express surprise (*Cambridge Dictionary, 2022*) which may be because she had previously suggested school had "*lots of strategies"* to support Ethan. Louise continues:

Extract 10		
969	EP	erm and if it's something that he ↑likes drawing, [erm and it's quite]
971	Teacher	[he loves drawing]
972	EP	a non-confrontational way of you know £'↑what ↑could ↑you ↑do ↑differently'£ you know it's a gentler way of
974	Teacher	mmm
975	EP	of of ↓that and it's ↓visual
976	Teacher	↑yeah
977	EP	so that might help just show other ways and and aid in that reflective process?
979	Teacher	£Yeah£
980	EP	and over time the ↑hope is that they then kind of would do that automatically so you may be able to go '↑Ok. ↑what's ↓happened' and give them a ↑grid and then they can do it ↑themselves erm in ↓time ◦so that might help◦
985	Teacher	yeah no I ↑really like that (.) he'd ↑definitely be drawing it £I'd draw stick men he'd draw full on£
986	EP	£full on [kind of]£
987	Parent	[so he's got this] character that he does called banana guy
988	EP	[OK]
989	Teacher	[£yes: he does£]
990	Parent	so he can put (.) banana guy in there

Louise appears to scaffold the use of the intervention, suggesting how it can be used and offering possible scripts. Zara's comment *"he'd ↑definitely be drawing it £I'd draw stick men he'd draw full on-*£" suggests she may have visualised using the approach – considering what they would both draw. Diane also appears to have done this as she has identified "*banana guy*" as a possible character, with the teacher offering consensus. Diane's input about Ethan's character highlights further ways of using the strategy at which point the teacher expresses support for the approach:

Extract 11		
997	Teacher	[you could say] pretend you're banana guy
998	Parent	yeah you could do
999	Teacher	↑yeah that's a good idea [actually] I ↑like that ↑yeah

After talking about the intervention, Diane suggests Ethan "*blanks it out*" (L1006) when he has upset someone. When the teacher responds, her description of Ethan's ability to recognise other's emotions appears to have changed as shown below:

Extract 12		
1012	Teacher	[and sometimes] when he's hurt somebody's feelings and I say that he's hurt their feelings sometimes his head'll droop a little bit
1015	Parent	[yeah]
1016	EP	[kind of yeah]
1017	Teacher	['I've got] a little bit of guilt about that
1018	EP	[yeah]
1019	Teacher	[and then] he'll go <'I don't know how I could've solved it'> or [shrug his shoulders]
1021	EP	[ye:ah]
1022	Teacher	because (.) he doesn't want to confront that say it's- [you know]
1024	EP	[ye:ah]

1025	Teacher	the T A or myself
1026	EP	yeah
1027	Teacher	because (.) he deep down really does care [for the]
1028	EP	[yeah]
1029	Teacher	his trusted adults at school,
1030	EP	yeah
1031	Teacher	he doesn't want to admit that he has (.) hurt their feelings and it is I think partially. that as well,-

Zara begins this narrative by reporting she has to tell Ethan when he has hurt someone's feelings, presenting this as an important fact. She previously reported Ethan's emotional literacy and empathy skills were low, however on this occasion she uses reported speech to establish he feels "*a little bit of guilt*". Her use of the words "*deep down*" suggests Ethan's emotions are not easy to identify. She refers to "trusted adults", reducing her involvement in these situations. She concludes "*he doesn't want to admit*" that he has upset someone and suggests he knows "*I should've handled it better*" (L1037). When Diane reports Ethan does not like feeling embarrassed, Zara suggests "*he's not good at that no*" (L1046) suggesting an agreement that this may be why he does not admit he has upset someone. Throughout this interaction Louise uses an active listening approach. Providing this space for talk appears to lead to Zara describing his skills optimistically. When Diane later expresses concern that Ethan's empathy skills appear to have gone "*backwards*", Anne (SENDCo) suggests it was more about "*when he's played a role in upsetting somebody else*" (L1115-7). This suggests she is confirming the new construction that Ethan does have empathy skills.

6.2.iii Summary – Consultation One

Zara's construction of the situation appears to become more consistent during the consultation – confirming areas for development which she had previously not acknowledged and talking more positively about other skills. She explains and justifies her actions throughout the consultation, suggesting she may see her position or role as supporting Ethan's emotional needs. Diane's construction and positioning does not appear to change throughout the consultation. She agrees with strategies discussed, reinforcing the suggestion that she was eager to seek help.

Throughout the consultation, Louise explored areas in which Ethan could be supported further, at home and in school and facilitated discussion around interventions to address this. Examples of the language strategies used by Louise throughout this consultation are summarised in Table 11. This table highlights the language used by the EP and the observed effect it appeared to have on Zara and Diane, with excerpts identified for reference. Most of these features were identified on more than one occasion, supporting the analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

Table 11: Table to show features of the EP's language and observed effects – Consultation 1.

Language strategies and location	Observed effects and example extracts in which they occur	Example
Providing topics for discussion – "*or*" (Extracts 2: Line 469; Extract 3: Line 548; Extract 7: L849).	- Richer discussion appears to follow multiple topics being presented rather than asking direct questions. (Extracts 2, 3, 7)	
Providing space to talk through active listening strategies: "*mmm*" (Extract 7: Lines 852, 854; Extract 8: Lines 917, 920, 922, 924, 926, 929, 931, 933) "*yeah*" (Extract 8: Lines 911; Extract 12: Lines 1018, 1021, 1024, 1026, 1030)	- Appears to implicitly invite space to talk - resulted in constructions changing (Extracts 7, 8, 12)	"I think he's a bit nervous…at school to label his feelings" (Extract 7, Lines 851, 853) "I genuinely think he doesn't know whether he's hurt someone" (Extract 8, Line 910).
Downplaying status by suggesting uncertainty: "*I wasn't sure whether*" (Extract 2, Line 48) "*I'm trying to work out*" (Extract 3, Line 547) "*I wonder if*" (Extract 9, Line 955)	- May invite others to discuss and share their opinion. (Extracts 2, 3, 9).	"In the past I've tried…." (Extract 2, Line 473) "I don't think he's worried about what people think of him" (Extract 3, L553)

Identifying positives (including adults' skills in handling situations and the child's skills): "*you know, you said…*" (Extract 6, Line 638) "*and when you said…you can identify*…" (Extract 1, Line 349) "*he's within his age-related expectations*" (Extract 6, Line 639)	- Positive talk about the child and situation. (Extract 1, 6)	"He's done amazingly" (p101) "He didn't struggle with that" (p. 101)
Placing child at centre of discussion by suggesting possible perspectives: "*but for him in the moment…" (*Extract 5, Line 604) or speaking on his behalf: "*it's not that interesting to me…"* (Extract 6, Line 644).	- Appear to attempt to see things from the child's perspective – describing situations as if talking on child's behalf. (Extract 5, 6)	"because I think a lot of the time as well if he's been asked to do something…." (Extract 5, Lines 604-5) "I can sit here and stare…." (Extract 5, Line 611)
Explaining ideas with evidence (psychological or examples): "*The idea is…." (*Extract 5, L606) *"The hope is…*." (Extract 10, Line 980)	- Appears to help adults view the situation differently. (Extracts 5, 10)	"I think a lot of it is if he doesn't have to work at it" (Extract 6, Line 646)

Scaffolding strategies: "*you may be able to go 'OK, what's happened' and give them a grid*…" (Extract 10, Lines 981-2)	- Apparent acceptance of strategy. - Descriptions may suggest visualisation of its use. - Positive talk of child's skills. (Extracts 10, 11, 12),	"he'd definitely be drawing it – I'd be drawing stick men he'd draw full on…" (Extract 10, Line 985-6) "deep down he really does care" (Extract 12, Line 1027)
Ensuring Collaboration by inviting opinion: "*I don't know what your take would be*…" (Extract 3, Line 552) "*In school would you say…"* (Extract 7, Line 848) Use of "*we*": (Extract , Line) Inviting opinion: *"I wonder if*…" (Extract 9, Line 955)	- Others share information that can be explored. (Extracts 3, 7, 9).	"I don't think he's worried about what other people think of him (Extract 3, Line 553) "I think he's a bit nervous" (Extract 7, Line 851) "Oh he loves comic strips, he draws them all the time" (Extract 9, Line 957)

6.3 Consultation Two – Mia

This consultation focuses on Mia, a Year 8 girl experiencing emotionally based school avoidance. This consultation occurred as part of a sequence and involved Mia's mother (Charlotte) and Head of Year (Megan), who met in person, and the EP (Emma), who joined the meeting via Microsoft Teams. Initial constructions and positions of the Head of Year and Charlotte are outlined before the EPs' use of language is considered.

6.3.i Initial constructions

Parent's construction and positioning

Charlotte describes the current situation as challenging. She breaths out before reporting:

"(hhhh) the last couple of weeks have been quite hard so the Mon-
I can't remember it's all blurred into one now" (L158)

Describing how it has "*all blurred into one*" suggests a busy week, with lots of movement, therefore difficult to keep track of what has happened. She reports Mia has been unhappy in school and describes how in recent meetings:

"she sat there <definitely at the last couple> … >really really nervous and< no eye contact to you two. … and (.) very very shaky and she's been fiddling with everything and (.) very unsettled hasn't she" (L69-73).

Charlotte repeats and slows down words which appears to emphasise how Mia may have been feeling. Use of the word "*definitely*" and seeking consensus from the Head of Year establishes her account as fact. She explains she has had several conversations with the mental health support team and reports she "*knew*" Mia would prefer one-to-one rather than group sessions (L651). Diane therefore appears to position herself as someone who knows her daughter well and can identify the support she needs.

On several occasions, when Emma (EP) suggests an idea, she gives examples of how she has already thought of or tried the strategy, reporting: "*no I've tried*

that" (L293); "*I did suggest that the other day*" (L744); " *I have suggested that*" (L778); "*I <u>had</u> that chat*" (L1214). By doing this, Charlotte appears to justify what she has done to help and defend herself against any possible 'blame' for her daughter not attending school. This is also achieved when discussing a strategy that did not work worked well - an early morning walk with Mia – as she emphasises it was developed in collaboration with Megan (Head of Year):

Extract 13		
848	Parent	the plan was wasn't it
849	HoY	Yes
850	Parent	ways of getting her up early (.) and so she had decided we would go for an early morning walk
852	HoY	yes
853	EP	↑mmmm ↑mmm so this was her idea (.) <u>Mia's</u> idea
853	Parent	[Yes after our chat wasn't it]
854	HoY	[<yeah yeah yeah>]

Charlotte seeks consensus from Megan in this interaction, establishing the "*plan*" had been made together after their "*chat*". She also states Mia had suggested going for a walk (L850), reducing her accountability for the strategies not being effective, possibly protecting herself from blame.

Head of Year's construction and positioning

The Head of Year (Megan) describes Mia as currently "*visibly very upset*" and suggests her behaviour is "*not proportionate*" and "*she's finding things really difficult at the minute*" (L206). By referring to Mia's emotional states, she appears to be establishing herself as knowing her well. She suggests the situation is "*not very predictable"* (L181) and reports:

"so I think it was it's again things kind of move and shift around (.) you know once we kind of sort one thing i-i-i-it's still kind of moving on to another.". (L223)

The words "*move*", "*shift*" and "*moving on*" suggest a dynamic situation involving many issues which is confirmed later when she reports: "*i-it's not kind of on:e (.) not just one thing*." (L843).

Megan appears eager to help and organise support throughout the consultation. She explains what she has done to help Mia in school, such as: "*I've done some work with…*" (L209-10) "*I asked her to* ..." (L244); "*I went with her to ...*" (L349); "*I've sent out updates* (to teachers) to *say …*" (L461-2). She also refers to strategies devised with Diane, reporting: "*we've tried*…" (L710). The steps she has taken to seek additional support from other professionals and agencies are also described, justifying this by suggesting: "*I think she needs that rather than that kind of ↓general ↓support that we can offer at the minute*" (L594).

However, later in the consultation, she refers to challenges in supporting Mia in school, explicitly seeking help, stating:

"*that's kind of one of the things I kind of wanted to ask you Emma about you know I don't know if that's the right thing to do? I don't know if that is helping? I don't know if that is (.) do I need to push more? ↓I'm not (1.4) ◦I don't know◦"* (L1104-8).

Listing three things she 'does not know' highlights uncertainty, while the pause following the words "*I'm not*" and quietly stating "*I don't know*" suggests she may not want to say she is unsure.

Summary

Charlotte and Megan both portray the current situation as challenging, despite wanting to help and agreeing "*it's probably getting worse at the minute*" (L1113). They agree Mia cannot be persuaded to attend lessons and that when she is pushed, she can challenge adults. For example, Megan suggests:

"I think <£we would both agree.£> ↓if she doesn't want to go into that I (.) there is nothing we can do to try and get her in there" (L1123-4).

Megan seeks consensus to establish agreement, while establishing a shared responsibility by suggesting "*there is nothing we can do*". The way in which the EP responds to these constructions is now considered.

6.3.ii EP's use of language

The EP (Emma) appears to seek to develop understandings of Mia's behaviour by facilitating collaboration to explore concerns and identify and develop supportive strategies. The features of language used to facilitate this are considered below.

Introducing the consultation

The EP (Emma) introduced this consultation by stating:

"Megan kept me up to date erm so I'm sort of I think I'm up to about mid-way since we last met so do you want to sort of update me particularly since you last emailed me" (L1-3).

This consultation was part of a sequence and this introduction reflects the Emma's ongoing involvement. By stating "*do you want to sort of update me*" Emma quickly invites others to talk, seeking their involvement.

Exploring concerns

During the early stage of this consultation, Megan appears to be eager to find solutions to challenges. On several occasions when an idea is suggested, she appears to respond quickly with: "*yep, we could definitely try that*" (L87); "*but we could definitely try-"* (L105); "*well why don't we, we could try*…" (117). Emma appears to respond to this by offering alternative strategies to explore taking time to explain the strategy or present concerns more fully, suggesting: "*I mean that taps into what the difficulty is doesn't it" (*L90*); "because it does sound like…"* (L90). This appears to slow down a rush to find and explore situations more fully.

Throughout the consultation, Emma continues to explore situations, including Mia's possible feelings about missing lessons – reflecting on comments made by Charlotte and Megan as shown below:

Extract 14		
299	EP	so she's she's getting a bit worried about getting behind with her work is she because she's (.) missed (.) a lot (1.9s) did you say,
302	Parent	I don't think she's worried I have tried that approach
303	HoY	yeah
304	EP	Oh sorry I thought you said she was
305	Parent	No no no no I have suggested that praps you know she's obviously missing work and she's going to slip behind and is she not bothered about that and no she's not (.) <u>at</u> <u>all</u> she sees work almost in the background I think doesn't she
310	HoY	yep.
311	Parent	at the minute
312	HoY	I think school is i-i-is a social place for her at the minute and it's where she comes to see her friends most of the time

By asking "*did you say*?" Emma appears to invite Charlotte to explain how Mia feels about missing work and provides an opportunity for other issues to be explored. Charlotte's repetition of the word "*no*" and emphasis of "*at all*" suggests she wants to establish that Mia is not worried about missing work. She seeks consensus from Megan to confirm that Mia sees work as being "*in the background*". She adds: "*at the minute*" to establish this as the current situation, which suggests this may not always be the case. Megan agrees with this, repeating her words and adding more detail to establish that friends are more important to her than work, before Emma takes back the control of the interaction to explore this further:

Extract 15		
322	EP	So do you think that's (.) sorry do you think that's- is she just sort of (.) <u>saying</u> that about the work or do you think she really isn't terribly

		bothered.
326	Parent	I don't think she is particularly bothered. She'll pinpoint something that she's really interested in and she'll go and do some as she puts it research on it
329	HoY	mmm hmmm
330	Parent	But homework and that is a real real battle I can- you can't encourage her to do anything at home (.) and she's not bothered (.) she'll sit in the learning centre and do [some bits-]
334	HoY	[she'll sit yeah] she'll do some bits in there

The EP gives two possible realities to consider – either Mia is "*just sort of saying*" it or "*really isn't terribly bothered*". This time, Charlotte suggests Mia "*isn't particularly bothered*" which is less extreme than her previous statement. She then reports Mia will not work at home although she will do "*some bits*" in the learning centre, which Megan confirms. Although Megan previously suggests school was a "*social place*", she then suggests Mia has reported not wanting to go to lessons because of the work she has missed and states:

"(hh) I think she must have picked up on people talking about her missing work because sometimes when we talk about going to a lesson she'll say "ooh I don't want to go there because I've missed a lot of the work" and things like that"

(L337-41).

Megan uses reported speech to reduce her own accountability for what is being said, establishing that Mia gives this as a reason. She reports Mia "*must have picked up on people talking about her*" – suggesting this has happened, but giving a vague rather than specific, description about who has been talking, minimising her stake in this. Emma's use of alternative explanations appears to have led to descriptions of Mia's approach to work changing.

