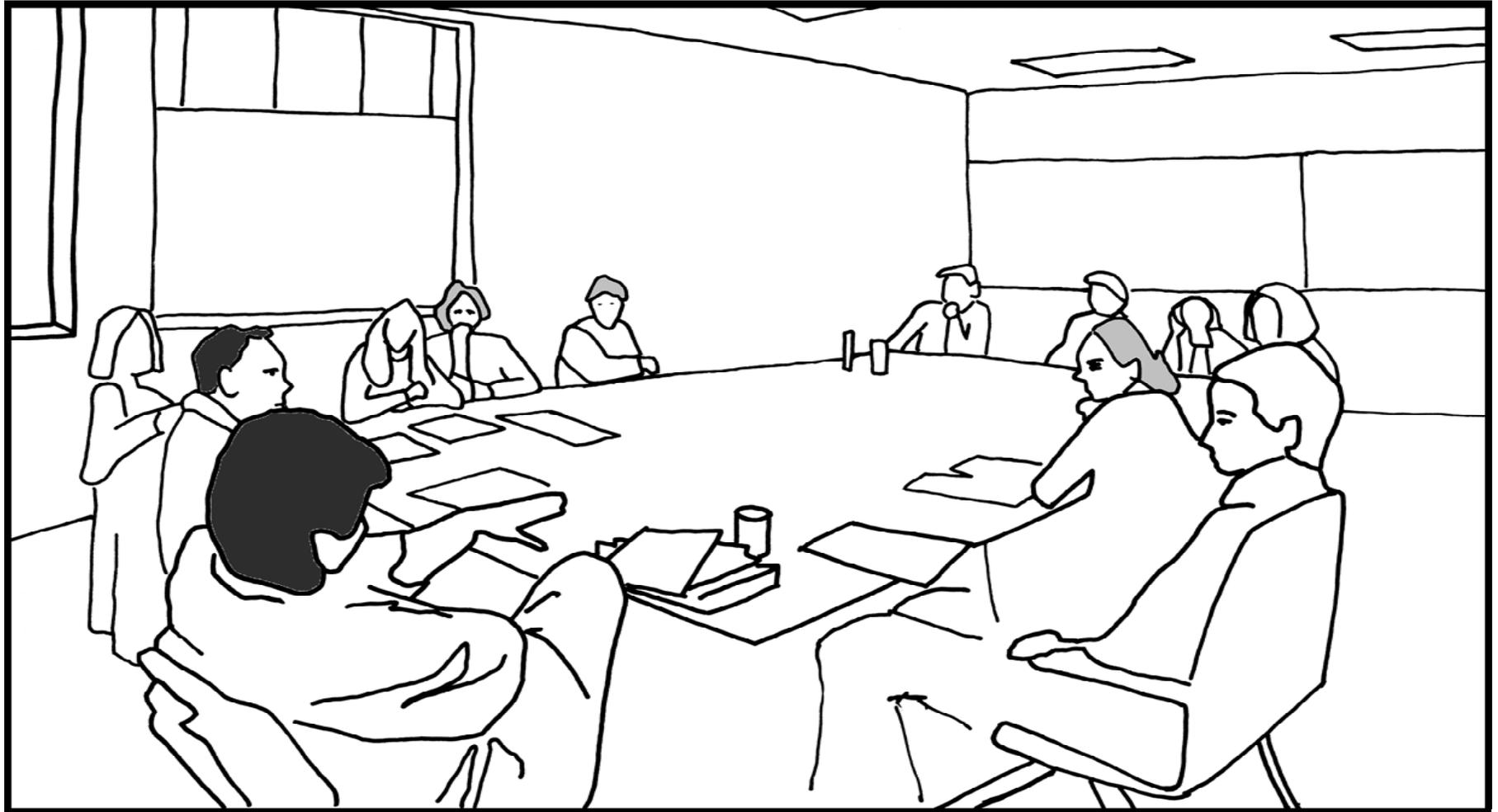


Women Speaking Up*



***we do so *and* skillfully!**

Why look at interaction in meetings?

