

Doing Mentoring and Managing in Giving Corrective Feedback: A Study of Managerial Discourse in Business Meetings

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Objectives: This paper explores a scarcely researched topic, namely, mentoring discourse. In particular, it addresses an underexplored issue that commonly exists in managerial mentoring. While leaders are encouraged to mentor their subordinates, the ultimate objectives of managing and mentoring may be quite distinct as the former orients to the company's goals while the latter focuses on the subordinate's development. This paper attempts to explore how leaders make use of discourse strategies to accomplish mentoring and managing practices in authentic leader-subordinate communication, with a focus on giving corrective feedback.

Methods: The study adopts a discourse analytic approach and the research data consists of 14 hours of recordings of business meetings collected from a Hong Kong company, complemented by semi-structured interviews and workplace observations.

Results: It is found that the leader under examination puts great emphasis on advancing the subordinates' competence and is frequently engaged in mentoring. He often employs evaluating, explaining, and demonstrating to help subordinates recognize their mistakes and understand the rationale behind the mistakes. When a conflict between the subordinate's interest and the company's interest appears, the leader may, in addition to similar discourse strategies for giving corrective feedback and, give explicit instructions to ensure compliance.

Conclusions: By conducting a detailed analysis of mentoring discourse, this study demonstrates that leaders skillfully make use of discourse strategies to do mentoring and managing simultaneously. It serves as a starting point for more comprehensive studies of mentoring at work in the future.

Key Words: Mentoring, Managing, Leadership Discourse, Giving Corrective Feedback, Workplace Interaction

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Introduction

It is emphasized in many managerial handbooks that mentoring is essential to people management in business organizations. Good leaders are expected to mentor and empower their team members, enhance their performance, and bring the best out of their subordinates (Brent & Dent, 2015; Gilley & Gilley, 2007; Wellington, 2017). However, from a critical perspective, the discourse of mentoring is not "innocent" (Gray, Garvey, & Lane, 2016). In the context of managers being mentors, The ultimate objectives of mentoring sometimes may clash with those

of managing. Mentoring focuses on the interests of the person being mentored (Holmes, 2005; Kurian, 2024; Nielsen & Nørreklit, 2012), yet, managing places emphasis on organizational goals (Hunsaker & Hunsaker, 2016). Tension may emerge when there is a conflict between the two. Little is known about how leaders balance the two conflicting objectives (mentoring vs managing) in actual leader-subordinate communication.

Many activities at work are enacted through talk (Boden, 1994) and the literature on workplace discourse has grown rapidly over the last three decades (e.g., Holmes & Stubbe, 2015; Koester, 2010; Stubbe et al., 2003; Vine, 2017). However, much of the mentoring literature adopts quantitative methods and draws on self-reported data such as questionnaire surveys and interviews. Few studies focus on the discourse of mentoring per se, and within this small body of literature, a considerable portion focuses on educational and medical settings (e.g., Kane & Saclarides, 2023) and sports coaching (e.g., Cushion, Stodter, & Clarke, 2022). The literature on mentoring discourse in workplace settings is scarce.

Against this background, the present study employs a discourse analytic approach to examine the discourse of a Hong Kong company director who sees himself as a mentor to his employees and often does mentoring in their regular senior staff meetings. In particular, the paper focuses on instances of the director giving corrective feedback to his subordinates for the purpose of correcting undesirable behavior and improving the subordinate's performance. It is hoped that the analysis reported

in this paper provides new insights into mentoring practices in authentic leader-subordinate communication.

Literature Review

The act that an experienced individual transfers knowledge, experience and expertise to a less experienced individual for the purposes of enhancing the latter's professional competence and/or career development can be referred to mentoring (e.g., Gray et al., 2016; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Holmes, 2005; Kurian, 2024).

The literature on mentoring in general is enormous, yet the topic started to receive scholarly attention in the fields of management and business only recently. A search on the Web of Science Core Collection using "mentoring" as the topic term, refined to articles and book chapters and with a restriction to English language, yielded 24,020 results (as searched on 15 January 2025). However, many of the publications were in the fields of health sciences and education, and only 1,282 (6.4%) fell within the fields of management and business (Figure 1), most of which were published in the past five years (Figure 2). While the search results reflected the situation in one literature database, it to some extent revealed that mentoring is an important topic and much more work should be done to develop a more comprehensive understanding of mentoring in management and business contexts.