Shortly after this Megan gives another example of Mia's motivation, referring to an incident with another member of staff, reporting:

"Mr Hill went over. and Mia said 'oh I can't be bothered to go to my lessons' and Mr Hill was a bit ↓cross (.) ↓with ↓her ↓about ↓it." (L372-4).

Emma responds by seeking to explore Mia's response:

Extract 16		
421	EP	mmm mmm It's a ↑funny thing to say isn't it. to- I know he's not actually a teacher but he's <u>like</u> a teacher isn't he to say 'I can't be bothered' (.) It's a bit in<u>flamma</u>tory isn't it and and (.) I wonder,-
425	Parent	it's not like her actually because she's normally very very respectful erm
427	HoY	she is
428	EP	yeah
429	Parent	to anybody she sees as being senior to her
430	HoY	↑yeah
431	Parent	so it's a very (.) very unusual comment for her to make.

Emma appears to implicitly invite comments about what Mia is reported to have said by making two judgements which she emphasises – suggesting it is "*a ↑funny thing to say*" and "*it's a <u>bit</u> in<u>flamma</u>tory*". This causes the parent to defend Mia, suggesting she is "*normally very respectful*" and the Head of Year to agree. At this point, there appears to be an agreement that Mia is respectful of adults, suggesting another reason for her response. Megan then elaborates:

Extract 17		
433	HoY	Yeah and I <u>do</u> think I think (hh) maybe a friend of hers was <u>there</u> and she <u>did</u> say to me really articulately afte::r. 'I didn't know how to say I was scared or worried' <I can't remember the exact word she used> 'about going to my lesson.'
438	EP	Yeah
439	HoY	You know

440	EP	I think that's just what I was thinking. that she at that moment in time she hadn't got the words for it.
442	HoY	Yeah
((443-446 removed – parent responds to text message))		
447	HoY	I think it is isn't it it's it's ↑and especially I think ↓I don't know to what extent she talks to her friend about how she's feeling and actually if she actually shares
((parent comments on text message))		
452	HoY	erm you don't know to what extent do you you know know that she talks to her friends and if its this kind of bravado, in front of friends and things or if it's more you know (.) in the heat of the moment finding the words is difficult, (.) I'm not sure.

Megan reports Mia told her "*really articulately*" that she felt "*scared or worried*", using reported speech to reducing accountability for this and establishing it as Mia's comment. At this point, Emma reframes the situation as being one in which "*at that moment in time she hadn't got the words for it"*. Megan agrees with this – stating "yeah" and upgrading this agreement with "*I think it is isn't it*". She then offers an alternative reason, suggesting it may be "*bravado*" in front of friends, before concluding "*I'm not sure*".

Emma does not dwell on this uncertainty, instead taking a solution-focused approach – focusing on solutions rather than problems (Rhodes & Ajmal, 1995) - by exploring what support can be put in place for Mia, asking whether the Megan had met with "*a:ll of the staff that teach her or as many as possible*" (L458). This is introduced as a possible intervention, with the suggestion that Megan tries "*drawing out from them things they feel work and things that don't*" (L483-4) before reinforcing the suggestion that Mia sometimes cannot articulate how she feels:

Extract 18		
486	EP	but I think one (.) hypothesis <that I think's worth exploring> is (.) that sometimes (.) she doesn't know what to say and she says things that she doesn't really mean. like (.) 'I can't be bothered' that's not (.) rea:lly he:r. is it rea:lly as you say she's normally really very polite so I think one thing would be (1.3) if she does say something like that for people to (1.1) praps try to use a bit of humour?
494	HoY	Yep,
495	EP	erm say £'What?! do you really mean that?'£ but you know not not to respond to it you know I don't think respond to it as you might a child who is being really deliberately rude. let's assume she hasn't got the words rather than she's being ↓rude I think
500	HoY	yep
501	EP	so see ↑and ↑again see what staff think about that you know
503	HoY	yep
504	EP	say that's what we think from this meeting but what do other people think,

Emma establishes this as a suggestion, rather than fact, with the disclaimer that this is "*one hypothesis I think is worth exploring*". She then seeks consensus about this, asking "*that's not rea:lly he:r is it*" before managing her accountability for the suggestion by reporting "*as you say she's normally really very polite*". This also reinforces a positive element to build on. Emma then scaffolds an alternative response and script for staff to use, reinforcing why this should be done and encouraging a collaborative approach by suggesting "*let's assume*". She then appears to encourage Megan to manage this in school by involving other members of staff and seeking their views. This leads to Megan describing how she will introduce this approach:

Extract 19		
535	HoY	yep I think it always works best doesn't it, if you ask people to come to those meetings with <you know> what works ↑well [with Mia]
538	EP	[yeah]
539	HoY	their perception of her in ↑lessons ↓and things like that. so that [we can]
541	EP	[yeah]
542	HoY	so it's a bit more structured then in terms of (.) what we're expecting from staff

Megan rephrases Emma's suggestions about how staff could be involved and stating "*you know*" taking accountability for delivering the approach and possibly visualising herself using it. She uses the word "*I*" when talking about how she will prepare the meeting and "*we*" when referring to what might be discussed, suggesting a collaborative problem-solving approach.

Later, Emma summarises this as an agreed action, downplaying her position as someone who has been called in to help, leading to Megan suggesting further ideas about what she can do:

Extract 20		
1363	EP	Yeah and I don't want them to think it's them coming along for me to drop pearls of ↑wisdom. cos I have no pearls of wisdom here. £I'm as puzzled as everybody else- we're all in it together£ ((*laughs))*
1367	HoY	I think just hearing the perspective that <you know> we're ↑all ↑trying ↑to ↑figure ↑out this situation and I think they <you know> they're playing their little part <you know> when she's <u>in</u> those lessons and just what they could do and and and feeding off other people I think is really valuable.
1373	EP	Yeah

1374	HoY	Even I I was thinking I with one of my ↑other students last year, what I did do, was tried to get some of those teachers where she was struggling to go to the lessons (.) when they were ↑in the learning centre just to, ↑pop ↑over ↑and ↑say ↑hello? to say ↑hi,
1379	EP	↑yeah- that's a ↑nice one yeah
1380	Parent	to which she would probably respond quite well to that [actually]
1382	HoY	[↑yeah I think] she probably would.

Emma begins by stating: "*we're all in it together*" which appears to downplay her status as someone who has been called in to help. This appears to result in Megan suggesting ways that she can manage the situation as, by referring to others playing a "*little part*" she establishes herself as someone who has a bigger role. She then makes other suggestions about how she can involve staff, reflecting on what has worked with other students, reporting "*even I was thinking*…" and later adding: "*maybe I could*….", "*I might just suggest* ….", "*I can do that as well*" (L1384-1392). Megan uses the word "I" each time, further positioning herself as someone who can help.

Emma revisits and reinforces the suggestion that Mia cares about her schoolwork later in the consultation. During a discussion about her attainment in primary school, Charlotte reports Mia always tried hard and had requested maths tutoring "*which she really loved*" (L1641). Emma responds:

Extract 21		
1619	EP	↑I ↑mean ↑that's interesting information ↑isn't it. (.) that she was seen as somebody who tried ↓hard, that she loved the maths tutoring (.) ↑this ↑doesn't sound like somebody who's not bothered does it
1623	HoY	no
1624	EP	£I think she just got the words wrong on that occasion£

1625	HoY	I think she did
1626	EP	↑yeah.
1627	HoY	£ the end of a long Friday£

Megan agrees with this suggestion, justifying it with humour to explain why it might have been the case, suggesting it may have been accepted as a new explanation.

In summary, Emma suggested an alternative narrative about Mia, encouraging Megan to take ownership and share it with school staff by scaffolding how to do this, providing scripts to share with others. She then revisits the narrative later in the consultation, clarifying the reason for suggesting the intervention. This process of reframing, scaffolding, revisiting and clarifying appears to have supported Megan to consider how she can manage this in school.

Clarifying next steps.

At several points during the consultation, when exploring problems or potential ways forward, Megan reports feeling uncertain about what to do. In the example above, Emma moved on to explore a possible solution. When this happens again, Emma responds by stepping in and appears to slow down the Megan's explanation by summarising what has been discussed and confirming the next steps:

Extract 22		
1460	HoY	(hhhh) i-it's really difficult I feel like I'm not certain about any of you know I think it's always just trying it isn't it and-
1463	EP	I think I think so long as she feels that you're trying that you're optimistic that we will get over this we're not quite sure how but that we will I think if you can (.) persuade people to try <u>not</u> to demonstrate their

		frustration with her
1468	HoY	Yes
1469	EP	you know so if she says something like that to use humour rather than (.) because you know as you say actually when it comes down to it there's no way you can get her to go to lessons is there
1473	HoY	no
1474	EP	so actually erm (4.3) I think (1.4) you're probably going to do it more by erm (.) persuasion and keep working on ways of helping her feel comfortable rather than any coercion
1478	HoY	Yeah
1479	EP	she doesn't respond well to coercion does she (laughs)
1480	HoY	no I think it's those relationships as well isn't it that are [important]
1482	EP	[relationships are key] yeah yeah
1483	HoY	Yeah and I can- I can have a look and see if there's anything in terms of school that we could (.) you know if there's any days where we could try and come and ↑meet her or something like that. I could have a look

Emma emphasises what can be done, using the word "we" to establish collaboration, while also establishing Megan's role in managing the situation in school by suggesting "*if you can persuade people"*. She reinforces this by reminding her of the scripts and acknowledging the challenges she is facing, before establishing the nature of the support should be around "*helping her feel comfortable*". This solution-focused approach appears to have offered her emotional support or 'containment' as Megan begins to consider what is needed, reporting "*it's those relationships as well isn't it that are important"* before taking accountability for what she can do to help, stating "*yeah I can- I can…"*.

A further example of Emma redirecting the conversation to become more solution-focused occurs in response to Megan's uncertainty when initial understandings about Mia's sleep patterns is suggested. Charlotte suggested: "*her sleep is so so deep"* (L718), with the Head of Year confirming: "*she almost never has enough like she can just sleep and sleep and sleep <it's not like she gets to a natural waking point kind of>*" (L813-5). On this occasion, when challenge leads to uncertainty, Emma responds by redirecting the conversation to focus on the present and explore next steps:

Extract 23		
949	EP	so mostly she gets up okay at the weekends does she?
950	Parent	not early early but if she plans to meet a friend
951	EP	yeah
952	Parent	erm she will be very focused she knows she has to be ready (.) very different
954	EP	so it's not so (1.5) sort of this thinking is this just because she's just finding it so difficult to wake up (.) it doesn't rea:lly quite sound like that does it.
957	Parent	no (.) It's almost as though (hhh) (1.8) she shuts herself away because she's safe
959	EP	mmm
960	Parent	erm
961	HoY	(4.8) it's really difficult isn't it
962	EP	mmm
963	HoY	[cos she] it's that kind of constant (.) the goalposts are always ↑moving ↓and everything's kind of shifting. I think as soon as you you almost kind of crack one aspect or you think you're getting somewhere with something something else moves and (and kind of)
968	EP	mmm mmm
969	HoY	you're not where you thought you £were any more£ and I think that's the <it's really difficult isn't it> to try and see what she:: (1.4) what she actually is very very

		worried about and what she is anxious about and what (.) what part of it is a ↑choice ↓what part of it is a: (.) habit? What part of it you know all of those [different things]
976	EP	Yeah yeah
977	HoY	And I think that's (1.2) [and I think]
978	EP	[I think you've] done a RAG rating of all the different lessons haven't you.

After Emma explores the situation and challenges the existing understanding, Charlotte appears to hold the turn to talk with pauses and breathing out: "*no (.) It's almost as though (hhh) (1.8)"* before suggesting: "*she shuts herself away because she's safe*". This suggests she does not think it is a physiological issue. Megan suggests it is "*difficult*" and describes a constantly moving situation where "*you're not where you thought you were any more*". Emma initially provides space for her to share her feelings, before responding by focusing on the current situation and discussing possible next steps. This redirection also leads to other issues regarding her engagement in work and relationships with teachers and friends to be discussed. Emma then summarises and addresses all issues and suggests offering her "*a day when there's no expectation of her (.) going into <u>any</u> lessons*" and where "*nobody's going to put any <u>pressure</u> on her*" to see if "*she then becomes more likely to come in on that day*" (L1186-1201). Megan responds to this with:

"so kind of tell her in advance that's what we're gonna ↑do: and this day is gonna be kind of (.) <u>your</u> day in the ↑learning ↑centre ↓and ↓and ↓and-" (1202-4).

Megan appears to be planning a script she can use with Mia, suggesting she is taking accountability for the approach and visualising its use. She later offers a range of suggestions as to what she could offer Mia on that day, again, visualising how to use the approach. This appears to be in response to Emma offering containment by acknowledging challenges, redirecting conversations to

focus on the present, exploring or recapping agreed next steps and scaffolding and offering scripts to support their use.

6.3.iii Summary – Consultation Two

During this consultation, Megan appears to position herself as wanting to help. When the situation becomes challenging, she reports being uncertain about knowing what to do. Emma appears to respond by reframing situations, offering solution-focused containment by redirecting to explore other issues, focusing on the present situation and summarising and scaffolding strategies and next steps. This appears to result in Megan taking ownership of situations and offering further ideas. Charlotte's construction and positioning appears to remain relatively consistent throughout.

Examples of the language strategies used by Emma throughout this consultation are summarised in Table 12. This table highlights the language used by the EP and the observed effect it appeared to have on Megan and Charlotte, with excerpts identified for reference. These features were identified on more than one occasion, supporting the analysis (Potter and Wetherell, 1987).

Table 12: Table to show features of the EP's language and observed effects – Consultation 2.

Example of language strategies and location in analysis	Observed effects and examples of extracts in which they occur	Example observed effect
Provide topics to discuss - alternative explanations: "*Do you think…. or…" (Extract 15, L322)* **or emphasising aspects of comments to invite discussion:** **"***It's a funny thing to say isn't it…" (Extract 16, L421)*	- Discussion and consideration of alternative narratives, and consideration of support. (Extracts 15, 16).	"*I don't think she's particularly bothered… but homework and that is a real battle" (Extract 15, L326-330).* *"It's not like her at all actually because she's normally very respectful." (Extract 16, L425)*
Reflecting on and revisiting previous comments: "*did you say*? (Extract 14, L301) "*this doesn't sound like*…" (Extract 21, L21; Extract 23, L956)	- Events explored further. - Variations in constructions identified and explored. - Slowing down discussions. - (Extracts 14, 15, 16, 21, 23).	*"I don't think she's worried I have tried that approach" (Extract 14, L302)* *"no, it's almost as though (hhh)…" (Extract 23, L957)*
Providing space to discuss – active listening: "*yeah*"; "*mmm*" (Extract 20)	- Narratives change, other concerns or ideas shared while talking (Extracts 19, 20, 23).	*"I was thinking I with one of my other students last year what I did do…." (Extract 20, L1374)*

		"It's really difficult…" (Extract 23, L961)
Reframing situations positively offering alternative narratives: "*I think she just*…" (Extract 18, L487) "*let's assume*…" (Extract 18, L498) "*at that moment in time…" (Extract 17, L440)* "*sometimes she doesn't know*….".Extract 18, L487)	- Further discussion leading to alternative explanations being suggested. (Extracts 17, 18, 19).	*"yep I think it always works best doesn't it if you ask people…" (Extract 19, L535)*
Solution-focused containment and a focus on the present in response to uncertainty: "*I think one hypothesis I think is worth exploring is*…" (Extract 18, L486) "*I think so long as she feels your trying and…*". (Extract 22, L1463)	- Talk suggests ownership of strategies and further support suggested (Extracts 18, 19, 22, 23).	*"so kind of tell her in advance that's what we're gonna do and this day is gonna be kind of your day…."* (Page 126)
Scaffolding strategies: "say…"(Extract 18, L495)	- Talk about how it can be used. - Possible visualization of its use. - Preparing own scripts (Extracts 18, 22).	"*I think it's those relationships as well isn't it that are important….and I can I can have a*

"let's assume…" (Extract 18, L498) "If you can persuade people to try… so if she says something like that use humour" (Extract 22, L1466)		*look and see if there's anything in terms of school that we could…t" (Extract 22, L1480-1484)*
Downplaying status: "*I think that's what I was thinking"*; "*we're in it together*" (Extract 20, L1366) "*I have no pearls of wisdom*".(Extract 20, L1364)	- Further suggestions offered (Extracts 16, 20).	*"I was thinking with one of my other students last year what I did do was…" (Extract 20, L1374)*
Ensuring collaboration: *"see what staff think" (Extract 18, L501)* *"what do other people think?" (Extract 18, L504)*	- Talk suggests ownership of strategies. - Further strategies suggested. (Extracts 18, 19, 20, 22).	*"I think just hearing the perspective that you know we're all trying to figure out this situation…. they're playing their little part" (Extract 20, L1367)*

6.4 Consultation Three– Demi

This consultation focuses on Demi – a girl in Year Eight whose behaviour has challenged adults at home and in school. As Demi had been mentioned in conversations about her twin sister, Mia (the focus of Consultation Two), it was agreed her needs should be discussed separately. The Head of Year (Megan) and Demi's mother (Charlotte) met in person while the EP (Emma) joined online. The way in which Megan and Charlotte construct the situation and position their roles within it is considered before identifying features of Emma's use of language.