To document the moment-to-moment enactment of social organization

To counter language prejudice - stereotyping of women and other groups

To provide a foundation for informed interventions that build on forms of participation women are skilled at using *already*

Beliefs about Gender and Language

*Women and men are
different.*

*To succeed in a
professional workplace,
women need to change.*

To Succeed Women Need “Fixing”

-> Assertiveness Training

Based on belief that women don't have skills to be taken seriously in the professional workplace

Early linguistic research on gender and language seemed to support this belief.

“Women’s Language”

Approval Seeking

Indirect

Hesitant

Lacking in Authority

Weak

Powerless

Women use forms expressing “insecurity” & “lack of authority”

- ◆ tag questions

(isn't it?, you know?)

- ◆ rising intonation on declaratives

A: When did you get here.

B: Six o'clock?

- ◆ hesitations, restarts, unfinished sentences

- ◆ hedges

(kind of, sort of, probably, like...)

- **What do these “powerless” features look like in turns at talk?**
- **A couple of cases from the meeting data.**
- (transcript symbols)

(A)

J: uhm what- what's the- percent of
alendronate users, (0.4) have you seen that ar-
you would call sort of failures.

(0.4)

J: Bone marrow density failu^ores.^o

((Ned responds))

J: And that's what it sounds like, I mean if y- if you:
.hh If you can loo:k, I mean if you know
you have good adherence,(.) it sounds like
the likelihood of failure is very, (.) ***((N nods))***
very low.

(B)

X: This uh program for P T H, though uh
it's eh it's very detail:ed, >I mean it's never<
gonna- you know: that- what you- the-
the treatment, and the monitoring,= it's never
gonna >kinda < wo:rk, yaknow, in primary
car:e, or and uh: what uh- so: eh-is that a-
that's just a clinical protocol:, right?=It's not- It's
not a research thin:g. (.) or is it,

- Hesitation, restarts, repairs, pauses, hedges, etc.

These are common in all spontaneous interaction regardless of speaker gender.

Women are being assertive

but speaking directly is “unfeminine” and unsettling to others,

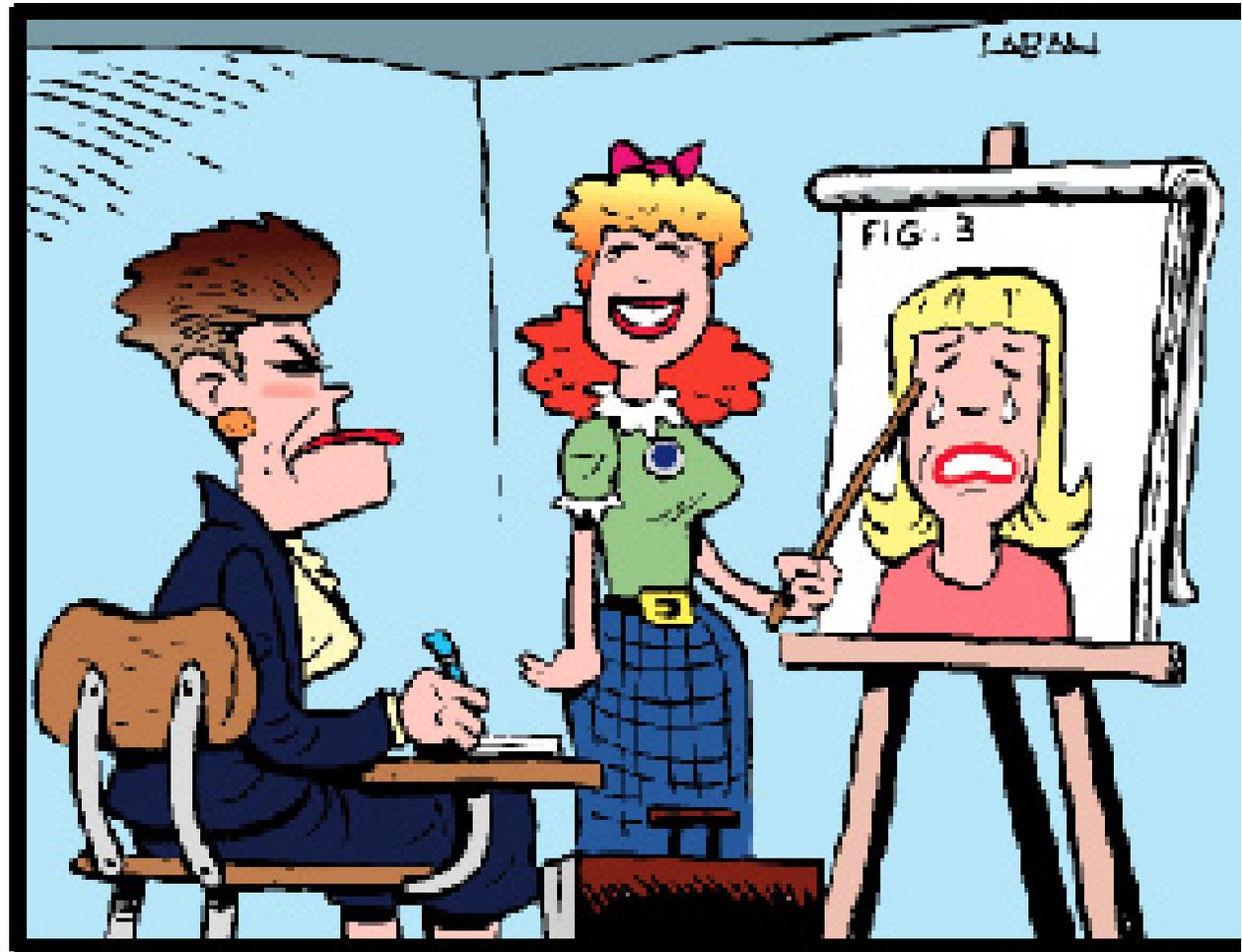
given the schemas we share about women.

