This book offers students a comprehensive account of the theories, methods and frameworks used in the field, applied usefully to illuminating case studies. *Researching Language, Gender and Sexuality* is essential reading for those developing their own research projects, but also an effective general introduction to the language, gender and sexuality.

Lucy Jones, *University of Nottingham, UK*

This book will spark students' interest in language, gender and sexuality and provide them with invaluable guidance for their own research projects. Its pertinent discussion of theoretical and methodological issues in combination with fresh illustrations and an incorporation of recent research render it an excellent resource.

Heiko Motschenbacher, *Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Bergen*

This book offers students a comprehensive account of the theories, methods and frameworks used in the field [illegible] and [illegible] Language, Gender and Sexuality [illegible] reading for those developing their own research [illegible] in language, gender and sexuality.

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Researching Language, Gender and Sexuality

Researching Language, Gender and Sexuality leads students through the process of undertaking research in order to explore how gender and sexuality are represented and constructed through language. Drawing on international research, Sauntson incorporates a fluid understanding of genders and sexualities and includes research on a diverse range of identities.

This accessible guidebook offers an outline of the practical steps and ethical guidelines involved when gathering linguistic data for the purpose of investigating gender and sexuality. Each chapter contains up-to-date information and empirical case studies that relate to a range of topics within the field of language, gender and sexuality, as well as suggestions for how students could practically research the areas covered.

Student-friendly, this is essential reading for undergraduate and postgraduate students of English language, linguistics and gender studies.

Helen Sauntson is Professor of English Language and Linguistics at York St John University, UK. Her research areas are language in education and language, gender and sexuality. She has published a range of books, chapters and journal articles in these areas and is co-editor of the *Palgrave Studies in Language, Gender and Sexuality* book series.

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Researching Language, Gender and Sexuality

A Student Guide

Helen Sauntson

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For all my students – past, present and future

Contents

Tables

Figures

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Chapter 2

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Chapter 8

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pter 8

ng, K. and Obuchowicz, A. C. (2008). Do books matter? ... of trans/gender identity through the manipulation of the Brazilian Portuguese grammatical gender system. Gender and Language, 2 (2), 131–162.

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apter 9

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1 What questions might a linguist ask about language, gender and sexuality?

Much of the time, doing a good research project in any area of linguistics is about asking the right questions, and this principle applies to researching language, gender and sexuality as much as it does to any other area. Within the field of language, gender and sexuality, there has been a historical shift away from notions of 'gender difference' to more fluid ideas about gender and sexualities as multiple, temporal and performative. Scholars in the field no longer ask, 'What are the differences (between genders and between sexualities)?', but instead ask, 'Why is there so much emphasis on differences?' Research now focuses more on the ideologies which underlie notions of gender and sexual difference, where they come from and why they still persist, rather than the differences themselves (if indeed there are any).

Sunderland (2014) acknowledges that there are, undoubtedly, still many structural inequalities around gender and sexuality in most societies. But, importantly, she links inequality and difference to linguistic *representation* rather than linguistic *behaviour*. For this reason, Sunderland argues that it is still valuable and important to research difference, but only in terms of *represented* difference. For example, it is less useful to ask about how men and women talk, but more useful to investigate how men and women (and other genders) get represented across texts and contexts.

The main questions in contemporary language, gender and sexuality research, then, tend to focus on examining how ideologies (defined later in this chapter) about gender and sexuality get embedded in language and on asking, 'What role does language play in perpetuating and challenging gender and sexuality ideologies?' With these questions in mind, the main purpose of this book is to provide you with the knowledge and research skills required to investigate various aspects of language, gender and sexuality in your own original research project. The book will provide an overview of the field, present illustrative empirical studies in a range of areas and address issues in research design and methodology that are most relevant to language, gender and sexuality.

It has been noted that the field has tended to focus more on 'minoritised' genders and sexualities such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender plus (LGBT+) identities. However, as we will see, more 'hegemonic' identities, such as heterosexuality and hegemonic masculinity, can also form a valuable part of research.

In recent years, a range of scholars have noted the importance of *intersectionality* in the study of language, gender and sexuality (e.g. Lazar, 2017) in which other forms of identity intersect with gender and sexuality (see later section). Although no book can be fully representative of a field, this book attempts to draw from research based on a range of different gender and sexuality identities, both 'minoritised' and 'hegemonic', and incorporates some intersectional studies.

A characteristic of the field of language, gender and sexuality is that the terms relating to identity are constantly evolving and often remain contested. For this reason, it is worth spending some time considering some of the key terms and concepts routinely used in the field.