6.4.i Initial constructions

Parent's construction and positioning

Charlotte describes Demi as being "*unhappy*" (L93) in school, reporting details about a recent conversation to establish this. She reports "*normally she won't talk to me at all*" but that this week she has "*chatted quite a lot*", highlighting the significance of the conversation (L91-2). Charlotte describes Demi as "*the carer of the two*" girls (L105-6). She appears to imply the situation with her sister may be affecting her behaviour, reporting Demi feels it is "*unjust that she gets into trouble all the time for not doing homework when Mia doesn't have to do any*" (L94-5). She suggests Demi wants school staff to know how she is feeling as she "*quite ↑gladly*" tells her the "*reason for some of her behaviours*" and "*almost fee:ds*" it to her in the hope she will pass it on (L163-173).

Charlotte reports there are "*two very different sides*" to Demi (L449), describing how sometimes "*she almost goes back to being a little ↑girl who wants to show you her ↑pictures she's done*" (L404-5). She reports Demi has recently been playing with a baby doll that she has "*hidden under her bed*" and has "*a load of fidget toys*" that she "*fidgets with all night long*" (L434-6). In this way she appears to present Demi as being child-like. By presenting detailed information about Demi's personal space and emotional states suggests Charlotte is establishing her understanding of her daughter and justifying her ability to talk on her behalf.

Charlotte describes the situation as difficult, using extreme descriptions such as "*I got so desperate*" (L258) and clarifying this as "*really desperate*" (L260). She uses an active metaphor to emphasise this, describing how "*everything just felt as if it it was really closing in and I didn't know what else to do*" (L260-1).

Head of Year's construction and positioning

The Head of Year (Megan) also suggests there are two sides to Demi - a young person who has challenges with her mental health and as someone who displays behaviours which challenge adults. She offers a list of behaviours linked to the "*mental health side*" including "*pulling her ↑hair when she's getting very ↑anxious*" (L220-2), describing this as the "*historic side*" (220). When Charlotte states these anxious behaviours are "*very much prominent [at the ↓minute]*" Megan takes back the turn to talk, stating: *"[↑yeah.] those kind of feelings of ↑anxiety*". She then reports other behaviours currently seen in school including:

> *"↑ac↓tchuly:? truanting in ↑scho:ol ↓actchuly ↓you ↓know ↓some ↓quite risky behaviours ↑that she has been displaying fo:r a period of ↑ti::me"* (L226-9).

Repeating the word "*actually*" and stating "*you know*" appears to present these behaviours as fact and suggests she is speaking on behalf of others, reinforcing their significance. When Charlotte refers to Demi displaying child-like behaviours, Megan reports "*that's the side that we don't necessarily see really*" (L408) and adds: "*I see ↑glimmers of it and I'm starting to see >little tiny bits of tha:t<*" (L411-3). She then reports:

> *"it's the unstructured ↓ti::me whe:re some of these ↑qui:te ◦<I think we can agree>◦ ↑quite ↑strange behaviours have been kind of occurring. (L418).*

She emphasises and slows down words such as "*glimmers*" and "*little tiny bits"* to establish their significance. She then presents a list of three examples of "*strange*" behaviours to validate this.

Megan describes the current situation as a "*difficult cycle*" (L82), reinforcing this by stating "*it just feels relentless doesn't it*"(L85) – seeking consensus from others to establish it as fact. She uses a metaphor of a wave crashing, stating *"you get over that bit of the wave and then the next bit crashes and it's really difficult" (L87-9),* suggesting a situation over which she has little control. Timelines are used to establish important events, such as Demi having been in isolation, which Megan reported she had explained to Demi was due to the "*impact you've had on somebody else*" (L199). She describes "*all sorts of stuff*" happening (L184), rather than providing details, suggesting many low-level incidents, confirming this later by stating:

"it's <u>every</u> day it's this <u>relentless</u> ↑cycle. of (.) low level behaviour that's ↑<u>actchuly</u> making other kids >quite un↑happy< and I know that <u>she's</u> really unhappy as <u>well</u>?" (L473-6).

Megan appears to position herself as wanting to help Demi, using reported speech to add authenticity to her account as shown below:

"*I <u>did</u> really <u>try</u> and acknowledge "I <u>know</u> this is really ↑difficult ↑for you::. and actually:. <I know that you are struggling in ↑lots of things and this is coming out in different> ↓ways. (.)" (L193-7).*

She describes a meeting arranged between another member of staff and the person "*in charge*" of an intervention for Demi, stating: "*because I said if we can try - <u>can</u> get this up and running as quickly as we can that would be <u>great</u>*,". She slows down when describing how "<*when I did the referral*>" and adds: "*I've ticked <u>so</u> many boxes*", emphasising what she has done. In this way she appears to be positioning herself as someone who has a responsibility to help to organise support for Demi, suggesting she sees this as her role.

Summary

Charlotte and Megan both appear to present the situation as challenging. They both acknowledge there are two sides to Demi, however their descriptions of these appear to differ. Both appear to establish themselves as knowing Demi well and able to speak on her behalf, therefore justifying their positions as being

able to help. Emma’s use of language in response to these descriptions and positions is now outlined.

6.4.ii EP's use of language

Throughout this consultation, the EP (Emma) draws on Charlotte's and Megan's constructions of the current situation, reflecting on and revisiting comments they have made and acknowledging the impact both systems have on Demi in terms of family dynamics and school policies. This leads to supportive strategies being identified. The strategies used by Emma throughout are now considered.

Introducing the consultation

Emma begins this consultation by establishing that they will be talking about "*both girls*", therefore the initial discussion begins with an update on Demi's sister. This conversation gradually turns to focus on Demi.

Exploring concerns

Emma begins the discussion by focusing on positives:

Extract 24		
74	EP	Yes £↑I ↑mean it always strikes me that you're doing all the right things£
76	Parent	It doesn't feel like I'm doing all the right things at all.
77	EP	That's why it's very hard to help you because you're doing all the right things and school are doing all the right (.) things and the girls are lovely really
80	HoY	They ↓are
81	EP	↑yeah.
82	HoY	it's just a difficult cycle isn't it and especially with Demi at the minute

Emma appears to downplay her status as someone who has been asked for help by suggesting: "it's very hard to help you", setting the scene for collaboration. Megan then appears to justify why she has sought help by

describing the current situation, as outlined in the previous section. Charlotte describes the situation from her own and Demi's perspective, as described in the previous section. Emma appears to provide space for these conversations, leading to lots of information being shared through their constructions of events.

Having listened to these descriptions, Emma appears to acknowledge the impact the home and school systems have on Demi. For example, Charlotte suggests homework is an issue as Demi thinks it "*unjust*" that she is "*in trouble all the time for not doing homework"* when her sister does not have to do it (L94-5). Emma suggests talking to her about this:

Extract 25		
314	EP	but to say 'well ↑what ↑<u>if</u> we:: let you <u>off</u> home↓work' you know and my assumption would be that she'd be '↑ye:ah ↑fantastic." ↓but <↓you ↓know> you <u>then</u> followed it through: and said "well (.) the implications of ↓<u>that</u> you know you might fall behind with your ↑<u>work</u> erm (.) <you know> just the sort of conversation that you <u>would</u> have. I don't know (.) do you think (.) how do you think a conversation like that might <u>work</u> with her
322	Parent	(0.94) I mean at the ↑<u>moment</u> homework is (.) mostly <u>me:</u> with <u>he:r</u> having to do: <u>most</u> of it (.) and say <u>look</u> you need to sit here and do ↓it so (.) every single bit of homework is (.) <u>mostly</u> from me with <u>her</u> doing ↓it (.) erm (0.96) she'll never <u>ever</u> do it off her own back.

Emma offers a scaffold for the conversation, suggesting: *"I don't know*" to downplay her status and explicitly invite opinion, ensuring collaboration. Charlotte pauses and responds with: "*I mean*" suggesting she is clarifying her thoughts before using extreme cases such as "*every single bit*" and "*never <u>ever</u>*" to establish how challenging homework can be. However, she does not appear to respond directly to the question. Instead, she continues to explain the challenges around homework and introduces further issues. Emma appears to

take a solution-focused approach to containing Charlotte's response, slowing down her description and reframing challenges by introducing a discussion about strategies:

Extract 26		
356	Parent	It's she: (1.98) I actually can't believe. a lot of what she ↓ses which I don't like ↓at ↓the ↓minute
357	EP	no no .hhh ↑I ↑wonder whether it might be better because (.) I ↑think there is an issue over ↓ti:me isn't it here for both of them they're both ↑really. hungry for your ↓ti:me and ↑competing for your ↓ti:me
358	Parent	Mmmm
359	EP	and (.) whether (.) it ↑might be erm I'm saying this as a question really I am saying this as a question not as a as a you must erm whether it would be better (.) to take away (.) things that have negativity as far as possible so that you can spend time the time you ↑do spend together. can be ↑positive.
365	Parent	↓mmm we were ↑talking I've tried really hard to get her to say something that she'd ↑like ↑to do that would be with me (.) and she's always wanted to ri:de

Emma appears to offer containment by lowering her voice, reframing the challenge more positively as an issue of "time" and encouraging a solution-focus by asking "would it be better if..". She states: "*I wonder*…" and repairs her initial sentence with "*I am saying this as a question not as you must*" to establish collaboration and downplay her status. Charlotte explains what she has already done, which appears to be similar to Emma's suggesting agreement. Megan then comments:

Extract 27

382	HoY	because she ↑does really respond well to ↓praise doesn't she
384	Parent	↑oh she loves it.
385	HoY	yeah. we had a meeting we met last ↓Thursday <to specifically focus on> Demi didn't ↓we and we went through ↑feedback ↑from parents evening because <Sarah was at work so we couldn't do the parents evening so I got the feedback> we went through that as well as other things in terms of the referral to (*intervention withheld*) excetra and I think ↑a ↑lot ↑of ↑the ↑feedback. in her actual lessons is really ↑positive isn't it and there are ↑lots of things I think she really held ↑on to,
394	Parent	oh she was ↑so excited when that evening she kept saying to me "↑were you really ↑proud of me" and I said "I it was ↑really lovely to hear-

Megan appears to talk positively about Demi at this point, establishing she "*does really respond well to praise*" and feedback from lessons is "*really positive*". Charlotte reinforces this, emphasising she was "↑*so excited*". Charlotte then reports:

> *"and she almost goes back to being a little girl who wants to show you her pictures she's done"* (L404-5).

Highlighting this "childlike" side to Demi, leads Megan to identify the alternative "side" to Demi, sparking a discussion about the two contrasting "sides" as outlined in the construction section above.

Emma provides space for this discussion, which leads to Megan explaining a strategy the school has introduced – sending Demi to another school for "*a bit of an opportunity for resetting*" (L453). As this strategy is being discussed, Emma reflects and revisits the earlier discussion about homework:

Extract 28		
541	EP	↑so ↑actually that would lend itself to not having any ↑homework legitimately wouldn't it
543	HoY	Yeah
544	EP	For the time she's there
545	HoY	yeah

Emma appears to use the current situation as evidence to justify the 'no homework' strategy. Megan responds to this suggestion without hesitation, suggesting agreement, leading to Emma summarising the strategy:

Extract 29		
552	EP	shall we ↑should ↑we say that then not to have any homework so that then the time that Sally and Demi spend together can <you know you you> take that piece of conflict out of it would that be alright with you Sarah,
557	Parent	£↑yeah£
558	HoY	I am happy to trial ↑that. ↑Can ↑we ↑do ↑it ↑on ↑a ↑↑trial ba- I don't want to say she's never gonna to have to do any again.
561	EP	↑no ↑no I was ↑just thinking of while she's there so she doesn't even need to know
563	HoY	okay

Emma seeks consensus and encourages collaboration using the word "*we*" when asking: "*should we say that then not to have any homework"*. She reinforces this impact homework has on the situation at home, by suggesting the strategy would "*take that piece of conflict out of it"* and seeking Charlotte's views. Megan uses the word "*trial*" suggesting she has not committed completely to the strategy, however, by asking "*can we*" implies a collaborative approach. Emma then elaborates:

Extract 30		
574	EP	erm (.) but I think I think to <u>see</u> that and then that is something we <u>could</u> then think about taking forward when she comes <u>back</u> you know if you're saying <u>actually</u> it really was helpful that we didn't have those nightly <u>battles</u> we could then say (.) you know perhaps on a week by week basis erm or even perhaps if you could talk to her ↑subject teachers and see if there's any subject teachers who say "↑yeah actually it will probably be <u>fine</u> if she didn't do homework, and if there's other subject teachers who say no I really you know if she doesn't do homework she's really going to fall behind (.) so if you could ↑check ↑that ↑out,
586	HoY	↑yep
587	EP	so that could be part of the reintegration plan we think about(.) what the <u>homework</u> requirements will be,
589	HoY	mmm ↑hmm.

Emma again reinforces the impact homework has on the situation at home, suggesting the approach may remove "*nightly battles*" reflecting the frequency and intensity of the problems it causes. This also appears to provide evidence to justify the approach. Emma scaffolds how the approach might be used, suggesting it form part of the reintegration plan "*we*" think about, reinforcing the collaborative approach. She places the responsibility for the approach with Megan stating: "*so if you could ↑check ↑that ↑out*,". Although Megan does not follow up Emma's suggestion with second assessments to confirm her agreement, she acknowledges it, implying she agrees by stating "*↑yep*" without hesitation.

Emma then reflects and revisits a previous comment made during the conversation and directly asks about it:

Extract 31		
592	EP	um ↑is ↑there ↑an ↑issue with her with friends as well?
594	Parent	yes.
595	EP	yeah.
596	Parent	erm Demi's always been very keen to have a special friend but unfortunately she always picks the people who (.) ↑perhaps ↑in her view (.) are the exciting people
599	EP	mmm
600	Parent	erm (1.68) and she feels (.) quite let down by (.) certain people at the minute. who have broken up a lot of her friendships as she sees.
603	EP	mmm
604	Parent	Und (.) I think she feels quite lost. She doesn't see ↑anybody out of school:l, (.) at all.
606	EP	mmm
607	Parent	un is really struggling with that.

Charlotte responds to the direct question with "yes". By acknowledging this with "*yeah*", Emma appears to offer an invitation for the parent to continue talking, leading to further information about Demi's friendships being shared. Megan reports: "*she's quite clearly finding that really difficult at the minute" (L621-4)* and suggests Demi is in a "*bit of a cycle and a bit of a tunnel. about what friendships is*." (L631). Emma acknowledges this, stating: "*yeah (.) yeah (.) it is tricky isn't it. It's so much simpler when you're in junior school*" (L633-4) before, again, turning to a solution-focused approach, discussing with Charlotte opportunities for Demi to socialise out of school.

Emma later revisits a previous conversation, which leads to further information being shared about Demi's friendships:

Extract 32		
794	EP	↑I ↑think it sounds a good idea. it it it you know I think your idea of it as a reset erm (.) and (.) encouraging her (.) to ↑see it as that and trying to erm (1.48) I mean does ↑she ↑acknowledge. that she's not ↑happy?
799	Parent	(.) I say it was the first time the other day that she told me how unhappy she was. [erm]
801	EP	[yeah]
802	Parent	mostly with her tutor group und her lack of friends I think are the two (1.18) which are very closely ↓linked aren't ↓they
805	HoY	↓yeah.
806	EP	yeah
807	Parent	I think as well. (.) the split from Alice which needed to happen
809	HoY	↑yeah.
810	Parent	but I think (1.48) from Demi's point of view I think that's taken away a bit of stability for her as well

Emma provides space for this conversation – appearing to invite Charlotte to continue by responding with "*yeah*". Charlotte's suggestion that being separated from her friends has "*taken away a bit of stability for her as well*" suggests there are other things that have contributed to a lack of stability. Emma summarises this, suggesting: " *I think friendships are probably one of the most fundamental aspects of all of this for both of them aren't they" (L823-5).* Emma suggests she "*thinks*" this is the case and seeks consensus to establish collaboration. She emphasises the word "*↑both*", which facilitates further discussion about Demi's relationship with her sister and the fact that they found it difficult being separated in secondary school. Megan confirms this, reporting a "*re:ally rocky start to secondary school*" (L845) for the whole year group, and adding:

Extract 33		
864	HoY	it's almost like that behaviour for them has moved on but for her it's still this like ↑looking for mischief ↑looking to cause trouble ↑not taking it very serious↓ly I think I think it's also quite reflective you know you say she reverts to those very ↑<u>child</u>-like behaviours around (.) playing with dolls and things like <u>that</u> and I think (.) she is <u>stuck</u> at that point and is struggling to move <u>beyond</u> that?
872	EP	mmm
873	HoY	I don't know (.) I can't (.) ◦I don't know why◦
874	Parent	It's quite funny you know at junior school they were <u>always</u> in the same class all the way through school and they sort of (.) they were ↑<u>always</u> there for each other but they always played with completely different ↓friends but they bounced ↑off. each other
879	EP	yeah
880	Parent	so problems sort of they sorted out.
881	EP	mmm
882	Parent	but then obviously all that went as well. so she lost everything ↓really ↓when ↓she ↓came, and I think she's just finding it hard to get her bearings again really,

Emma uses "yeah" and "mmm" which appears to invite Charlotte to continue talking, leading to her responding to Megan's uncertainty by sharing information about what has helped in the past. Emma then explores the current situation as shown below:

Extract 34

886	EP	was it a deliberate choice for them to be in different tutor groups at secondary school?
887	HoY	so I: Holly Brown does all the- she does all the tutor groups and I:: think her normal policy is she <u>never</u> puts twins together,

By referring to another member of staff, Megan reduces her own accountability for the decision. She appears to acknowledge Demi's situation may be different, reporting other twins had "*quite a normal transition period*" (L903) and adding: *"they did all the taster days. but obviously this year group didn't get any of that*" (L908-9).