Although mentoring may be conducted formally or informally (Clutterbuck, Kochan, Lunsford, Dominguez, & Had-



Figure 1. A screenshot of a treemap showing the top 20 Web of Science categories of fields among the search results by using "mentoring" as the topic search word (as on 15 January 2025).

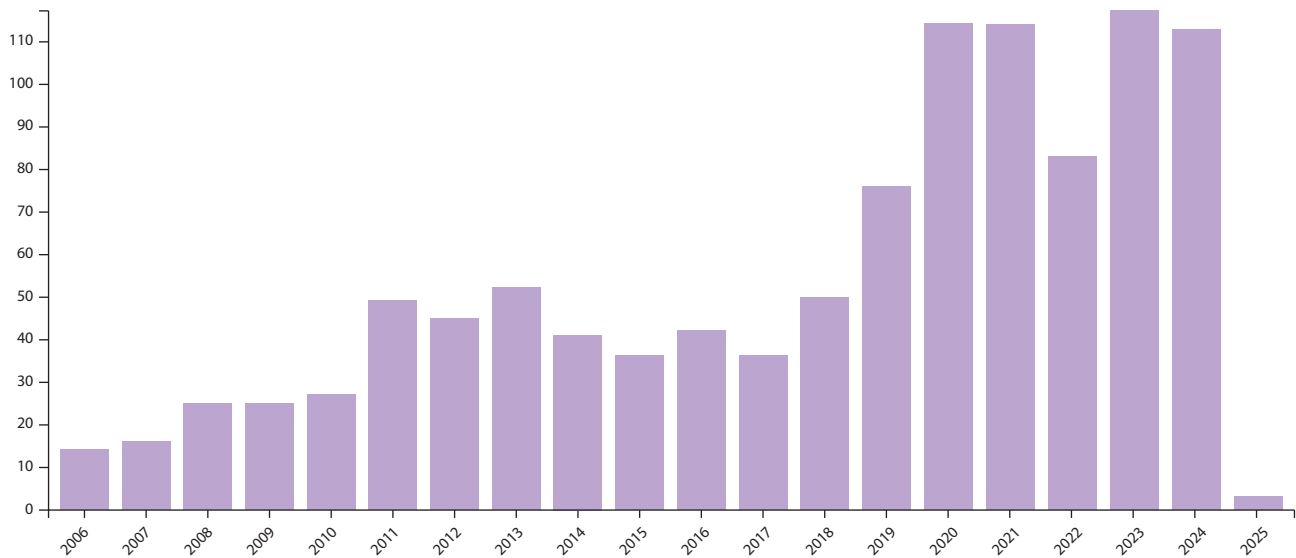


Figure 2. A screenshot of mentoring publications in fields of management and business over time (as on 15 January 2025).

dock-Millar, 2017), many business enterprises have implemented it in formal mentoring programs (Deng, Gulseren, & Turner, 2022). A large portion of the mentoring literature also focuses on the outcomes of formal mentoring (Janssen, van Vuuren, & de Jong, 2016).

Much research has revealed that mentoring is beneficial to both employees and organizations. Brent and Dent (2015) consider mentoring as an effective way to help leaders to resolve human and relational issues. Jones, Woods, and Guillaume (2016) report that internal workplace mentoring is effective to employee learning and development. Managerial mentoring can empower employees (Jepsen & Dehlholm, 2020), improve employees' performance and productivity (Whitmore, 2002), and therefore has positive effect on employees' work satisfaction, role clarity, and organizational commitment (Birtch, Cai, & Chiang, 2024; Kim, 2014). In multinational enterprises, home-country mentors may play important roles in promoting expatriate voice on psychosocial support, role modelling, and career development (Zhuang, Chu, Yang, & Chang, 2023) and have positive effect on expatriates' organizational knowledge and job performance (Carraher, Sullivan, & Crocitto, 2008).