Now we can get “Bully Broads” training to soften our style.

Instead of “Just say ‘No’”, we should...

“Bully Broads” Training

Just say
“uhm”



Popular beliefs
Women's ways of
communicating need fixing

Social science research

Stereotypes or Schemas

- Reinforced and recreated.

- *The Myth of Mars and Venus*

Deborah Cameron (2007)

RESEARCH CHALLENGE:

How do we do research on language and gender in the context of our own schemas about women, men and ways of speaking?

With vigilance and constant reflection on assumptions and potential consequences.

Language of research must also be an object of analysis.

**Women report:
*"My ideas are ignored."***

(Original) Guiding Question:

**"What can conversation analysis
reveal about how women's
ideas are ignored?"**

Method - Videotaping & Analysis

Observation and videotaping

Detailed transcription

Part of analysis; original recordings remain the central focus.

Action analysis - Co-constructed sequences

Focal sequences

- Identify segments where women speak up with ideas.
- Identify segments of women being ignored???

In videotaping meetings I noted.....

- These women are speaking up effectively.
- Reconsider assumption in guiding question.

"Women's ideas are ignored"

Women don't need
to fix themselves.

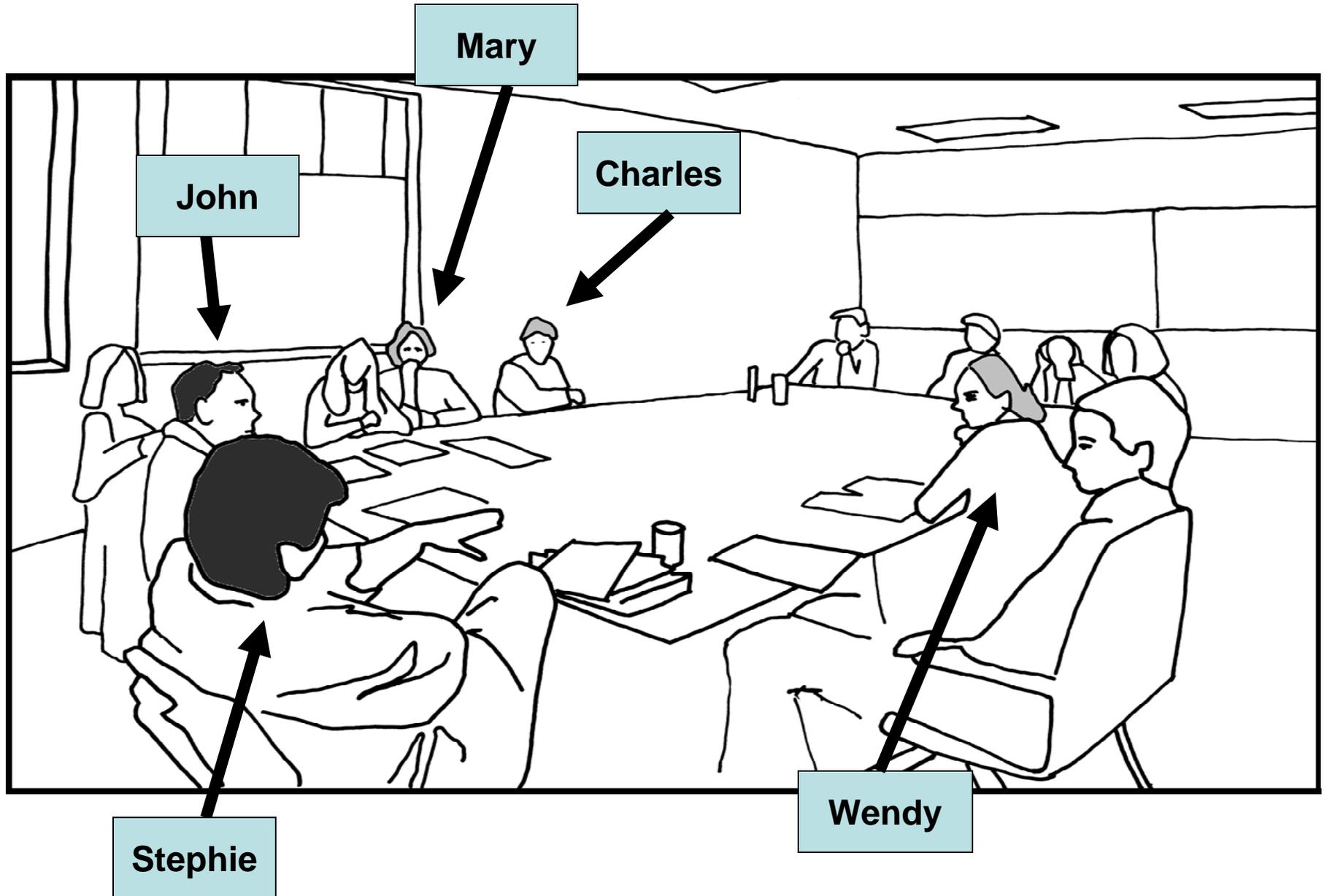
Focus on women as agents:

How do *women participate* in meetings?

How do *we contribute*?

What *forms and strategies do we use*?

Just as topic is being closed....



The actions and the participants

- Both Stephie and Mary take issue with the way the plan has been conceived by the chair and the deans.
- By calling attention to issues the high ranking members have not addressed, both women are doing “delicate” or “disaffiliative” actions.
- Such actions are typically formulated with care

by women and men alike.