At this point, Emma draws on Megan's earlier comment that she had: "*<u>started</u> exploring the idea that <u>maybe</u> we <u>look</u> at if there was another ↑tutor ↑group ↑that ↑she ↑goes ↑↑into*" (L483). Emma explores this further:

Extract 35		
933	EP	<u>might</u> there be any (.) mileage <I know you you've said it's very difficult for you to move the tutor group> at <u>all</u> but (.) to <u>try</u> to get it into the same third, so that they <u>could</u> ↑support ↑each ↑other?
937	HoY	I can look, into, it, (.) I think so-
938	EP	what do you think Sarah. I mean do you think there would be any value in that?
940	Parent	(2.96) I had thought about that I just wonder if it ↓might (.) ↑not (.) because they'd never ever be together at playtime

Emma presents her suggestion tentatively, enabling disagreement, by asking if it "*<u>might</u>*" be possible and acknowledges the difficulty Megan had already

suggested she may face. Megan appears to talk positively about the possibility, suggesting she "*can look into it*" and confirming this with "*I think so*". Emma explicitly seeks Charlotte's opinion, suggesting collaboration. Charlotte then suggests: "*<u>support</u> wise I wonder if it ↓might (.) just (.) moral support from a distance*" (L949-50), suggesting agreement.

Megan confirms "I can look into it" (L952), outlining the tutor groups and possible difficulties. Emma responds by explaining and justifying the strategy, leading to confirmation and approvals being made by Megan and Charlotte:

Extract 36		
976	EP	(.hhh) I think I think it might be worth thinking about you know if (*cough*) there do seem to be a lot of <u>positives</u> in their relationship and (.) it's not as if they're in each other's ↑<u>pockets</u> but it seems as if they (.) almost without talking (.) get a lot of security from one another (.) and they both seem so ↑<u>adrift</u> at the moment in their different ways ↑don't they that to try to put that back there <cos it is by all accounts> a very special <u>bond</u> isn't it (.) twins,
985	HoY	◦yeah◦
986	Parent	◦£yes£◦

Emma justifies the strategy by referring to the "*positives*" in the sisters' relationship and the "s*pecial bond*" they have while the word "*adrift*" appears to establish they may feel lost without each other. Emma uses a metaphor of not being in each other's pockets to confirm the distance between the girls. Megan reports:

"OK well I can definitely look into that and I will- I'm not making any promises because I can't- I'm trying to visualise all my pictures on the wall of where there is space and where there's not" (L997-1000).

Megan appears to talk more positively about this possibility at this point – having changed her language from "*I can look into it*" to "*I can definitely look into that*", while using the caveat "*I'm not making any promises*".

6.4.iii Summary – Consultation Three

Both Megan and Charlotte describe the situation as challenging. Both explain what they have done to help, suggesting they both see it as their role to support Demi's SEMH needs. Megan describes support she has drawn on both in school and externally. Throughout the consultation she appears to talk more positively about further support that can be put in place.

Emma appears to explore how Demi's behaviour presents both at home and in school when identifying possible supportive strategies. Examples of the language strategies used by Emma throughout this consultation to facilitate collaboration are summarised in Table 13. This table highlights the language used by the EP and the observed effect it appeared to have on Megan and Charlotte, with excerpts identified for reference. Most of these strategies were identified on more than one occasion, supporting the analysis (Potter and Wetherell, 1987).

Table 13: Table to show features of the EP's language and observed effects – Consultation 3.

Example of Language Strategy and location in analysis	Observed effects and examples of extracts in which they occur	Example of observed effect
Focus on positives (including adults' skills in managing situations): "*you're doing all the right things*" (Extract 24, L74)	- Leads to further talk about what help is needed (Extract 24).	*"It's just a difficult cycle isn't it" (Extract 24, L82)*
Providing space to talk – active listening strategies: "*yeah"; "mmm*"	- Further information shared through constructions of situations and descriptions of strategies tried. (Extract 26, 31, 32, 33)	
Ensuring collaboration (seeking parent views, use of word '*we'):* *"how do you think…that might work?" (Extract 25, L320)* *"would that be alright with you?" (Extract 29, L555)* *" we could then think about.." (Extract 30, L575)*	- Further information and suggestions for support shared. - Agreement over strategies. (Extracts 25, 29, 30, 35)	*"I'm happy to trial that. Can we do it on a trial…" (Extract 29, L558)*
Downplaying status	- Further discussion leading to ideas for strategies being shared. (Extracts 25, 26).	*"mmm we were talking and I've tried really hard to get her to say*

"*I wonder..*" (Extract 26, L357) "*I don't know..*" (Extract 25, L320) "*I am saying this as a question, not as you must" (Extract 26, L359)*		*something that she's like to do that would be with me" (Extract 26, L365)*
Summarising and scaffolding strategies and next steps: "*say…" (Extract 25, L314)* *"perhaps if you..." (Extract 30, L579)* *"if you could check that out…" (Extract 30, L585)*	- Agreement of strategy and next steps (Extract 25, 29, 30).	
Offering evidence to justify strategies: *"so if you're saying..." (Extract 30, 576)* *"that would lend itself to…" (Extract 28, L541)* *"it seems as if…" (Extract 36, L979)*	- Agreement over strategies. (Extracts 28, 30, 36).	
Solution-focused approach – inviting discussion about solutions to offer containment and focus on the present situation:	- Further discussion about solutions. - Positive discussion about young person. (Extract 26, 27, 28).	"*Because she does really respond well to praise doesn't she" (Extract 27, L382)*

"would it be better if…" (Extract 26, L357) "would it be better to…." (Extract 26, L361)		*"I think a lot of the feedback in her actual lessons is really positive isn't" (Extract 27, L391)*
Revisiting comments and conversations and asking explicit questions: "um is there an issue with…" (Extract 31, L592) "I mean does she…" (Extract 32, L997) "I know you've said…" (Extract 35, L933)	Leads to further information being shared and strategies identified (Extracts 28, 31, 32, 35).	*"erm Demi's always been very keen to have a special friend…. I think she's feeling quiet lost….un is really struggling with that" (Extract 31, L596-607)* *"…she told me how unhappy she was… mostly with her tutor group und her lack of friends which are very closely linked aren't they" (Extract 32, L799-804)*

6.5 Summary of analysis.

Construction and positioning

In all three consultations, school staff appear to explain their role as being a helper. This appears to include organising support for young people's SEMH needs – either through implementing strategies in school or drawing on external support from other professionals.

EPs' use of language

A focus on the interactions throughout the three consultations has led to various language features used by the EPs to facilitate collaboration being identified and the impact these appear to have observed. Although each consultation is distinct and the interactions only relevant to that point in time, the information presented in the Tables 10, 11 and 12 suggest similar features were used throughout all three consultations, and similar effects noted.

The way in which these findings reflect existing research is considered in the Discussion chapter.

7. Discussion

This study aimed to answer the question:

How do EPs use language to facilitate collaboration with parents and school staff within joint consultations focusing on SEMH needs in primary and secondary schools?

Discursive Psychology and Conversation Analysis approaches were used to observe the interactions within three joint consultations between EPs, parents and school staff. The research aimed to:

- Identify the language used by teachers and parents in joint consultations when constructing accounts of events and positioning their roles within them.
- Identify EPs' use of language when seeking to facilitate collaboration during consultations to develop shared understandings of a young person's needs and co-produce strategies to support them

A number of observations of the interactions within these consultations have been identified and will be discussed further below. It is important to point out that, as analysis of language is itself a construction (Philips & Hardy, 2011), the findings of this study are the author's interpretations. As it is assumed there is no single 'truth', other researchers may have a different interpretation of the analysis and different findings may have been drawn had different consultations been included. However, based on careful consideration of the language used, various observations can be made.

7.1 Unique contribution of this study

The findings from this study suggest school staff and parents appeared to find situations associated with young people's SEMH needs challenging at times yet saw it as their role to help and support them, drawing on additional support where needed. However, while other professionals were involved to provide

support to children and young people, the EPs appeared to provide emotional support to school staff and parents.

An analysis of the language used by the EPs identified a number of ways in which they were able to facilitate collaboration during joint consultations, leading to changes in the way in which young people and their skills were described (developing a shared understanding) and the development of agreed next steps. In particular, this involved the EP scaffolding possible strategies and providing 'solution-focused containment' for school staff and parents to develop adults' self-efficacy and empowerment. While this term has not been used in previous research, it is an appropriate way of explaining what appeared to be happening within the consultations. This will be described further below.

7.2 Discussion of analysis

Throughout this chapter, the findings from this study are considered in relation to existing research presented in the Literature Reviews in Chapters Two and Three. This includes research into the role of teachers in supporting possible SEMH needs in schools and EPs' language use during collaborative consultations. Collaboration is thought to involve consultants and consultees working together and sharing decision-making (Wagner, 2008) is thought to be the most essential element of consultation (Gutkin & Curtis, 2009). Research is therefore considered which focuses on identifying ways in which EPs seek to develop shared understandings and co-produce next steps – the goal of joint consultation (Dowling & Osborne, 1994). The limitations of the study are then identified before exploring the implications for EPs' professional practice and suggestions for future research.

7.2.i Adults' constructions of roles in supporting SEMH needs

The SEMH needs discussed during the joint consultations included in this study included challenges with emotional regulation, emotionally based school avoidance and behaviour which challenged others. An exploration of the

language used to describe the presentation of these behaviours and the role of adults in supporting them suggest the school staff were eager to provide support in school. School staff in all consultations referred to steps taken or strategies they had already put in place, suggesting they saw this as part of their role (Kidger et al., 2009).

However, observing the use of pronouns, guided by work by Newman et al. (2015) led to some differences being identified between the way in which primary and secondary school staff described their role. The primary school teacher in Consultation One (C1) reported "*we've put lots of support in place*" (L266, p. 106), suggesting the responsibility for identifying strategies and resources lay with the school as a whole. She also refers to a "*blip*" which was "*understandable*" because "*I wasn't there to (…) help him with his emotions"* (p. 106). This suggests she may see day-to-day support as her responsibility. The secondary school Head of Year in Consultations One (C1) and Two (C2), also reported strategies she had implemented, reporting: "I've done…"; "I've tried…" (p.126), and those devised with the parent, reporting: "*we've tried…*" (p.126). However, she also referred to external professionals who had been asked to deliver interventions rather than "*general support"* offered in school (p. 126). This appears to reflect previous research suggesting secondary school staff see their role as referring to specialist services (Shelemy et al., 2019). It may also reflect the school being located within an area of the UK involved in a trial of mental health teams working with schools to support pupils (DfE, 2017), where seeking external support may be expected.

Despite enlisting external support from other professionals, the Head of Year in C2 actively sought help from the EP during the consultation, referring being uncertain about how to support the needs in school. Once this support was given, the Head of Year appeared to talk more positively about what she could do to help (Extract18, 19, 22, 23). This suggests, although varying forms of specialist support may be needed for some young people, EPs may be well placed to support teachers in identifying strategies to support needs in school

(Sharpe et al., 2016). Furthermore it suggests EPs may be able to provide the emotional support teachers have reported to need when working with students described as having SEMH needs (Kidger et al., 2019). In C3, when the Head of Year reports being uncertain, the parent offers solutions in response (Extract 33). This may reflect the development of a collaborative relationship through the EPs' repeated involvement by creating a temporary system in which all adults involved can discuss issues (Miller, 2003).

A focus on the parents' language when describing situations and their roles with them, suggests they appear to defend against possible blame for the challenges their children face (Miller, 2003; Wagner, 2016). Although this cannot be concluded with certainty, as the Discursive Psychology approach does not claim to identify emotions or true opinions (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), the use of discursive devices including disclaimers, suggest at times, both parents defended themselves against potential criticism (Wiggins, 2017). The parents also referred to challenges they had faced at home due to their child's behaviours. It is important for EPs to be aware of parents' perspectives such as these when working with adults to support possible SEMH needs in school, as they may also need the emotional support and containment EPs can offer. This appeared to be the case in C3 (Extracts 26, 27, 28).

A focus on the use of language therefore suggests parents and school staff appear to describe situations arising from possible SEMH needs as challenging, however EPs may be able to offer emotional and practical support. This has implications for the role of the EP in supporting possible SEMH needs through joint consultation. Further features of EPs' language and their apparent effects are now discussed.

7.2.ii EPs' use of language

Features of the EPs' language and the impact they appeared to have on facilitating collaboration were observed in all three consultations (summary

tables 10, 11 & 12). Each consultation was viewed as a distinct event and analysed as such as, from a social constructionist standpoint, knowledge is constructed through interactions with others, and therefore relevant only to that situation (Burr, 2015). However, similarities can be seen in the features of language used within all three consultations and appear to reflect those identified in existing research including the "rhetorical devices" identified in Nolan and Moreland's (2014) discourse analysis study. To consider the "usefulness and fruitfulness" of this study's findings and the extent to which they cast light on previous research (Burr, 2015, p. 178) the features of EPs' language which were identified and their apparent effects will now be considered in light of past research.

i. Scaffolding

Scaffolding was used by EPs when suggesting and discussing possible supportive strategies, therefore developing collaboration. The EPs suggested ways of using interventions, offering scripts to use when delivering them (C1&2) or when involving other members of staff (C2, Extract 16). In all cases, a focus on the use of language and its sequence suggests adults responded to this scaffolding, resulting in further discussion about the intervention and more talk about what could be done to help. At times, this appeared to lead to more talk about the child or young person's skills rather than challenges (C1, Extract 12) as well as the situation and the adult's ability to make a difference (C2, Extract 20; C3, L997-1000).

This appears to be an example of EPs using consultation collaboratively to support the knowledge and skills of teachers (West & Idol, 1987). Past research has suggested EPs develop adults' self-efficacy and feelings of empowerment through consultation, by making joint decisions (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020), empowering teachers and giving them ownership to suggest strategies (O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018) and helping consultees to make changes, rather than fixing things for them (Nolan & Moreland, 2014). This study appears to have identified the impact scaffolding approaches may have in this process

ii. Solution focused containment

There was also evidence of EPs offering containment - the process of holding and protecting others' emotions (Bion, 1962). This was evident when both when parents appeared overwhelmed (C3, Extract 26) and when school staff expressed uncertainty, such as when alternative explanations for situations were suggested (C2, Extract 17). EPs appeared to respond by redirecting conversations to the current situation, focusing on developing solutions and summarising agreed steps rather than discussing problems in detail (Rhodes & Ajmal,1995). Past research also suggests EPs use solution-focused approaches (Newman et al., 2017; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020; Nolan & Moreland, 2014; Wagner, 2016). However, this study identifies the way in which this was used to contain emotions along with the possible impact of this, with school staff appearing to take ownership of strategies and offering further ideas (C2, Extracts 18, 19, 22, 23; C3, Extracts 26, 27, 28). The term solution-focused containment, although not used in previous research, therefore appears to be an appropriate description of the EPs' approach.

iii. O*ffering topics to discuss*

When exploring concerns, EPs offered at least two 'topics' or suggestions, and either explicitly or implicitly invited opinions on them (C1, Extracts 2, 3, 7; C2, Extracts 15, 16). This appeared to develop collaboration by facilitating discussion about the concerns, either leading to a suggestion being discarded (C1, Extract 3; C2; Extract 14), alternatives being suggested (C1, Extract 7) or supportive strategies suggested and explored (C2, Extracts 15, 16). It may be that this provided opportunities for school staff and parents to consider different perspectives, which Holmes et al. (2021) suggest leads to improved communication and improved relationships within the consultation, resulting in more discussion.

iv. Implicitly vs explicitly seeking opinion

When the EPs explicitly sought opinions from consultees, for example by asking "would you say…" (C1, Extract 7) or "do you think…" (C2, Extract 15) it appeared to lead to richer discussion than wondering aloud and implicitly inviting responses (C1, Extract 2). It appears these direct questions were aimed specifically at either a parent or member of staff. It also appeared that by directing questions in this way, EPs were able to explore behaviours both at home and in school, leading to agreed strategies and next steps being developed.