Mentoring is often linked to the concept of leadership and is stated as an effective managerial strategy and strongly advocated. Clutterbuck (2008) reports that the trend to equip all managers with mentoring skills is likely to accelerate. Managers at all levels are encouraged to mentor their team members (McCarthy & Milner, 2013), and managers who provides mentoring to their subordinates are considered as good leaders (Gilley & Gilley, 2007; Wellington, 2017). Mentoring is considered as a typical transformational leadership behavior (Scandura & Williams,

2004) or a type of participative management (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019).

While the potential of managers as mentors is highly praised, little research has pointed out that there are possible conflicts between mentoring and managing in many aspects. A primary cause may be their different focuses. Managing tends to be task-oriented (Booth, 1996) and usually places emphasis on the advancement and the development of an organization (Hunsaker & Hunsaker, 2016). On the other hand, mentoring is considered more person-oriented, focusing on the interests of the mentee and aiming at the advancement of the mentee's competences and the development of his/her career in the organization/profession (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Hunsaker & Hunsaker, 2016; Nielsen & Nørreklit, 2012). Inevitably there are situations that the mentee's desire conflicts with the manager's desire to accomplish the organizational/team objectives. However, such complexity of mentoring is seldom addressed in the literature (Jepsen & Dehlholm, 2020).

Also scant is the study of mentoring from discourse analysis approaches to examine the actual use of linguistic strategies in naturally-occurring mentoring contexts in the workplace. One exception is Holmes (2005) which explores how leaders does mentoring when they talk to their subordinates in one-on-one settings. Holmes reports five discourse strategies employed by leaders to do mentoring, namely, procedural coaching, corrective, approving, advising, and indirect coaching. Holmes points out that the five strategies exhibit different degrees of explicitness and directness in doing mentoring. Holmes's work nicely illustrates that mentoring is complex and how it is actually done in workplace interaction deserves more direct attention.

However, after almost 20 years, not much similar work has been published.

Research on mentoring has primarily relied on data gathered using self-reporting techniques such as interviews and questionnaires (e.g., Allen, Eby, O'Brien, & Lentz, 2008; Cushion et al., 2022; Maynard-Patrick & Baugh, 2019). While these types of data provide a generalizable understanding of communication practices and norms, they rely on respondents' interpretations which may be potentially biased and reflect what respondents thought they do rather than what they actually do. They may not be able to reflect genuine practices in actual scenarios.

In view of this, the present study adopts a discourse analytic approach to explore how managers deal with the distinct features of managing and mentoring when interacting with their subordinates/mentees, with a focus on a common managerial/mentoring activity, namely giving corrective feedback. The aim of giving corrective feedback is to correct poor or undesirable performance or behavior (Bee & Bee, 1996). The activity is usually accomplished in a sequence of actions including identification of an issue, evaluation, explanation, and plan for future action (Svennevig, 2011). It is a rather challenging task; but if done effectively, it can lead to better performance (Cushion et al., 2022; Holmes, 2005).

Methods

This paper draws on 14 hours of audio and video recordings of regular senior staff meetings collected from a paint manufacturing company in Hong Kong, pseudonymed Rainbow.¹ In order to facilitate understanding of the video recordings, a set of supplementary data including one-on-one semi-structured interviews, workplace observations and workplace culture questionnaires collected from the research site. Each of the recorded meetings is about 2 to 3 hour long and involves the senior members of several departments including production, sales, and accountancy, as well as the company director, Mr Liu (hereafter 'Liu'), who is the most senior person among the participants in terms of organization position and age. The language of the meetings is Cantonese which is the native language of all of the participants.

Analysis of the data has drawn on the principles and analytical techniques developed in three discourse analytic frameworks, namely, conversation analysis (Sacks, 1992), social constructionism (Holmes, 2003), and the community of practice theory (Wenger, 1998) to scrutinize the data at different levels.

¹The names of the participants and all names of people, places, and organizations mentioned in the data have been changed to protect the participants' identities.