Stephie's turn

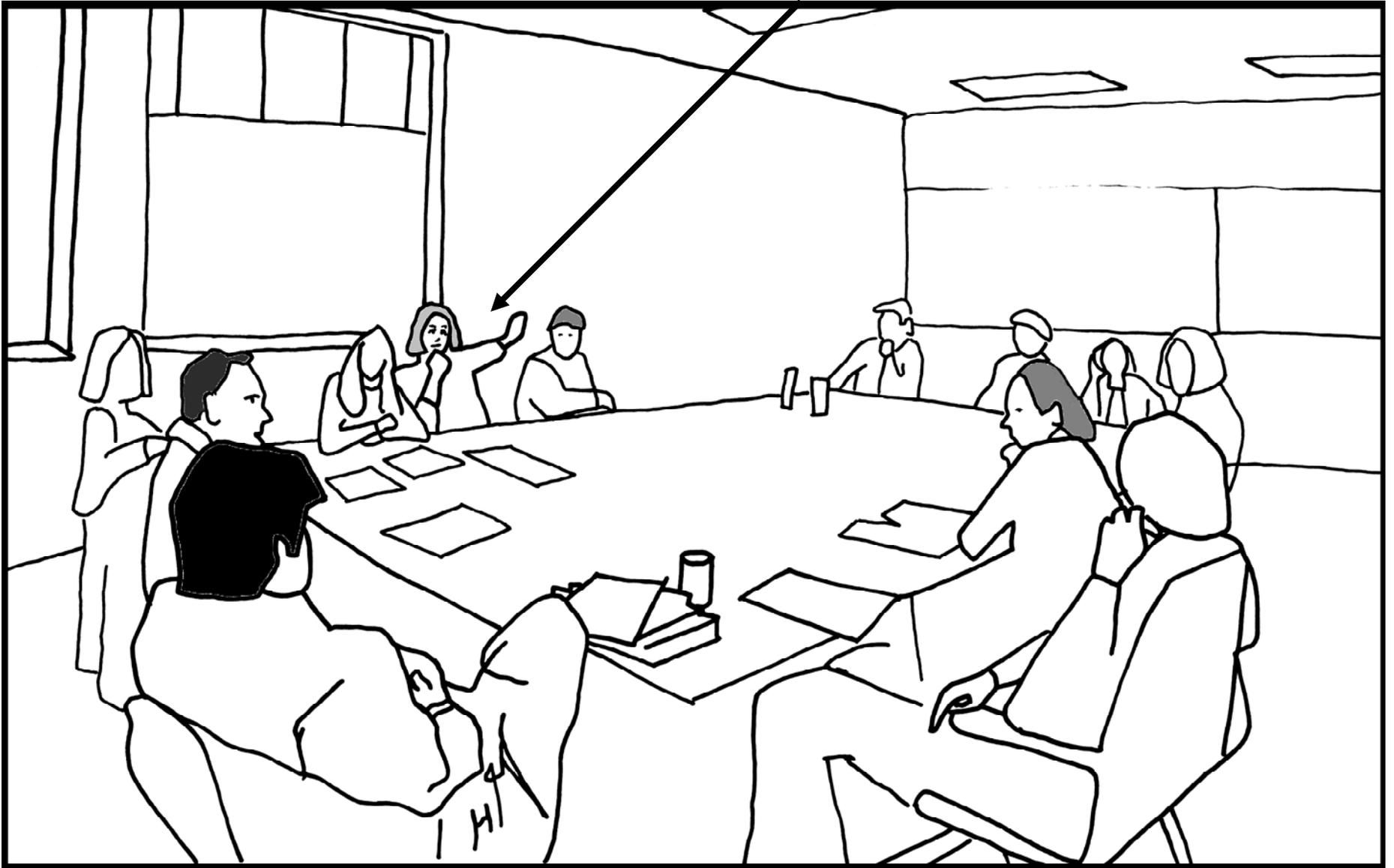
Stephie's turn

- In-breath - pre-beginning (line 3)
- Hand raise simultaneous with turn beginning
- Turn beginning that "projects" an action
- Pause at point of clear projection. Managing attention of group. Gaze on Stephie.
- Humor and solidarity management
- Managing stance and tone. Enforcing the seriousness of continuing contribution

Stephie's turn: Uptake

- Idea is continued, particularly in responses by the deans, Charles and John.

Mary



Mary's turn

Mary's turn

- Downplaying relevance
 - Frame: "this may be stating the obvious"
- Diminished --in time and stance
 - Rapid pace = reduction of space taken by talk
- Deferential
- Hesitations and restarts

Could be counted as a case of hesitant style or women's "powerless" style of speaking

A second look

Persistence:

- Maintaining bid for floor throughout higher ranking person's contribution

Counter balancing deference:

- "Maybe not"

Strength:

- ***Overlap and cut off*** of John
- ***Loudness*** of overlapping addition

Disaffiliative Action

- Drawing attention to a concern of the committee but one that the deans and the chair have not raised.

A benefit specifically related to a charge of the committee: supporting underrepresented groups in the university

Mary's turn: Uptake

- **The topic is continued at length**

Focus on what women are already doing *with skill*.

- Offer women knowledge and resources for reflection and strategizing *

**Men, too, can learn this kind reflection on speaking up.*

Your thoughts:

- How can we use evidence from real workplace interaction to counter stereotypes of women's lack of competence in communication?
- How can we improve women's experiences with participation in meetings?
- How can research on language in interaction be applied to mentoring?