Although it cannot be assumed why this may be as discourse analysis cannot claim to identify internal states, past research has suggested by encouraging and valuing different perspectives a sense of collaboration and engagement is supported which may lead to more discussion (Nolan & Moreland, 2014; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020; O'Farrell & Kinsella, 2018). It has also been suggested this may lead to improved communication between parents and school staff which positively affects collaboration, information sharing and problem solving (Holmes et al., 2021).

v. Providing space to talk - active listening

In all three consultations, the EPs provided space for discussion through the use of active listening strategies such as "mmmm" and "yeah". Burnard (2005) suggest active listening strategies ensure the speaker is heard and includes a range of aspects of communication including linguistic (words and phrases), paralinguistic (volume, pitch, 'ums' and 'errs') and non-verbal strategies (facial expressions etc.). Past research has suggested EPs demonstrate active listening in this way to display empathy (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). In this study, this approach appeared to act as an implicit signal for the speaker to continue talking.

vi. Collaborative 'we' language

In consultations 2 and 3, the EP referred to "we", reporting "*we're all in it together.*" (C2, Extract 20) and "we could say…" (C3, Extract 30). This was particularly used when exploring supportive strategies and next steps. It appeared to result in school staff taking ownership of strategies and, at times, suggesting more. Past research suggests the language of "we" led to feelings of collaboration and improved outcomes for the students and consultees, including more positive perceptions of the student (Newman et al., 2015). This may explain why this word resulted in further discussion and sharing suggestions.

vii. Revisiting and exploring current concerns

EPs appeared to redirect conversations to explore issues previously mentioned in the consultation, asking: "*is there an issue with…"* (C3, Extract 31) This was used several times in response to adults reporting uncertainty or seeking solutions (C2, Extract 23; C3, Extract 32). This appeared to lead to events being explored further and variations in accounts being identified and explored. Past research suggests questioning can facilitate conversations, check perceptions and build on all contributions (Nolan & Moreland, 2014). The present study appears to identify the use of this in revisiting previously mentioned issues, providing opportunities to collaborate by discussing them together. At times, it also appeared to have the effect of slowing down adults who were in a rush to reach conclusions or agree solutions.

viii. Identifying positives and reframing situations

EPs identified positives in situations, with differing effects. Acknowledging adults' skills in dealing with situations either led to more positive talk about the child (C1, Extract 1) or school staff justifying why help was still needed (C2, Extract 24). Identifying positives about the child appeared to lead to more positive talk about them and the situation (C1, Extracts 1,6). When situations were reframed, it appeared to lead to further discussion about alternative explanations for behaviours (C2, Extracts 17, 18, 23). Past research suggests

when consultees used more positive language there were positive correlations with outcomes (Newman et al, 2017). The present study appears to suggest this may be achieved by ensuring the identification of positive aspects of the child and their situation, or reframing situations.

ix. Downplaying status

In all consultations, EPs appeared to express uncertainty by suggesting: "*I wasn't sure whether*…" (C1, Extract 2) or "*I wonder*.." (C2, Extract 17; C3, Extract 26). This appeared to invite others to discuss and share their opinions as further discussion followed and, at times, further suggestions for support were offered. It has been suggested EPs downplay their status to avoid being considered an 'expert' and establish equal relationships within the consultation (Knotek & Sandoval, 2003). Past research suggests this approach encourages collaboration and ensuring consultees are involved in the process (Gutkin, 1999; Nolan & Moreland, 2014) and is therefore and "essential element of consultation" (Gutkin & Curtis, 2009, p. 600). This may explain why it resulted in further discussion.

x. Offering examples and evidence to support ideas

EPs appeared to offer examples to support or justify ideas. This was either in the form of psychological knowledge (C1, Extract 5) or explaining ideas with reference to the situation being discussed (C3, Extract 28, 30, 36). This appeared to lead to adults describing situations differently and working collaboratively by agreeing strategies or next steps. Although West and Idol (1987) suggest EPs rely more on interpersonal skills than 'expert' knowledge, it appears providing specific information – whether theory driven or not - may support understandings at times.

Summary

In summary, an analysis of EPs' language has identified various features which appear to have facilitated collaboration by, for example, facilitating further discussion and leading to changes in descriptions of events and people. These findings are reflected in existing research. Some findings were also identified which do not appear to have been explored fully in existing research presented throughout this study and may warrant further investigation. This includes the impact of:

- scaffolding interventions on adults' feelings of self-efficacy and empowerment.
- solution-focused containment on adults' ownership of situations.

7.3 Reflections on the use of a discourse analysis approach

A discourse analysis approach appears to have been helpful in providing information about the interactions within joint consultations focusing on SEMH needs. It has enabled the research aims to be explored, identifying the way in which adults describe their role in supporting SEMH needs and the EPs' use of language and the impact it appears to have on interactions – some of which do not appear to have been discussed in previous research.

Author reflexivity

Throughout this research, the author reflected on the possible impact her own experiences as a parent, teacher and TEP may have had on interpretations and analysis. This involved ensuring her own thoughts and feelings about how situations with young people were being described by school staff did not affect her interpretations of the parents' responses to them. Furthermore, the author was aware of her own experiences supporting SEMH needs in schools as a teacher and ensured this did not affect her interpretation of the use of language by school staff in this study. The author found using CA and DP supported this by enabling her to focus on what was being said and the impact it had on subsequent talk and interactions, based on features of language identified by other researchers without the need to interpret possible underlying emotions.

A number of limitations within this study can be identified and are described below.

7.4 Limitations

Due to the small sample size of three consultations included in this study, care must be taken when generalising the results. This is particularly the case with a small number of participants – with two consultations featuring the same EP , parent and member of school staff. It could be argued not enough variation in approaches by EPs can be observed with this sample size – particularly as it has been suggested interpersonal dynamics within consultations may affect collaboration and interactions (Newman et al., 2015). This was a consequence of the author facing challenges in recruiting EPs to take part in the research. However, from a social constructionist standpoint, sample sizes, or participant numbers, should not be seen as a limitation (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Burr, 2015). This epistemology assumes all naturally occurring conversations are constructed for a purpose, therefore there are likely to be variations in accounts and conversations on different occasions even with the same individuals (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Furthermore, Potter and Wetherell (1987) suggest, even with small sample sizes, a range of linguistic devices will be used resulting in relevant information being observed.

A further limitation, which may have impacted the small sample-size, may be the focus on specific needs. Through discussions with EPs about the challenges the author faced with recruitment, it was suggested some had forgotten about the research invitation due to high workloads while others suggested underlying SEMH needs were not always clear as challenges were presented by school staff as learning difficulties. This may reflect research suggesting school staff need more training on how SEMH needs may manifest (Rothi et al., 2008); Shelemy et al., 2019). It may also reflect differences in the way in which presenting behaviours are perceived and constructed . Had the research included any consultation occurring as part of EPs' casework, a wider

range of participants may have been selected. Despite this, however, this study has provided information about the interactions within joint consultations focusing on possible SEMH needs. It has also identified the role EPs may have in supporting these needs in schools as, although individual support may be available for young people, teachers and parents may need emotional and practical support in schools. This offers justification for selecting joint consultations focusing on possible SEMH needs.

Each consultation took place at a different point in the problem-solving process - an initial consultation and those as part of a series– which could also be considered a limitation of this study. Relationships may have developed which may have affected interactions within the consultations. However, discourse analysts suggest language is more important than context (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Burr, 2015), suggesting conversations between EPs, parents and school staff from any stage of involvement would have been appropriate. Furthermore, as the aim of joint consultation is seeking to develop shared understandings and identify next steps (Osborne & Dowling, 1994), it was assumed this could be observed in some form regardless of the number of previous consultations, as C2 and C3 in this study demonstrate. These issues also reflect the challenges of real-world qualitative research, particularly when gathering data from naturally occurring situations (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Finally, a limitation of this study lies in the fact that the author was a sole researcher, therefore the analysis was subject to her interpretations and constructions of meaning. Furthermore, as the author had specific research aims, only sections of the consultations were selected as part of the analysis, with other information left out – other researchers may have included different elements of the conversations. However, this limitation could be directed at all social constructionist research and as the researcher was aware of this, reduced the risk of interpretations being affected (Burr, 2015; Philips & Hardy, 2011). Throughout the analysis, the author discussed the results with tutors, TEPs and the EPs involved to seek their views on whether interpretations

appeared reasonable and ensure her personal views or expectations were not influencing interpretations. The author's interpretations of the data were largely accepted by those who read them. It was suggested by one reader that, at times, the author may have used her own experiences as a point of reference to interpret the school staffs' intentions, for example, describing taking back turns to talk as "interrupting". This was changed to ensure more neutrality and the rest of the transcript checked.

7.5 Implications for EP practice

This study has important implications for EP practice. As outlined in the Literature Review (Section 2.2), supporting young people's SEMH needs in school is high on the Government's agenda, with school staff being identified as having responsibility for their prevention, identification and support (DfE, 2017). Training for all school staff appears to be required to help them support these needs (Mental Health Foundation, 2018), with research suggesting EPs' work in this area often involves delivering training or interventions (Atkinson, 2011). However, EPs also report using consultation when working in this area (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). The present study therefore highlights ways in which they may be able to support adults in schools by facilitating collaboration – particularly through offering solution-focused containment and scaffolding possible next steps. Although care must be taken generalising from this study due to the small number of consultations analysed, it provides an opportunity for EPs to reflect on their own use of language and approach to facilitating collaboration in consultations when supporting SEMH needs in schools.

This study also suggests the potential impact of bringing the home and school systems together through collaborative joint consultations when attempting to consider different perspectives of situations and possible way to improve them. By identifying the processes involved in these consultations, this study has highlighted features of language that can be used by EPs when seeking to facilitate collaborative discussion and develop shared understandings. Although many of these have been identified in existing research, this study has

highlighted the impact these strategies appear to have on developing shared understandings and planning next steps. This includes EPs scaffolding interventions with scripts to support their use and the impact of solution-focused containment on adults taking ownership of strategies. This study could therefore be helpful to EPs wanting to reflect on their own practice, particularly as it has been suggested they have a professional obligation to understand how consultations work to help develop their skills (Leadbetter, 2006; Nolan & Moreland, 2014).

This study also highlights the impact language can have on collaborative discussions within consultations, and the way it can be used as "the crucible for change" (Burr, 1995, p. 43). Again, this demonstrates the importance of EPs reflecting on their own practice. During conversations with both EPs following the recording of the consultations, they reported having found it valuable to have time to reflect on the strategies used in their own practice - particularly as time constraints prevent activities such as peer observation as part of professional development activities. One EP also suggested being involved in the study had made "the unconscious conscious" and reported the process has made her more aware of the impact of the language used in consultation. On reflection, it would have been interesting to gather more in-depth information about the EPs' reflections of their conversations and the analysis completed. It was not considered appropriate in this research as the EPs were told when they agreed to take part in the study, that their involvement would only be to arrange and record consultations. It would be interesting to gather this information if similar studies were carried out in future.

Finally, this study highlights the importance of EPs' interpersonal skills during consultations. It has been suggested these skills, including active listening (Burnard, 2005) and providing feedback (Conoley & Conoley, 1990) reflect an understanding of the process of communication and interaction (West & Idol, 1987) and are used to build rapport and encourage consultees to talk, enabling them to "facilitate rather than force solutions or change" (Newman et al., 2014,

p. 15). The EPs relied on a limited amount of content knowledge during the consultations. This therefore reinforces the suggestion that school psychology is "at its core a relational enterprise" (Newman & Clare, 2016, p. 327). This study may also have implications when training Educational Psychologists in the process of consultation.

7.6 Suggestions for future research

One of the findings of this study suggests offering solution-focused containment appeared to lead to school staff taking ownership of strategies and, at times, suggesting more. As research suggests involving teachers in the development of strategies can lead to increased feelings of self-efficacy, or a belief that they can make a difference, which may increase their motivation to try to implement them (Bandura, 1994; Deci & Ryan, 2012; Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). Further research could therefore explore whether the use of this approach has an impact on the strategies being implemented by school staff.

The findings from this study also suggests further research exploring teachers' self-efficacy in supporting SEMH needs may be helpful. The school staff involved reported at some point having experienced challenges in supporting needs in school, despite having implemented strategies or drawn on external support. As Bandura (1994) suggests individuals must believe in their ability to affect change through their actions, this may be important when considering whether they can support SEMH needs. Research could therefore explore teachers' views about their own feelings of self-efficacy in supporting SEMH needs in schools. Although research exists (Shelemy et al, 2019) this was carried out at least three years ago, therefore more up to date research may be needed. Furthermore the impact of collaborative joint consultation on developing teachers' self-efficacy in supporting SEMH needs could be explored, along with the impact of scaffolding strategies.

This study involved a relatively small sample of two EPs, two parents and three members of school staff discussing the needs of three young people. Further research could build on this by including a larger sample of EPs. Furthermore, there were few disagreements throughout the consultations and agreements appeared to be reached regarding possible next steps. As a result, there did not appear to be any expressions of negative emotions (Zafeiriou & Gulliford, 2020). This may have been due to relationships having developed through repeated involvement or the skill of the EPs in facilitating collaborative conversations. Consultations in which school staff or parents were conflicted in their views about young people's needs could be explored to consider whether the similar language features were observed and their apparent impact. However, during this research, some EPs identified such consultations which they did not feel anyone involved would agree to being recorded, which may impact such research happening in future.

Throughout the analysis, the researcher noted richer and longer conversations followed explicit questions or when issues and contrasting realities were presented for discussion. However, as no quantitative data was gathered, it was not possible to describe this further, such as time spent talking or the number of interactions between the parents and school staff that followed. If the study were repeated, both quantitative and qualitative data could be gathered to explore this further.

Furthermore, as this research relied on audio rather than video recordings of consultations to explore interactions within joint consultations, future research could consider the impact of observation of non-verbal information. Although audio recordings are an accepted way of gathering data for discourse analysis (Wiggins & Potter, 2017), considering non-verbal gestures such as eye gaze may have added another layer of analysis. Future research may therefore include observations of the possible impact of facial expressions such as smiles or nods on turn-taking and listening as well as considerations of whether the

meaning of statements were interpreted differently if accompanied by a facial expression.

8. Conclusion

This study set out to explore the interactions within collaborative joint consultations between parents and school staff focusing on children and young people's possible SEMH needs. A focus on EPs' use of language when facilitating collaboration has identified various strategies and their impact – particularly the use of solution-focused containment and scaffolding supportive strategies when co-producing next-steps. EPs in this study reported little time being available for professional development through peer observation and support, yet if consultation is to be used to support young people's rising SEMH needs in UK schools, it is important they have a good understanding of the processes involved to help them develop their consultive skills (Leadbetter, 2006). This study therefore offers an opportunity for EPs to consider how collaboration may be facilitated during consultations, allowing them to reflect on their own use of language, and consider how it can be used as a "crucible of change" (Burr, 1995, p. 43).

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Appendices

Appendix 1: SLR Appraisal Summary

Analysis of selected SLR studies using the Mixed Method Appraisal Tool

(MMAT) Version 2018 (Hong et al., 2018)

Authors	Methodological Quality Criteria – Qualitative Studies						
	Are there clear research questions?	Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?	Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?	Are the findings adequately derived from the data?	Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?	Is there coherence between the qualitative data sources, collection and interpretation ?
Nolan & Moreland (2014).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zafeiriou & Gulliford (2020).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
O'Farrell & Kinsella (2018).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Authors	Methodological Quality Criteria – Mixed Methods Studies						
	Are there clear research questions?	Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?	Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?	Are the outputs of the integration of the qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?	Are the divergencies and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?	Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?
Newman et al. (2017)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Newman et al. (2015)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Authors	Methodological Quality Criteria – Quantitative Descriptive Studies						
	Are there clear research questions?	Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?	Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the research question?	Is the sample representative of the target population?	Are the measurement appropriate?	Is the risk of nonresponse bias low?	Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?
Holmes et al. (2020)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Appendix 2: Email to EPs

Expressions of interest email to Educational Psychologists

Dear all,

Thank you for taking time to listen to my research proposal in the team meeting yesterday. As I explained, I am undertaking this research as part of my doctoral studies and would very much appreciate your support in being involved in this. To recap and summarise in case you were not at yesterday's meeting, my research involves exploring the language used in interactions between Educational Psychologists, parents/carers and school staff during consultations focusing on young people's social, emotional and mental health needs. As SEMH needs among children and young people are increasing in UK schools, it is hoped this research will help raise an awareness of how EPs can support in this important area. If you are interested, I will pass you a full information and consent sheet for the study. If you agree to take part, I will ask you to identify consultations you have arranged with parents and school staff around secondary school students' SEMH needs, and agree to record them, either on Microsoft Teams, if taking place virtually, or using a mobile phone or computer if face-to-face. I will also ask you to distribute letters and consent forms to school staff and parents. I will send you an information letter with further details once a consultation has been identified. If you have any questions, please contact me on (number given) or by replying to this email. If you are happy to take part, please contact me and I will send you a letter outlining the study in more detail and a consent form for you to sign.