Conversation analysis pays special interest to turn design and sequential organization of interaction and provides a fine-grained analysis of talk in interaction while social constructionism and the related community of practice theory take the contextual settings embedded in the interaction into account and examine how interlocutors construct/negotiate their social and professional identities in relation to the practices and norms about the identity in the immediate workplace or broader organizational or societal contexts. These frameworks emphasize a participant-based approach towards the issue of context and argue that the construction of identity is not merely predetermined by general conventions but is interactionally negotiated between the interlocutors in an on-going conversation (Holmes, 2003). The three frameworks have been used individually or in combinations as effective tools for analyzing language use in workplace contexts (e.g., Boden, 1994; Chan, 2017; Chan & Du-Babcock, 2019; Clifton, 2019; Holmes & Stubbe, 2015). In the course of analyzing the meeting recordings, the researcher often poses questions such as "What is the participant attempting to do now?" and "What identity is the participant attempting to construct now?" in a particular utterance. The researcher seeks to identify answers to these questions through analyzing the transcript in a line-by-line, moment-by-moment manner, supplemented with a range of contextual data involved in the interaction, from the interactional setting (e.g., a business meeting) and the immediate physical setting (e.g., a work organization), to the relationships between the participants and the broader cultural norms about the identity in the society (e.g., Hong Kong). It is hoped that this study can provide in-depth analysis of the research data and contribute to further understanding of mentoring discourse in workplace settings.

It should be noted that by drawing on a set of data collected from one workplace, this study attempts to serve as a case study and a starting point for more comprehensive studies of mentoring discourse at work in the future. The findings discussed below should be treated as suggestive, instead of conclusive.

Findings

Through workplace observation and participant interviews, the researcher has found that at Rainbow employee advancement was highly emphasized. Employees were encouraged to take off site courses with financial support from the company. Work-related seminars were organized, and employees were encouraged to share their experiences and knowledge with each other.

In particular, the company director, Liu, often provided his subordinates with detailed work instructions and feedback on their performance along with elaborated explanation. He believed that through teaching and sharing his knowledge and

experiences, his subordinates would improve and develop. The meeting recordings and interview data also revealed that the subordinates highly respected Liu and valued his knowledge sharing and opinions, admitting that they could benefit greatly from his expertise. From a social constructionist perspective, Liu appears to construct himself as a mentor rather than a boss, and his subordinates as mentees rather than employees. This suggests the existence of informal mentoring relationships between Liu and his subordinates (Dougherty, Turban, & Haggard, 2007; Holmes, 2005; Janssen et al., 2016).

The research data reveals that in the recorded business meetings Liu often self-initiates to provide advice, feedback, and guidance to his subordinates to advance their competence and performance. In some instances, it seems obvious that Liu does mentoring and attaches high attention to the subordinate's interest while in other instances, both the subordinate and the company appear to be the beneficiaries: the ultimate purpose of Liu's discourse is to improve the subordinate's competence so that they would better accomplish their work for the company. These instances suggest that Liu attempts to do mentoring and managing simultaneously.

In the following, two representative excerpts are presented to illustrate Liu's mentoring discourse. Both excerpts involve the same subordinate, Anthony, the manager of the production department as well as the chair of the recorded meetings. According to Liu, Anthony was knowledgeable in his profession but lacks managerial competence (interview); and he therefore intended to advance Anthony's managerial skills, partially through correcting Anthony's undesired practices. In Excerpt 1, Liu gives corrective feedback that appears to orient to the improvement of Anthony's reporting skills while in Excerpt 2, Liu's discourse shows an orientation to the advancement of Anthony's human management ability so as to avoid potential negative impact on the company. Excerpt 1 can be regarded as an instance of mentoring while Excerpt 2 can be regarded as an instance of mentoring and managing. Similar and different discourse strategies are exhibited in these excerpts.

Example of Mentoring

Excerpt 1 takes place in the middle of Anthony's report on the work progress of the production department. Prior to this excerpt, Anthony informs the other participants that they are going to replace material A with material B in their products and points out that during the transitional period, products made of either materials co-exist. Daniel, a sales executive, then suggests some measures that may be taken to distinguish these products. After their conversation, Liu comes in to comment on Anthony's reporting skills in line 2. The Chinese characters represent

the transcript in the original language (Cantonese, occasionally mixed with English words) while the italicized words in English are the free English translation of the transcript (see the Appendix 1 for transcription conventions).

