

Lydia and Louise: Competing for the floor

Lydia and Louise are 8 year old white British friends from inner London. Here they are telling the interviewer about a playground that they like. Louise is a dominating speaker and Lydia finds it difficult to take the floor. It could be interesting to compare this extract with Howard and Junior's Dog Story where, unlike Lydia and Louise, the two boys collaborate in telling their story to the interviewer. It could also be interesting to see how Louise uses features that typically involve the listeners in the discourse and that may therefore allow her to keep the floor.

Indefinite *this* (lines 1, 5, 20, 43). Louise sometimes uses *this* rather than *a* to introduce something that is new to the discourse. This involves the listeners in the discourse by presenting the new item as if it was actually present.

Non-fluency features

er and *erm*

Lydia uses *erm* when she tries to take a turn at speaking (lines 38, 44, 46). She is probably planning the structure of what she intends to say but her *erm* allows Louise to interrupt and take the floor from her. Note that Louise uses the same strategy herself on line 17 and unlike her friend is successful in taking the floor.

False starts (lines 4, 7, 18, 42, 46, 51) are like crossing out in writing.

Repetition The repetition of the function words *that's on* (line 12) and *there's a* (line 22) indicates planning.

Note that the repetition of the content words *favourite* (line 23) and *high* (line 28) does not reflect a lack of fluency but instead adds emphasis to the words, like using an **intensifier**. In line 23 there is additional emphasis from the superlative *most* and in line 28 from Louise's shouting.

Nonstandard grammar

Louise uses some common nonstandard grammatical forms typical of the local area: past tense *done* (line 16) and relative *what* (line 38),

Rhetorical strategies

Louise is perhaps showing off by using a singing voice (line 23) and shouting (line 28). These strategies do, though, make her description very striking. She also uses repetition to add emphasis (see above), the intensifier *really* (line 37) and says *loads of lumps* (line 46) rather than simply *lumps*.

Vague language Louise is intentionally vague on line 6 (the general extender *and stuff*), 13 (*little play area thing*), 14 (the **general extender** *and stuff* again) and 15 (*a little couch thing*). Vague language of this kind usually involves the listeners by suggesting that they understand what is being referred to and so the speaker doesn't need to be specific.