Many thanks,

Claire Underwood

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Appendix 3: Email to Principal EPs

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to invite Educational Psychologists (EPs) within your service to take part in the research I am undertaking as part of my doctoral studies.

I have attached a letter providing more information about this research. In summary, I hope to explore the language used in interactions between EPs, parents/carers and school staff during consultations focusing on secondary school students' social, emotional and mental health needs. As SEMH needs among children and young people are increasing in UK schools, with consultation often identified as a key approach, it is hoped this research will help to raise an awareness of how EPs can support this important area. I am hoping to identify two consultations to use for analysis.

EPs will be asked to identify consultations they have arranged with parents and school staff around secondary school students' SEMH needs, and agree to record them, either on Microsoft Teams if taking place virtually or using a mobile phone or computer if face-to-face. They will also be asked to distribute information letters and consent forms to school contacts (possibly SENCOs) to share with school staff and parents.

I would be happy for you to contact me via email with any questions you may have or if you would like to discuss this research in more detail.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Best wishes,

Claire Underwood

Trainee Educational Psychologist

University of Nottingham

Appendix 4: Participants' information letters

4.i. Letter for Principal EPs

School of Psychology

Information Sheet

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Title of Project: Exploring interactions in joint consultations to support social emotional and mental health needs in secondary school students. A discourse analysis

Ethics Approval Number: S1314

Researcher: Claire underwood - claire.underwood@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor: Victoria Clarke – victoria.clarke@nottingham.ac.uk

I am a third-year trainee Educational Psychologist, studying at the University of Nottingham. As part of this doctorate course, I am undertaking research exploring the language used in interactions between Educational Psychologists (EPs), parents/carers and school staff during consultations focusing on secondary school student's social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.

This is an invitation for EPs within your service to take part in this research. Before you decide if you would be happy to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

The purpose of this study is to explore interactions between Educational Psychologists, parents/carers and school staff during joint consultations focusing on secondary school students' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. As SEMH needs among children and young people are increasing in UK schools (NHS digital, 2020), it is hoped this research will help raise an understanding of how EPs can support in this important area.

Taking part will involve EPs identifying a joint consultation and recording it, either via Teams or a mobile recording device, subject to the fully informed consent of all participants, for research purposes. I will ask EPs to share information and consent

letters, initially with headteachers and then with their school contact for distribution to adults attending the meeting.

The conversations within these consultations will be analysed in terms of what is being said. At no point will EPs, the student being discussed, the school or anyone present at the consultation be identified in any reports connected to this research: **reports will be fully anonymised**. All names will be changed to ensure anonymity and all recordings and transcriptions will be stored securely using password protected files. All data will be stored in compliance with GDPR regulations. I will contact EPs towards the end of the research to discuss the findings of the study in more detail if they were interested in doing so.

As the consultation will take place via a video call on Microsoft Teams and recorded and stored electronically, I am obliged to make you aware that there is there is a small risk of those involved being identified. To minimise this risk the researcher will transcribe the conversation in a private room as soon as possible following the consultation and will delete the video on completion of the study. As the video will be stored electronically, there is also a potential risk of intrusion by outside agencies, for example through hacking, and therefore the possibility of being identified. To minimise this risk the recording will be password protected.

If you would like to take part, or have any further questions, please contact me on the email address above. Consent forms and further information letters will be sent following expressions of interest.

If you have any complaints about the study, please contact:

Stephen Jackson (Chair of Ethics Committee)

stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk

Your Sincerely,
Claire Underwood
Trainee Educational Psychologist claire.underwood@nottingham.ac.uk

4.ii. Letter for EPs

School of Psychology

Information Sheet

The University of Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Title of Project: Exploring interactions in joint consultations to support social emotional and mental health needs in secondary school students. A discourse analysis

Ethics Approval Number: S1314

Researcher: Claire underwood - claire.underwood@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor: Victoria Clarke victoria.clarke@nottingham.ac.uk

Thank you for expressing an interest in being involved in the research I am undertaking as part of my doctoral studies. Before you decide if you wish to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully.

The purpose of this study is to explore interactions between Educational Psychologists, parents/carers and school staff during joint consultations focusing on secondary school students' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. As SEMH needs among children and young people are increasing in UK schools (NHS digital, 2020), it is hoped this research will help raise an understanding of how EPs can support in this important area.

Being involved in the study will involve identifying a consultation you have arranged with school staff and parents/carers and agreeing to record this consultation for analysis. You will be asked to help share the aims of the study with school SENCOs and to seek their help in distributing information letters and consent forms to headteachers, school staff and parents/carers.

The conversations within these consultations will be analysed in terms of what is being said. At no point will you, the student being discussed, the school or anyone present at the consultation be identified in any reports of this research. All names will be changed to ensure anonymity and all recordings and transcriptions will be stored securely, using

password protected files and devices. If you decide to participate in this research you will be free to withdraw at any time or to have some, or all, of your data deleted or omitted from the research, without giving an explanation. All data will be stored in compliance with GDPR regulations (see attached privacy notice). I will contact you towards the end of the research to discuss the findings of the study in more detail if you were interested in doing so.

As the consultation will take place via a video call on Microsoft Teams and recorded and stored electronically, I am obliged to make you aware that there is there is a small risk of you being identified. To minimise this risk the researcher will transcribe the conversation in a private room as soon as possible following the consultation and will delete the video on completion of the study. As the video will be stored electronically, there is also a potential risk of intrusion by outside agencies, for example through hacking, and therefore the possibility of being identified. To minimise this risk the recording will be password protected.

If you have any questions, please contact me on the email address above. If you are happy for your consultation with school staff and parents/carers to be recorded and this conversation to be used in this research, please sign and return this form via email as soon as possible.

If you have any complaints about the study, please contact:

Stephen Jackson (Chair of Ethics Committee)

stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk

Your Sincerely,
Claire Underwood
Trainee Educational Psychologist

4.iii. Letter for Headteachers

School of Psychology

Information Sheet

Title of Project: Exploring interactions in joint consultations to support social emotional and mental health needs in secondary school students. A discourse analysis

Ethics Approval Number: S1314

Researcher: Claire underwood - claire.underwood@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor: Victoria Clarke victoria.clarke@nottingham.ac.uk

I am a third-year trainee Educational Psychologist, studying at the University of Nottingham. As part of this course, I am undertaking research exploring the language used in interactions between Educational Psychologists, parents/carers and school staff during consultations focusing on young people's social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.

This is an invitation to take part in this research. Before you decide if you wish to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

The purpose of this study is to explore interactions between Educational Psychologists, parents/carers and school staff during joint consultations focusing on secondary school students' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. As SEMH needs among children and young people are increasing in UK schools (NHS digital, 2020), it is hoped this research will help raise an understanding of how EPs can support in this important area.

Your school is being invited to take part in this research as a consultation has been arranged with (name staff/'your SENCO'), an EP and parents/carers. Taking part will involve allowing this consultation to be recorded, subject to the full informed consent of

all participants, for research purposes. Nothing else will be asked of you, your staff or the parents/carers involved.

The conversations within these consultations will be analysed in terms of what is being said. At no point will you, the student being discussed, the school or anyone present at the consultation be identified in any reports of this research: **reports will be fully anonymised**. All names will be changed to ensure anonymity and all recordings and transcriptions will be stored securely using password protected files. All data will be stored in compliance with GDPR regulations (see attached privacy notice). I will contact you towards the end of the research to discuss the findings of the study in more detail if you were interested in doing so.

As the consultation will take place via a video call on Microsoft Teams and recorded and stored electronically, I am obliged to make you aware that there is there is a small risk of those involved being identified. To minimise this risk the researcher will transcribe the conversation in a private room as soon as possible following the consultation and will delete the video on completion of the study. As the video will be stored electronically, there is also a potential risk of intrusion by outside agencies, for example through hacking, and therefore the possibility of being identified. To minimise this risk the recording will be password protected.

If you have any questions, please contact me on the email address above. If you are happy for this consultation to be recorded and used in this research, subject to consent from all involved, please sign and return the attached consent form via email as soon as possible.

If you have any complaints about the study, please contact:

Stephen Jackson (Chair of Ethics Committee)

stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk

Your Sincerely,
Claire Underwood
Trainee Educational Psychologist

4.iv. Letter for Teachers

School of Psychology

Information Sheet

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Title of Project: Exploring interactions in joint consultations to support social emotional and mental health needs in secondary school students. A discourse analysis

Ethics Approval Number: S1314

Researcher: Claire underwood - claire.underwood@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor: Victoria Clarke victoria.clarke@nottingham.ac.uk

I am a third-year trainee Educational Psychologist, studying at the University of Nottingham. As part of this course, I am undertaking research exploring the language used in interactions between Educational Psychologists, parents/carers and school staff during consultations focusing on young people's social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.

This is an invitation to take part in this research. Before you decide if you wish to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

The purpose of this study is to explore interactions between Educational Psychologists, parents/carers and school staff during joint consultations focusing on secondary school students' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. As SEMH needs among children and young people are increasing in UK schools (NHS digital, 2020), it is hoped this research will help raise an understanding of how EPs can support in this important area.

You are being invited to take part in this research as a consultation has been arranged with you, an EP and parents/carers. Taking part will involve allowing this consultation to be recorded, subject to the full informed consent of all participants, for research purposes. Nothing else will be asked of you.

The conversations within these consultations will be analysed in terms of what is being said. At no point will you, the student being discussed, the school or anyone present at the consultation be identified in any reports of this research: **reports will be fully anonymised**. All names will be changed to ensure anonymity and all recordings and transcriptions will be stored securely using password protected files. If you decide to take part, you are **free to withdraw** at any time or to have some, or all, of your data deleted or omitted from the research. All data will be stored in compliance with GDPR regulations (see attached privacy notice). I will contact you towards the end of the research to discuss the findings of the study in more detail if you are interested in doing so.

As the consultation will take place via a video call on Microsoft Teams and recorded and stored electronically, I am obliged to make you aware that there is there is a small risk of you being identified. To minimise this risk the researcher will transcribe the conversation in a private room as soon as possible following the consultation and will delete the video on completion of the study. As the video will be stored electronically, there is also a potential risk of intrusion by outside agencies, for example through hacking, and therefore the possibility of being identified. To minimise this risk the recording will be password protected.

If you have any questions, please contact me on the email address above. If you are happy for this consultation to be recorded and this conversation to be used in this research, please sign and return the attached consent form via email as soon as possible.

If you have any complaints about the study, please contact:

Stephen Jackson (Chair of Ethics Committee)

stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk

Your Sincerely,

Claire Underwood

Trainee Educational Psychologist

4.v. Letter to Parents/carers

School of Psychology

Information Sheet

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Title of Project: Exploring interactions in joint consultations to support social emotional and mental health needs in secondary school students. A discourse analysis

Ethics Approval Number: S1314

Researcher: Claire underwood - claire.underwood@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor: Victoria Clarke victoria.clarke@nottingham.ac.uk

I am a third-year trainee Educational Psychologist, studying at the University of Nottingham. As part of this course, I am undertaking research exploring the language used in interactions between Educational Psychologists, parents/carers and school staff during consultations focusing on young people's social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.

This is an invitation to take part in this research. Before you decide if you wish to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

The purpose of this study is to explore interactions between Educational Psychologists, parents/carers and school staff during joint consultations focusing on secondary school students' social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. As SEMH needs among children and young people are increasing in UK schools (NHS digital, 2020), it is hoped this research will help raise an understanding of how EPs can support in this important area.

You are being invited to take part in this research as a consultation has been arranged with you, an EP and school staff. Taking part will involve allowing this consultation to be recorded, subject to the full informed consent of all participants, for research purposes. Nothing else will be asked of you.

The conversations within these consultations will be analysed in terms of what is being said. At no point will you, your child, the school or anyone present at the consultation be identified in any reports of this research: **reports will be fully anonymised**. All names will be changed to ensure anonymity and all recordings and transcriptions will be stored securely using password protected files. If you decide to take part, you are **free to withdraw** at any time or to have some, or all, of your data deleted or omitted from the research. All data will be stored in compliance with GDPR regulations (see attached privacy notice). I will contact you towards the end of the research to discuss the findings of the study in more detail if you are interested in doing so.

As the consultation will take place via a video call on Microsoft Teams and recorded and stored electronically, I am obliged to make you aware that there is there is a small risk of you being identified. To minimise this risk the researcher will transcribe the conversation in a private room as soon as possible following the consultation and will delete the video on completion of the study. As the video will be stored electronically, there is also a potential risk of intrusion by outside agencies, for example through hacking, and therefore the possibility of being identified. To minimise this risk the recording will be password protected.

If you have any questions, please contact me on my email address above. If you are happy for this consultation to be recorded and this conversation to be used in this research, please sign and return the attached consent form via email as soon as possible.

If you have any complaints about the study, please contact:

Stephen Jackson (Chair of Ethics Committee)

stephen.jackson@nottingham.ac.uk

Your Sincerely,
Claire Underwood
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Appendix 5: Consent form and GDPR

Consent form and GDPR information for all participants

5.1: Consent form

School of Psychology

Consent Form

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

Title of Project: Exploring Interactions in joint consultations to support social emotional and mental health needs in secondary schools: A discourse analysis.

Ethics Approval Number: S1314

Researcher: Claire Underwood claire.underwood@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor: Victoria Clarke victoria.clarke@nottingham.ac.uk

The participant should answer these questions independently:

- Have you read and understood the Information Sheet? YES/NO
- Have you had the opportunity to ask questions about the study? YES/NO
- Have all your questions been answered satisfactorily (if applicable)? YES/NO
- Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study? (at any time and without giving a reason) YES/NO

- I give permission for my data from this study to be shared with other researchers provided that my anonymity is completely protected. YES/NO
- I give my permission for the consultation to be recorded. YES/NO

- Do you agree to take part in the study? YES/NO

"This study has been explained to me to my satisfaction, and I agree to take part. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time."

Signature of the Participant: Date:

Name (in block capitals)

I have explained the study to the above participant and he/she has agreed to take part.

Signature of researcher: Date:

5.2: GDPR Information

GDPR: Research Participant Privacy Notice

Researcher: Claire Underwood (claire.underwood@nottingham.ac.uk)

Supervisor: Victoria Clarke (victoria.clarke@nottingham.ac.uk)

Privacy information for Research Participants

For information about the University's obligations with respect to your data, who you can get in touch with and your rights as a data subject, please visit: www.nottingham.ac.uk/utilities/privacy/privacy.aspx.

Why we collect your personal data

Your personal data is being collected as part of a research project under the terms of the University's Royal Charter in its capacity as a teaching and research body to advance education and learning. The researcher is part of a doctorate programme in Applied Educational Psychology at the University of Nottingham. The purpose of the research is to explore interactions between Educational Psychologists, secondary school staff and parents during consultations.

Legal basis for processing your personal data under GDPR

The legal basis for processing your personal data on this occasion is Article 6(1a) consent of the data subject OR Article 6(1e) processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. We hope this research will help to identify the features of talk in consultation that may support Educational Psychologists when facilitating consultations and lead to improved outcomes for children.

Where the University receives your personal data from

Some personal data about you will be collected as part of the research which will be kept confidential. This data will come from yourself as a research participant. Your personal data is being collected as part of a research project. The researcher is part of a doctoral training programme in Applied Educational Psychology at the University of Nottingham. The purpose of the research is to explore the interactions between Educational Psychologists, secondary school staff and parents during consultations.

Special category personal data

We will be collecting some 'special category personal data' in line with GDPR Article 9(2a). We will collect, with your consent, data regarding your racial or ethnic origin.

How long we keep your data

The University may store your data for up to 25 years and for a period of no less than 7 years after the research project finishes. The researchers who gathered or processed the data may also store the data indefinitely and reuse it in future research. Measures to safeguard your stored data include anonymising any stored data, meaning that participants will not be identifiable. Any data that might identify a participant will be left out of transcriptions. All participants will be given a 'pseudonym' (a fake name) in the research to protect their identity. Recordings will be stored on one computer and password protected.

Who we share your data with

Extracts of your data may be disclosed in published works that are posted online for use by the scientific community. Your data may also be stored indefinitely on external data repositories (e.g., the UK Data Archive) and be further processed for archiving purposes in the public interest, or for historical, scientific or statistical purposes. It may also move with the researcher who collected your data to another institution in the future.

Appendix 6: Research script and debrief

To share with Special Educational Needs Coordinator/School contact

There is a research project taking place within the service, linked to the University of Nottingham, looking at interactions between EPs, school staff and parents/carers during consultations. Our consultation would be ideal to include in that research. It will involve the consultation being recorded and analysed by the researcher at a later date. The conversations would be completely anonymous – no one involved would be identified. Would you be willing to take part? If so, I can send you information letters for the headteacher to approve the involvement initially. Everyone attending the meeting will then be sent information letters and consent forms to agree to the consultation being recorded.

Script for the start of the consultation

Thank you for agreeing to this consultation being recorded. I will use my phone/computer here to record this conversation. Please try not to think about this recording while we are talking.