Excerpt 1: RBW04A_00:09:10-00:10:54

- 1 (0.4)
 2 Liu: 嗱啲個下一次呢, 噉樣講
Look you should say it in this way next time:
 3 Anthony: 係
 Yes.
 4 Liu: ((points at Daniel)) 應該呢: 就- 你剛才嗰句說話呢
 ((points at Daniel)) *It should be- I mean the sentence you just said,*
 5 Daniel: ((points at Anthony)) 佢講啲嘛
 ((points at Anthony)) *It should have been said by him.*
 6 Liu: ((points at Anthony)) 就係你講出嚟嘅
 ((points at Anthony)) *should have been said by you.*
 7 Daniel: *heh heh [heh]*
 8 Liu: [喀] 我哋宜家生[產線]
 [Yeah]. *Now we the pro[duction line]*
 9 Daniel: [[(Clears throat)]]
 10 Liu: 生產部呢 <打算> 噉個個: eh eh eh
The production department <plans> that during the: eh eh eh
 11 噉個個過度期裏面, 我哋會點樣去做.
the transition period, we'll do this and that.
 12 Anthony: Mm
 13 Liu: 喀. 就係噉樣. (0.3) 噉唔係擺出嚟討論嗎
Yeah. Just like this. (0.3) So you're not bringing up the issue for discussion.
 14 (0.6) 係你自己提出報告, 你自己呢, 喀
 (0.6) *You were reporting on that issue. You yourself, yeah.*
 15 Daniel: 通知我哋
Notifying us.
 16 Liu: 係囉. (你自己) <但係> (0.6) 佢哋可以呢, 針對:
 (0.5)
That's right. (You yourself) <But> (0.6) they could, in response to: (0.5)
 17 你: 嗰- 所講嘅嘢呢(0.3)就可以 ((pretentious tone)) 噉? 喂,
what you: t- have said, (0.3) they could ((pretentious tone)) what? Hey,

- 18 唔係噉下話: (0.3) 噉搞唔掂噉噉樣.
it should not be like this (0.3) It won't work.
- 19 ((normal voice)) 佢哋可以噉樣講.
((normal tone)) *They could say something like this.*
- 20 Anthony: 係啊
Yes
- 21 ((transcript of 70 seconds omitted, Liu further explains why he considers Anthony's reporting skills unsatisfactory, pointing out some negative outcomes of presenting the issue as a discussion item, and demonstrating the "correct" way of presenting the issue))
- 22 Liu: 噉我哋用噉噉方式去做
We should have done it this way.
- 23 Anthony: Mm
- 24 Liu: 好唔好啊? (0.3) 嚟 ((touches Daniel and Anthony))
Is that all right? (0.3) Come ((touches Daniel and Anthony))
- 25 Anthony: 好
okay=
- 26 Liu: =嚟 重新再噉過
=come, start over again
- 27 All: ((la[ugh]))
- 28 Liu: [彩排彩排]
[that was a rehearsal]
- 29 Liu: ((smiling)) 重新再噉過. 咯
((smiling)) *Start over again. yeah*

The brief pause in line 1 indicates that the discussion between Anthony and Daniel has finished. In line 2, Liu comes in and starts his turn with a particle, 'look', which functions as an attention seeker to get the participants' attention. Expressions such as 'next time', 'should' and 'like this' suggest that Liu is about to give corrective feedback (Svennevig, 2011). It seems that he attempts to be rather vague here by not naming the addressee and using the determinant 'this' instead of specifying the subject. Yet, from lines 2, it is clear to Daniel (and the other participants) that he is addressing his feedback to Anthony and 'this' refers to the fact that what Daniel just said should have been said by Anthony. Anthony's minimal response 'yes' in line 3 shows his understanding that he is the recipient of Liu's feedback.

From line 4 onward, including the omitted transcript, Liu does evaluation and teaching more overtly. He demonstrates a "proper" way of reporting (lines 8–11), and repeatedly points out that Anthony should have reported the issue rather than bring it up for discussion (lines 13–14 and in the omitted tran-

script). In addition, Liu then projects some potential responses from the sales department to the arrangement and explains why Anthony should have indicated in the beginning that he is informing the audience about the new arrangement rather than soliciting suggestions for the arrangement (lines 16–19). Lastly, Liu repeats his point in line 22 that they should *do it this way* (as he has demonstrated), checks Anthony's acceptance 'Is it okay?' (line 24) and ends with a humorous suggestion that Anthony starts over again (lines 26 and 29). Throughout the excerpt, Anthony acknowledges Liu's talk with minimal responses such as 'yes' and 'mm'. In response to Liu's checking in line 24, he utters 'okay' in line 25. All together suggests that Anthony accepts Liu's feedback and agrees to follow his suggestion.

Liu's teaching tone is clearly displayed in this example. The long sequence consists of attention seeking, problem identification, demonstration, tactics for dealing with possible responses, explanation, and repetition of his suggestion. By suggesting for starting over and referring to the scenario as a rehearsal which usually allows mistakes and improvement, Liu further mitigates the tension that might have created during his long speech and constructs himself as a teacher rather than a manager. All these strategies are commonly used by teachers. Moreover, although effective measures for distinguishing the products with two similar materials is important to the running of the organization, Liu's remarks seem to exhibit genuine interest in enhancing Anthony's reporting skills. In this respect, Liu's behaviour can be regarded a typical example of mentoring that attempts to correct undesired behavior and to improve the mentee's performance (Holmes, 2005).

Example of Mentoring and Managing

Prior to Excerpt 2, Daniel complains that a technical staff member in Anthony's department does not adhere to the company's standardized procedures to measure temperatures when conducting experiments. In lines 1–3 Anthony indicates that he has kept an eye on the technician's work and that the technician is aware of the correct procedures. In line 4, Daniel interrupts and accuses that the technician 'does not do it any more'. In line 8, Liu instructs Anthony to follow up on the technician's work and explains that 'otherwise no matter how well we have set the procedures' (line 10). Grammatically his utterance is incomplete and line 12 indicates his intention to continue.

Excerpt 2: RBW2a_010236-010354

- 1 Anthony: 唔係, 我知佢-佢知道: eh要調節溫度
No. I know he- he knows: eh he needs to adjust the temperatures

- 2 同埋佢都即場噉做亦都:做過嘅 (0.5)
and: he knows how to do it and he has *done it*
before. (0.5)
- 3 即係佢唔係 [做:]
I mean he doesn't [do:]
- 4 Daniel: [冇] 跟: 而家有做
[not] following, he doesn't
do it any more
- 5 Anthony: Mm
- 6 Daniel: 而家有做
he doesn't do it any more
- 7 (1.6)
- 8 Liu: ()要- 你要跟嚇佢個工作
() need- you should follow up on his work
- 9 Anthony: Mm
- 10 Liu: 如果唔係我哋定得好美好都好
Otherwise no matter how well we have set the
procedures
- 11 Anthony: Mm
- 12 Liu: 咯 佢-
Yeah he-
- 13 Anthony: >即係< 咁個工作就唔係話 eh:
>*I mean*< this task is not like eh:
- 14 ((Anthony continues to explain the proce-
dures that the technician has employed to
measure temperatures and states that his
procedures are consistent with the depart-
ment's practices))
- 15 Anthony: 噉我: 一陣間出去瞭解番佢
I: will go out and find out what's going on.
- 16 Daniel: Mm
- 17 (1.8)
- 18 Liu: 即係有啲錯: 嘅方法呢馬上更正
I mean we should correct a wrong way of do-
ing things immediate.
- 19 Anthony: Mm
- 20 Liu: 如果唔係個數據冇意思
otherwise the figures become useless
- 21 Anthony: 係
Yes
- 22 Liu: 第二 (0.4)就積非成是
second (0.4) an error passed on for a long time
may be interpreted as correct
- 28 (0.3)
- 29 Anthony: 係
Yes
- 30 Liu: 養成壞習慣最大獲
It'd be a big trouble if a bad practice is formed
- 31 ((Transcript of 20 seconds omitted. Liu ex-
plains why it is so important to develop cor-
rect concepts and job procedures. If a wrong
procedure is employed, the test results will be
meaningless and the tests have to be redone,
which will cause great loss)).
- 32 Liu: 所以有時你有時就要裝嚇佢咁
Therefore sometimes you need to check on
them
- 33 Anthony: Mm
- 34 Liu: 裝佢點樣做, [問吓佢點樣做]
Check on his way of doing the tasks, [ask him
how he does his work.]
- 35 Daniel: [()]
- 36 (0.4)
- 37 Daniel: 仲有- 仲有頭先 ((Daniel continues))
Also- Also just now ((Daniel continues))