Debrief statement script

Thank you again for agreeing to this consultation being recorded. It will be stored securely and anonymously and deleted when the research has been completed. Ethics Submission Form Version 12 2018 25 I would like to remind you that you can ask for all or part of this conversation to be withdrawn from this research at any time. If you would like the results of the analysis to be shared with you, please provide an email and the researcher will contact you when this

Appendix 7: Ethics

School of Psychology

The University of Nottingham

University Park

Nottingham

NG7 2RD

T: +44 (0)115 8467403 or (0)115 9514344

SJ/tp

Ref:**S1314**

Thursday 6th May 2021

Dear Anthea and Claire

Ethics Committee Review

Thank you for submitting an account of your proposed research 'Exploring interactions in joint consultations to support social emotional and mental health needs in secondary school students. A discourse analysis.'

That proposal has now been reviewed by the Ethics Committee and I am pleased to tell you that your submission has met with the committee's approval.

Please note the following comments:

- Please use the standard templates for Recruitment letters, Information sheets and Consent forms. If this is not possible, please resubmit the application and clarify why you require versions that deviate from the standard procedures.
- Include privacy notice for all participants.

- Consent form. Please ask the participants to confirm that they agree for the recordings to take place and for these to be used within the study YES/NO. This would be a separate item on the consent form.

- Please ask the participants to reconfirm their consent at the day/time of the recordings (appendix 8).

- Clarify the criteria that will be used to select the consultations.

- The approximate duration of the consultations would need to be added to the letters.

Final responsibility for ethical conduct of your research rests with you or your supervisor. The Codes of Practice setting out these responsibilities have been published by the British Psychological Society and the University Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns whatever during the conduct of your research then you should consult those Codes of Practice. The Committee should be informed immediately should any participant complaints or adverse events arise during the study.

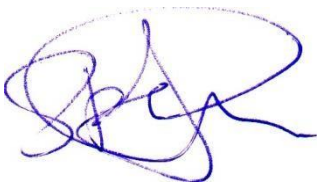
Independently of the Ethics Committee procedures, supervisors also have responsibilities for the risk assessment of projects as detailed in the safety pages of the University web site. Ethics Committee approval does not alter, replace, or remove those responsibilities, nor does it certify that they have been met.

The University of Nottingham
UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

School of Psychology
The University of Nottingham
University Park
Nottingham
NG7 2RD

T: +44 (0)115 8467403 or (0)115 9514344

Yours sincerely



Professor Stephen Jackson
Chair, Ethics Committee

Appendix 8: Discursive devices.

Discursive Devices – From **(Wiggins (2017).**

Discursive Device		Description and example of function	Example
Basic Discursive Devices	Pronoun use and footing shifts	Change in speaking as an individual to speaking on behalf of oneself or others. They manage the identity of the speaker and their accountability for what is being said. They can be used to position the speaker as believable or reporting facts.	"I was like…. You know when you're dead upset"
	Assessments and second assessments	Assessments are instances when description makes a judgement. Assessments are often followed by a second assessment which is typically expressed with no hesitation and upgraded if they agree.	A: "It was nice." B: "it was lovely!"
	Silences, pauses and hesitations	Precedes a disliked second assessment or highlights the delicacy of an issue. Can indicate trouble if there are too many pauses or a long gap between speakers.	
	Hedging	Manages a speaker's accountability as it avoids making specific claims about something and can be softened or retracted in case of disagreement.	"I don't know"; "I think"; "erm"; pause
	Extreme case formulation	Extreme phrases or words to justify or strengthen an argument, add credibility or manage one's identity.	"The best friend I ever had."
	Minimisation	Treat accounts as minimal to downplay the significance or importance of something or to manage someone's accountability.	"Only"; "Just a little"
	Lists and contrasts	Lists are often in three parts and add strength to an argument. They can indicate the speaker has finished talking.	"I'd love to be able to, but I just can't".

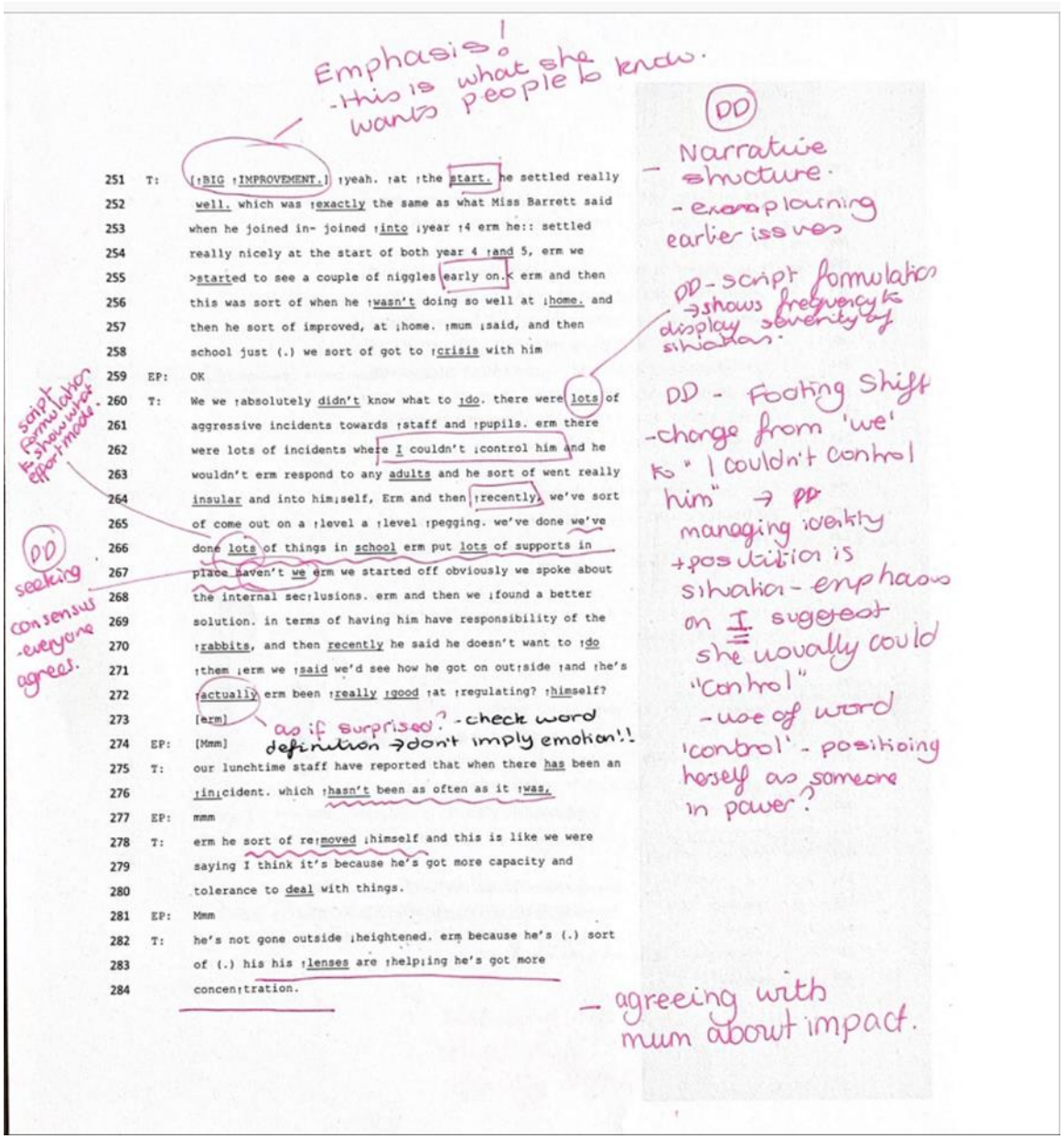
		Contrasts can highlight one thing over another; set up an either/or state of affairs; contrast intentions or desires with an alternative "reality".	
Intermediate Discursive Devices	Affect displays	Apparent displays of emotion. Often immediately precedes or follows an interaction. Where and when it occurs and how it is made relevant should be considered.	Audible cries; sighing.
	Consensus and collaboration	Accounts suggesting everyone agrees or someone else provides an independent witness. Ways of encouraging others to support a claim, attend to facts and reduce a sense of their own investment in accounts.	"Everyone said…"; "She told me…"
	Detail vs vagueness	Manages investment in the account and the speaker's entitlement to tell it and suggests the observational skills on the part of the speaker. Being too detailed may appear as if a speaker is too invested in the account.	"It was quarter to ten last Thursday vs one evening last week."
	Disclaimer	Inserted before a main account to mitigate the speaker's stance on an issue. Often used when someone's identity or category membership is under question, therefore opening up issues of agency and blame.	"We've got nothing against….."
	Metaphor	Frame an account in a particular way – often to produce categories of the world or people themselves. They highlight some features and blur others or oversimplify distinctions between categories.	
	Narrative structure	Presents an account in sequential order and highlights what the listener needs to know first.	
	Reported Speech	Adds authenticity to an account and minimise one's own accountability for the content.	

	Script formulations	Makes the account appear as if it is a regular or frequent occurrence. Analysis should focus on how the script works in the interaction.	Reporting plurals; adverbs - always and usually; highlighting regularity - "loses" "gets"
Advanced Discursive Devices	Agent-subject distinction	Speakers often make their agency relevant within a course of events (positioned as passive or active) and associated responsibility or accountability.	I went with them vs they made me go with them.
	Emotion categories	Speakers refer to own or others' emotions. Analysed in terms of interactional function rather than indicating emotional state.	That was quite upsetting. She was so angry with me.
	Category entitlements	Use of category to refer to a person or category-bound activity (age, gender, job, family).	My daughter… I thought she was older than 60….
	Modal Verbs	Infer obligations, abilities or likelihood of something. Used to manage responsibility for one's own or other people's actions.	You shouldn't have to worry about that.
	Stake inoculation	Similar to category entitlements – talk constructed to defend against a claim they might have a stake in (biased/subjective).	I wouldn't usually be fooled but this was really believable.

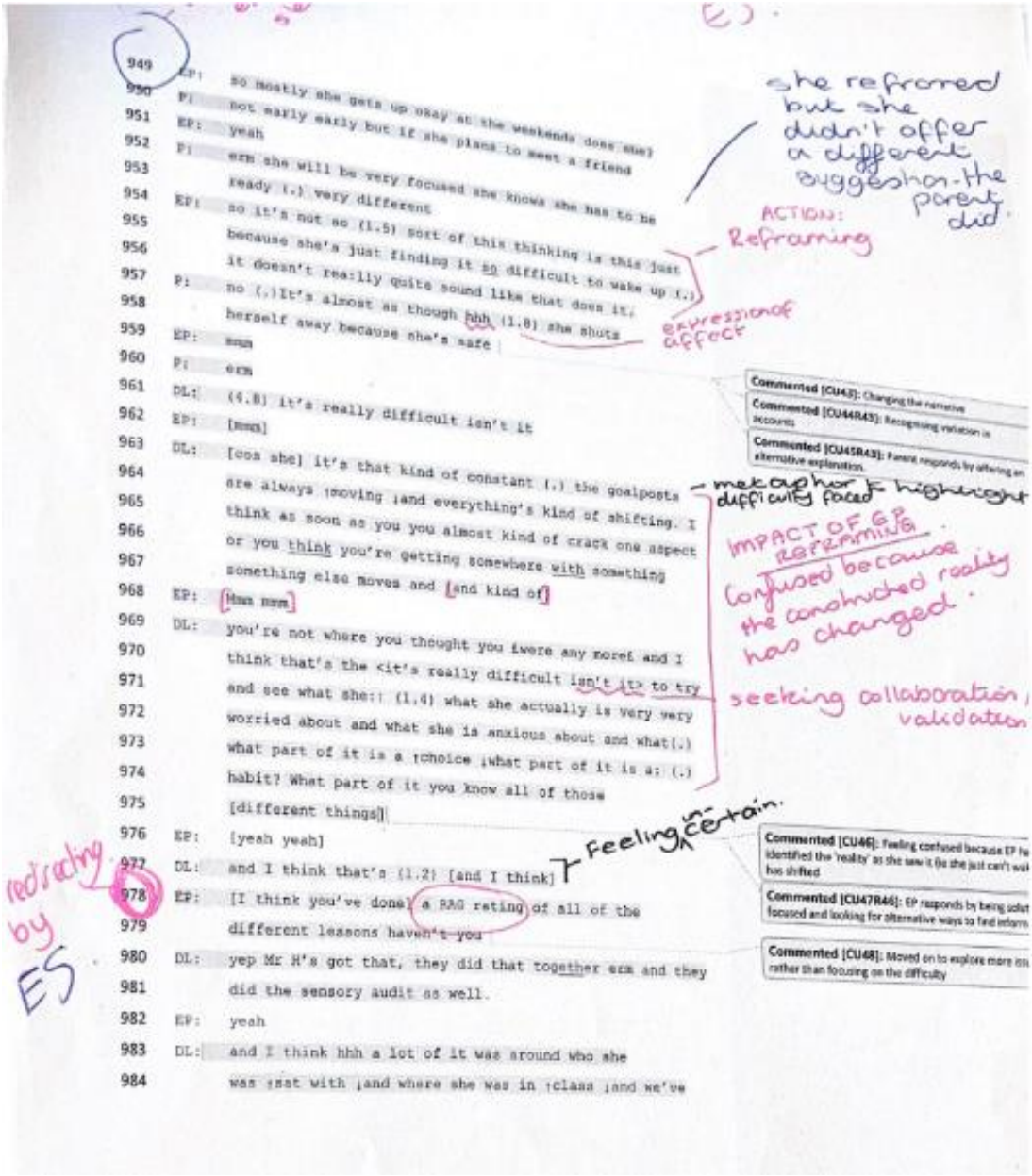
Discursive Devices: Adapted from Wiggins, 2017, p. 122-125).

Appendix 9: Annotated transcriptions examples

Consultation 1:

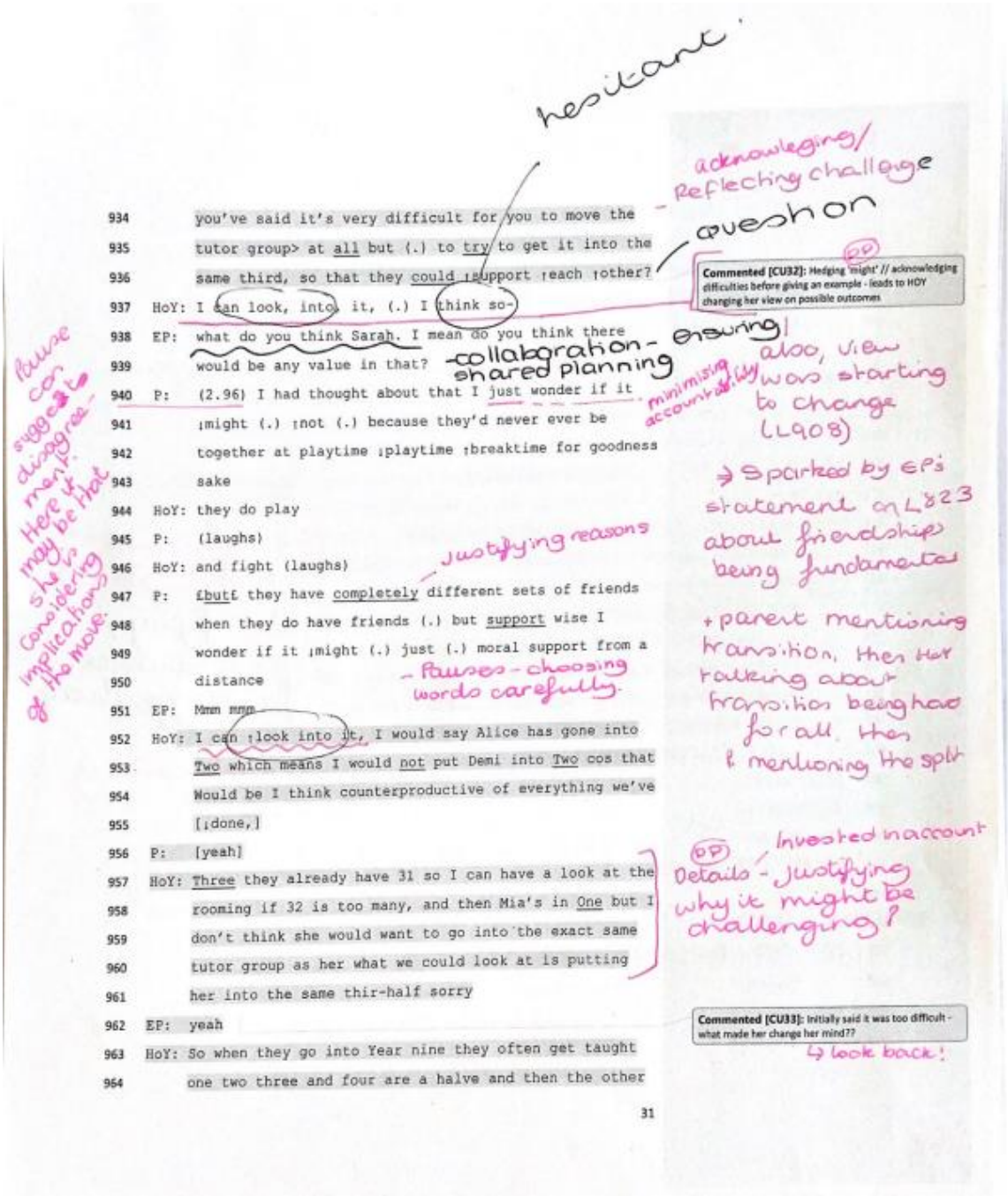


Consultation 2:



949 EP: so mostly she gets up okay at the weekends does she)
950 P: not really early but if she plans to meet a friend
951 EP: yeah
952 P: erm she will be very focused she knows she has to be
953 ready (.) very different
954 EP: so it's not so (1.5) sort of this thinking is this just
955 because she's just finding it so difficult to wake up (.)
956 it doesn't rea:lly quite sound like that does it,
957 P: no (.)It's almost as though hhh (1.8) she shuts
958 herself away because she's safe
959 EP: mmm
960 P: erm
961 DL: (4.8) it's really difficult isn't it
962 EP: [Mmm]
963 DL: [cos she] it's that kind of constant (.) the goalposts
964 are always ↑moving ↓and everything's kind of shifting. I
965 think as soon as you you almost kind of crack one aspect
966 or you think you're getting somewhere with something
967 something else moves and [and kind of]
968 EP: [Mmm mmm]
969 DL: you're not where you thought you were any more↓ and I
970 think that's the <it's really difficult isn't it> to try
971 and see what she:: (1.4) what she actually is very very
972 worried about and what she is anxious about and what(.)
973 what part of it is a ↑choice ↓what part of it is a: (.)
974 habit? What part of it you know all of those
975 [different things]
976 EP: [yeah yeah]
977 DL: and I think that's (1.2) [and I think]
978 EP: [I think you've done] a RAG rating of all of the
979 different lessons haven't you
980 DL: yep Mr H's got that, they did that together erm and they
981 did the sensory audit as well.
982 EP: yeah
983 DL: and I think hhh a lot of it was around who she
984 was ↑sat with ↓and where she was in ↑class ↓and we've

Consultation 3:



934 you've said it's very difficult for you to move the
935 tutor group> at all but (.) to try to get it into the
936 same third, so that they could ↑support ↑each ↑other?
937 HoY: I can look, into it, (.) I think so-
938 EP: what do you think Sarah. I mean do you think there
939 would be any value in that?
940 P: (2.96) I had thought about that I just wonder if it
941 ↓might (.) ↑not (.) because they'd never ever be
942 together at playtime ↓playtime ↑breaktime for goodness
943 sake
944 HoY: they do play
945 P: (laughs)
946 HoY: and fight (laughs)
947 P: £but£ they have completely different sets of friends
948 when they do have friends (.) but support wise I
949 wonder if it ↓might (.) just (.) moral support from a
950 distance
951 EP: Mmm mmm
952 HoY: I can ↑look into it, I would say Alice has gone into
953 Two which means I would not put Demi into Two cos that
954 Would be I think counterproductive of everything we've
955 [↓done,]
956 P: [yeah]
957 HoY: Three they already have 31 so I can have a look at the
958 rooming if 32 is too many, and then Mia's in One but I
959 don't think she would want to go into the exact same
960 tutor group as her what we could look at is putting
961 her into the same thir-half sorry
962 EP: yeah
963 HoY: So when they go into Year nine they often get taught
964 one two three and four are a halve and then the other

31

hesitant

acknowledging/ Reflecting challenge

question

Commented [CU32]: Hedging 'might' // acknowledging difficulties before giving an example - leads to HOY changing her view on possible outcomes

collaboration - shared planning

ensuring

minimising accountability

also, view was starting to change (L908)

→ Sparked by EP's statement on L823 about friendships being fundamental

+ parent mentioning transition, then her talking about transition being had for all, then & mentioning the split

Pause cos suggest disagree - may be that she's considering implications of the move

Justifying reasons

- Pauses - choosing words carefully.

Details - Justifying why it might be challenging?

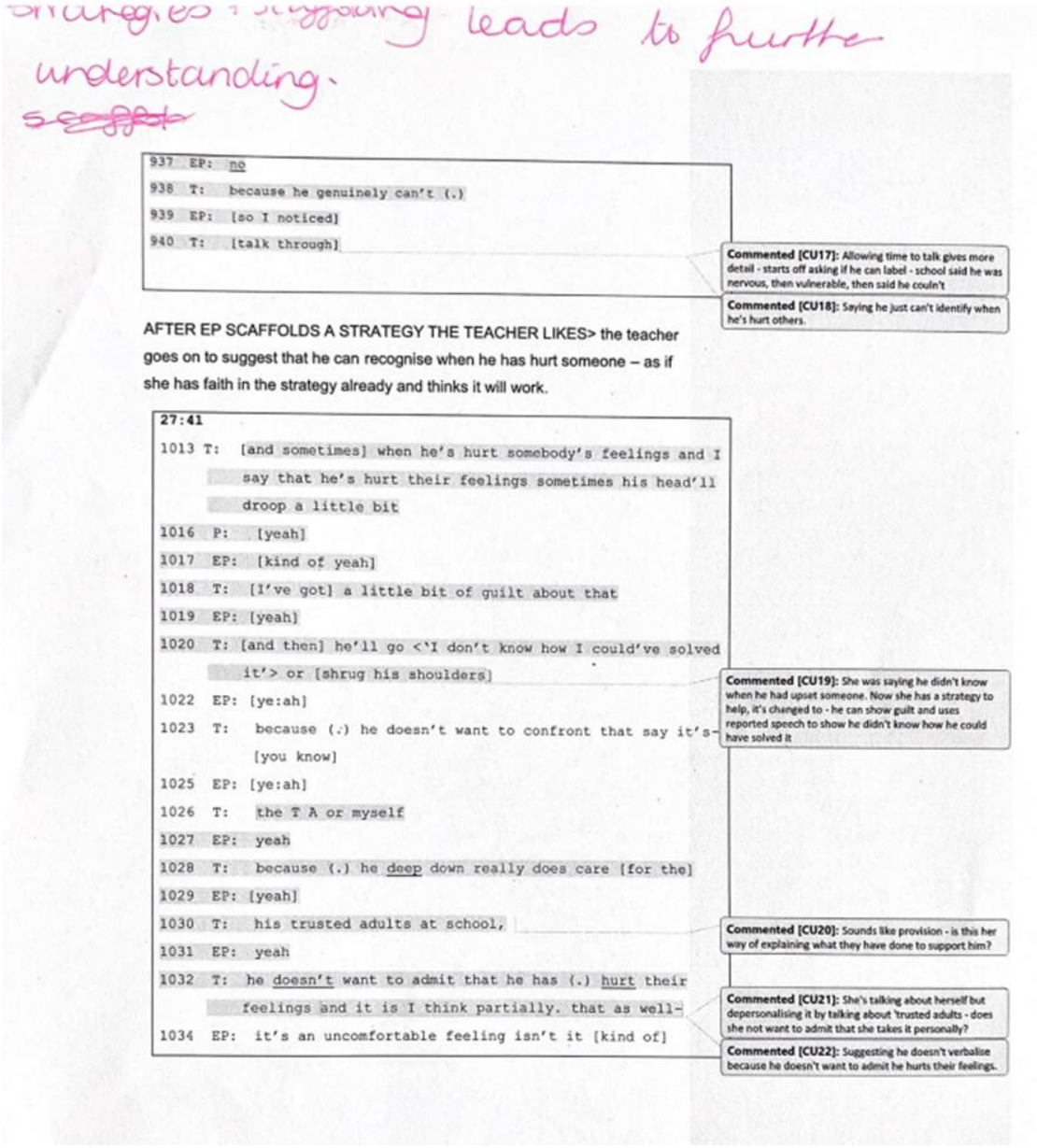
Invested in account

Commented [CU33]: Initially said it was too difficult - what made her change her mind??

↳ look back!

Appendix 10: Analysis extract examples

Consultation 1:



...strategies ... suggesting leads to further understanding.

937 EP: no
938 T: because he genuinely can't (.)
939 EP: [so I noticed]
940 T: [talk through]

Commented [CU17]: Allowing time to talk gives more detail - starts off asking if he can label - school said he was nervous, then vulnerable, then said he couln't

Commented [CU18]: Saying he just can't identify when he's hurt others.

AFTER EP SCAFFOLDS A STRATEGY THE TEACHER LIKES> the teacher goes on to suggest that he can recognise when he has hurt someone – as if she has faith in the strategy already and thinks it will work.

27:41
1013 T: [and sometimes] when he's hurt somebody's feelings and I say that he's hurt their feelings sometimes his head'll droop a little bit
1016 P: [yeah]
1017 EP: [kind of yeah]
1018 T: [I've got] a little bit of guilt about that
1019 EP: [yeah]
1020 T: [and then] he'll go <'I don't know how I could've solved it'> or [shrug his shoulders]
1022 EP: [ye:ah]
1023 T: because (.) he doesn't want to confront that say it's- [you know]
1025 EP: [ye:ah]
1026 T: the T A or myself
1027 EP: yeah
1028 T: because (.) he deep down really does care [for the]
1029 EP: [yeah]
1030 T: his trusted adults at school,
1031 EP: yeah
1032 T: he doesn't want to admit that he has (.) hurt their feelings and it is I think partially. that as well-
1034 EP: it's an uncomfortable feeling isn't it [kind of]

Commented [CU19]: She was saying he didn't know when he had upset someone. Now she has a strategy to help, it's changed to - he can show guilt and uses reported speech to show he didn't know how he could have solved it

Commented [CU20]: Sounds like provision - is this her way of explaining what they have done to support him?

Commented [CU21]: She's talking about herself but depersonalising it by talking about 'trusted adults - does she not want to admit that she takes it personally?

Commented [CU22]: Suggesting he doesn't verbalise because he doesn't want to admit he hurts their feelings.

Consultation 2

- This conversation continued after incidental conversations due to the parent replying to a text message.
- The EP reinforced an alternative view of the situation and this time suggesting scripts teachers could use. This may have been to ensure this narrative was easily accessible, then suggesting how this could be shared with staff.
- The result was the SENCO appeared to take ownership of the situation and how she could get staff involved.

Extract 18.41 – continuing to suggest an alternative narrative and offering ways of sharing it with others

- Demonstrates how scaffolding and scripts can be helpful
- The EP suggested how the alternative narrative could be shared with others, scaffolding an approach and a script and encouraging further collaboration with the rest of the staff – ensuring they took ownership of the situation "Say that's what we think from this meeting, but what do other people think?" (L504).
- This appeared to help the DL to feel more confident, who then took control of the situation – making suggestions about how she could do it and why.

486 EP: But I think one (.) hypothesis <that I think's worth exploring> is (.) that sometimes (.) she doesn't know what to say and she says things that she doesn't really mean. like (.) 'I can't be bothered' that's not (.) rea:lly he:r. is it rea:lly as you say she's normally really very polite so I think one thing would be (1.3) if she does say something like that for people to (1.1) praps try to use a bit of humour?

494 DL: Yep,

495 EP: erm say 'What?!' (laughing) 'do you really mean that?' but you know not not to respond to it you know I don't think respond to it as you might a child who is being really deliberately rude. let's assume she hasn't got the words rather than she's being ↓rude I think

500 T: yep

501 EP: So see ↑and again see what staff think about that you

Consultation 3:

Topic for discussion then Space to talk

Leads to more conversation about the issue and provides further constructions about the situation that can be explored.

592 EP Um ↑is
↑there ↑an ↑issue with her with friends as well?
594 P: yes.
595 EP: yeah.
596 P: erm Demi's always been very keen to have a special friend but unfortunately she always picks the people who (.) ↑perhaps ↑in her view (.) are the exciting people
599 EP: mmm
600 P: erm (1.68) and she feels (.) quite let down by (.) certain people at the minute. who have broken up a lot of her friendships as she sees.
603 EP: mmm
604 P: und (.) I think she feels quite lost. She doesn't see ↑anybody out of school:l, (.) at all.
606 EP: mmm
607 P: un is really struggling with that.
608 EP: mmm.
609 HoY: I'm really hoping that (*intervention withheld)* when they start working with her they've said that they will offer her some (.) ↑opportunities in the ↑holidays, and potentially evenings and weekends maybe erm to go and do some of their different ↑clubs ↑that ↑they ↑run so they're ↑not far away they're kind of (*location withheld*) based or (.) the furthest I think is (*location withheld*) maybe ↓which ↓isn't ↓too ↓far erm and give her some opportunities to maybe go and join some clubs where she might be able to make some new friends there as ↑well

620 EP: OK

621 HoY: They do lots like themed different kind uh (.) some bits ↑sport some bits quite ↑creative so I'm hoping that that might be an opportunity as well for ↓her to build up friendships outside of ↓schoo:l because I think (.) she's quite clearly finding that really difficult at the minute and its (1.43) its pushing against kind uv (.) you know (.) some of those relationships she's ↑got or those other people outside those relationships, to try n hold on to the ones she has got at the minute, which makes it I think quite difficult for people to then try and get ↑in with her as a friend, erm because she's in that kind uv (1.28) ↑again a bit of a cycle and a bit of a tunnel. about what friendship is.

635 EP: yeah (.) yeah (.) it is tricky isn't it. It's so much simpler when you're at junior school

637 HoY: it is

Appendix 11: Reflexivity examples

Below are some examples of the author's reflexivity during the analysis stage of this research.

i. Consultation 1

Initial thought: Is this an SEMH consultation? Does it link to mental health and wellbeing or is this more focused on finding ways to explain challenging behaviour?

On reflection – listening to the consultation, Ethan needed support with emotional regulation. I can sometimes accept teachers' constructions about situations and need to remind myself to consider the underlying cause. This may be because of my experiences of being a teacher – I empathise with teachers and how challenging the job can be when supporting children having difficulties.

Listening carefully to the way in which parents and teachers constructed situations and to the EPs' use of language enabled me to identify what was happening in the consultation.

ii. Consultation 1

Initial thoughts: The way the teacher is describing the situation – depersonalising situations by saying "when he's upset an adult" (not admitting it's her) or "when an adult has told him **so** many times" rather than saying 'when *I* have told him so many times'. It sounds like she may get frustrated with him – is this influencing why she appears to present the situation as though there is not a problem? Is she reluctant to reflect on how she responds?

On reflection: This may be my interpretation based on my experiences as a teacher and parent – hearing other teachers get frustrated with children and not recognising what they may be able to do differently. I need to ensure I focus on the language in context and what comes before or after to consider how this

forms part of construction. Focus on the language for evidence – my interpretations may be influenced by my own experiences.

iii. Consultation 2

- ***Initial thoughts:*** The head of year is quick to try to take on board suggestions to solve problems. Is she trying to speed up the consultation? Does this reflect her wanting to end is quickly or is she presenting herself as efficient?

  On reflection: Reflect on the research – secondary school teachers can lack confidence in supporting SEMH needs yet see it as their role to help. Looking at the Head of Year's language throughout the whole consultation – the variation and the way it changed in response to the EP, her approach appears to reflect the research. When the EPs slows her down by exploring situations and solutions more, she appears more uncertain, but when the EP facilitates discussion around solutions she appears more confident.

iv. Consultation 3:

- ***Initial thoughts***: Every suggestion made by the EP appears to be met with the parent saying "I've done/tried that". It appears she is trying to be heard – perhaps school staff have not appreciated what she has done.

  On reflection: I may be drawing on my experiences of feeling as though I have not been listened to as a parent.

  Discussion with the EP involved: She had developed a good working relationship with the parent. We discussed this use of language and it appeared the parent was trying lots of different strategies and was eager to share what she had done. She may still have been trying to justify what she had done and positioning herself as someone who was helping – possibly to avoid blame - but this may not have been done in frustration as I had initially interpreted it.

Consultation 3:

- There is lots of overlapping talk between Head of Year and parent.
  Initial thought: It appears she is talking over the parent to have her views heard, suggesting she may not value the parents'.
  On reflection: This may be me empathising with the parent – considering how I might feel if a teacher was interrupting or talking over me as a parent. I need to remember to focus on the language and descriptions of discursive devices – don't allow my thoughts to influence analysis.

  A comment was made by a reader sense-checking the results for this consultation that, at times, the parents' constructions appeared to have been written more sensitively than the Head of Year's. I had written: "*The Head of Year talks over the parent*" was used which suggested the researcher was making a judgement. I changed this to: "*The Head of Year takes back the turn to talk*" (Section 6.4) which focuses on the discursive device used rather than my interpretation of the interaction.

All Consultations

Initial thoughts: Why do EPs change the subject when parents or school staff are explaining problems rather than empathising at times?

On reflection: Focus on what the EP changes the conversation to and what the impact is on the parents and teachers for the rest of the consultation. Leads to more talk about solutions and ways forward and they appear to talk with more confidence and more positively.

Containing emotions doesn't always have to be through offering empathy.