While line 12 suggests that Liu intends to continue speaking, Anthony takes over the floor and produces a long speech to explain the procedures that the technician has employed to measure temperatures and indicates that his procedures are consistent with the department's practices (lines 13–14). He ends his talk with 'I will go out and find out what's going on' (line 15). This does not serve as an agreement to Daniel's criticism nor a compliance to Liu's instruction (to check on the technician's work). It seems apparent that Anthony intends to defend his team member. A tension seems to emerge.

From line 18 onward, Liu repeatedly highlights the importance of correcting wrong practices immediately and imbuing subordinates with correct perceptions; he also portrays negative consequences of bad practices. In lines 32 and 34, he reiterates that Anthony should monitor the technician's work. The episode discontinues when Daniel comes in to shift the discussion to another topic.

Like in Excerpt 1, a range of discourse strategies (mainly teaching) are used by Liu in Excerpt 2. For example, he explicitly tells Anthony what should be done (lines 8, 18, 32, & 34); he structures his teaching in a point form and numbers the points to facilitate understanding (line 22 and in the omitted transcript); and he uses the first personal plural pronoun to include himself and the others (in the omitted transcript). Moreover, Liu provides detailed accounts for his feedback, and highlights the importance of correcting a wrong practice as soon as it is identified (as if this is beneficial to Anthony). By doing so, he constructs himself as a mentor that aims at developing Anthony's human managerial competence.

On the other hand, Liu's talk in Excerpt 2 could be interpret-

ed as a disapproval of Anthony's managerial skills regarding managing the technician. Unlike in Excerpt 1 in which he demonstrates and constructs a learning scenario, in this excerpt, he repeatedly gives out instructions. Despite Anthony's promise to follow up on Daniel's complaint, Liu repeatedly instructs Anthony to keep an eye on the technician and correct wrong doings on the spot, implying that Anthony has not properly managed the technician. It seems that in this excerpt Liu pays little respect to Anthony's autonomy which is regarded as a crucial strategy to empower and motivate subordinates (Hunsaker & Hunsaker, 2016). Moreover, by drawing Anthony's attention to the negative impact of any possible wrong concepts held by an employee, Liu appears attempting to correct Anthony's perception as well. It is reasonable to argue that Liu tries to manage the technician in question via managing Anthony, correcting the technician's "wrong" perception by imbuing Anthony with the "right" perception. This excerpt nicely illustrates that when there is a conflict between the subordinate's interest (i.e., autonomy in this case) and the company's interest (i.e., employees' correct work attitude), the leader may choose to persuade the mentee to align with the company's interest.

In conclusion, in Excerpt 2 Liu simultaneously constructs himself as a mentor and a manager, displaying his orientation to both Anthony's interest and the company's interest. Similar examples are common in the recordings collected from the workplace.

Discussion

This paper has examined how the director of a Hong Kong workplace does mentoring and managing in authentic leader-subordinate communication in meeting settings. The paper has particularly focused on instances of giving corrective feedback, a typical mentoring activity. In Excerpt 1, the director constructs himself as a mentor and orients to the development of the mentee's reporting skills. In Excerpt 2, the director deals with the conflict between the mentee's autonomy and the company's long-term interest by doing mentoring and managing simultaneously: he on the one hand orients to improve the mentee's managerial competence, on the other hand, attempts to correct improper behavior so as to prevent potential damage to the company.

Unlike the existing literature on mentoring that tends to draw on self-reported data such as questionnaires and interviews, this paper examines authentic interactional data from a discourse analytic approach. The analysis of the director's mentoring discourse has enriched our understanding of the discourse strategies employed by a leader to mentor their subordinates. In the two selected excerpts, Liu speaks at the end of a prolonged discussion among his subordinates, showing his patience and

respect for the subordinates' opinions. By identifying and explaining a mistake and demonstrating a correct practice, he shares his experience and knowledge with the subordinates, allows them to understand the rationale behind the corrective feedback, and therefore facilitates the subordinates' learning from his experience. It is evident that Liu employs a range of discourse strategies that are commonly used by teachers and mentors, suggesting that he attempts to portray himself as a mentor rather than a manager (DiGirolamo & Tkach, 2019; Nielsen & Nørreklit, 2012).

On the other hand, when a subordinate's behavior may potentially harm the company's interest as illustrated in Excerpt 2, Liu may provide with spelt-out instructions with explanation so as to ensure compliance and to minimize possible risks of unsatisfactory performance. Similar strategies are commonly observed in the research data. Liu's behavior is consistent with common managerial responsibilities as described in the managerial literature (e.g., Hunsaker & Hunsaker, 2016; Mintzberg, 2007). With detailed instructions provided, Anthony does not have to work out by himself how to accomplish the tasks. His responses and acknowledgements, such as "mm" and "yes" throughout the excerpts, show his attention and understanding of Liu's turns, assuring Liu that the messages and instructions have been well-received.

A comparison of the mentoring strategies identified in this study with those reported in Holmes (2005) yielded some interesting observations. Liu's discourses of correcting and advising appears to be more explicit and face-threatening (Brown & Levinson, 1987) than those identified in Holmes's study which drew on mentoring interaction recorded in New Zealand workplaces. Our data illustrates that such face-threaten and bold-on-record strategies are normative and acceptable in the workplace under examination. The interviews have shown that Liu's explicit and direct teaching was welcomed and well-received, and his fatherly figure was reciprocally recognized. Liu's discourse in these excerpts appears to demonstrate authority and benevolence, which are essential aspects of paternalistic leadership (Farh & Cheng, 2000; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008). Previous research on paternalistic leadership has revealed that this type of leadership is culturally-linked (Hiller, Sin, Ponnappalli, & Ozgen, 2019; Mansur, Sobral, & Goldszmidt, 2017). It would be possible that mentoring practices are also culturally bounded. Further exploration of cultural impact on mentoring practices would constitute an interesting research topic.

Conclusion

To sum up, the present study has presented a case study of how

a leader does mentoring through the use of discourse strategies in meeting settings. It expands the scope of investigation into mentoring practices from formal to informal relationship, from one-on-one private settings to multi-partied meeting settings, the literature of which is rather rare (Janssen et al., 2016). Although the mentoring practices observed in this study are rather limited, it offers some empirical evidence for the complexity of mentoring at work, and reveals the challenges that leaders face to deal with the tension between mentoring and managing in authentic workplace settings. It is hoped that more studies like this one will be conducted to shed further insights into the actual mentoring practices in everyday workplace interaction.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Transcription conventions

(.)	Untimed brief pause
(n)	Timed pause where “n” indicates the interval measured in seconds
:	Lengthened sound
-	Sudden cut off
=	The second utterance is latched onto the first one
.	Falling intonation
,	Level intonation
?	Rising intonation
↓	Sudden falling in intonation
↑	Sudden rising in intonation
.hh	Audible inhalations (more hs indicate longer sound)
(word)	Word in doubt
>word<	Word uttered at a faster pace
<word>	Word uttered at a slower pace
word	Stressed word
°word°	the word is said softer than the surrounding items
((louder))	Paralinguistic features
()	Indecipherable speech
[The beginning of overlapping
]	The end of overlapping
heh	Laughter (hah is used to represent louder laughter)
word (h) word	Words are said while the speaker is laughing