Defining key terms and concepts

As with many areas of sociolinguistics, the 'identities' under scrutiny in the field of language, gender and sexuality are often unstable, contested and, therefore, difficult to define. Therefore, the following explanations should not be taken as definitive but as working definitions. You may come across alternative definitions (as well as a wider range of terms) in your reading. In fact, it is good practice to think 'critically' (i.e. not take at face value) about any definitions you come across in your reading. The terms that follow are not exhaustive and neither are they necessarily unproblematic. They are also likely to continue changing in response to social changes. The terms that follow are just intended to provide a starting point for thinking about particular concepts and the kinds of 'identities' that are typically the focal point of studies in the field of language, gender and sexuality.

Sex – Traditionally used to refer to the biological state of being female or male. The terms 'male' and 'female' are only ever used to refer to biological sex. Biological sex (and the accompanying terms 'male' and 'female') applies to all animals, not just humans.

Gender – Traditionally used to refer to a social categorisation system consisting of a polarised set of behaviours classed as 'masculine' and 'feminine'. Sex and gender are ideologically linked so that masculine behaviour is expected of biological males and feminine behaviour is expected of biological females. The term 'gender' only refers to *human* behaviour.

Woman/man, girl/boy – These terms are usually used to refer to someone's gender, whereas the terms 'female' and 'male' are reserved for referring to someone's biological sex. In contemporary work on gender, individuals can claim their own gender as 'woman', 'man' or 'variant' rather than simply being ascribed a biological sex. Thus, gender is now seen (at least in academic work) as having more agency and as something which is dynamic, active and sometimes a site of struggle.

Cisgendered – Someone whose chosen gender identity corresponds to their biological sex and as Identifying and embodying the sex assigned at birth. For example, a cisgendered woman is someone who was born female and is happy with their female body and with adopting a gender identity which is broadly understood as feminine.

Transgendered – Someone whose chosen gender identity does not correspond to their biological sex. For example, a transgendered man is someone who was born female in terms of biological sex but who identifies as a man and adopts a gender identity which is broadly understood as masculine. Transgendered individuals may or may not have had different kinds of medical interventions in order to help them to transition into their desired body.

Non-binary, gender variant, gender queer (and related terms) – A range of terms used by individuals whose chosen gender identity lies outside the binary categories of 'woman/man' and/or 'trans/cis'. It is worth noting that 'woman/man' and 'trans/cis' are not viewed as mutually exclusive binary systems in the field but are seen more as continua.

It has been repeatedly noted that *sex* and *gender* not easy to define and can have multiple meanings. Baker (2008a) observes, for example, that *sex* can refer to sexual acts but can also be used to define the biological distinction between males and females. Sex is generally considered to refer to a male/female binary, whilst *gender* is thought to operate as a masculine/feminine binary. Baker notes, though, that this distinction between *sex* and *gender* is notoriously over-simplified, and we will see examples of why this simplification is problematic throughout this book. Gender is seen as an organising principle for social life in that behavioural expectations around masculinity and femininity are set up through the repetition of social norms. Gender is perceived to be a very fluid concept, as Baker explains,

> Throughout their lives, individual people appear to change their gender, becoming more or less masculine or feminine over time. And societies can either gradually, or quite dramatically, alter the consensus about what constitutes masculine and feminine behaviour.
>
> (Baker, 2008a: 5)

A key point to remember is that gender is socially and discursively constructed, rather than naturally occurring. The only link between biological sex and social gender is an ideological one, as Eckert and McConnell-Ginet explain,

> Gender builds on biological sex, but it exaggerates biological difference, and it carries biological difference into domains in which it is completely irrelevant
>
> (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2013: 2)

Colour is a good and well-known example. 'Pink' is ideologically associated with femininity but has nothing to do with the biological state of being female. It has been argued that 'pink' functions to construct social expectations of girls and women in particular ways which are often detrimental.

Gender is closely related to sexuality, as sexuality involves behaviour in relation to other gendered social actors. As Baker explains,

> Sexuality refers to the ways that people conduct themselves as sexual beings. This covers an extremely wide range of phenomena: sexual behaviour (what people do), sexual desire (what they like and don't like to do and who they like to do it with) and sexual identity (how people express and view themselves as sexual beings). One important aspect of sexuality concerns a person's sexual orientation (sometimes referred to as sexual preference): the extent to which someone prefers opposite sex or same sex partners.
>
> (Baker, 2008a: 6)

Sexual orientation is not considered to be binary, although is often constructed linguistically as such as we will see in some of the examples presented throughout this book.

Baker argues that gender and sexuality are related to each other in a number of ways. One way that people are expected to express their gender is through their sexual behaviours and expressed desires. For example, men display dominant forms of masculinity by being the ones who pursue relationships, whereas women display femininity by being more passive. The bodies that are considered to be sexually desirable are also often linked to ideas about traditional, dominant cultural forms of masculinity and femininity.

Cameron (2005) notes that the study of language and gender started to give greater prominence to sexuality throughout the 2000s which increasingly incorporated considerations of 'queer' gender identities and explorations of the relationship between gender and heteronormativity. In linguistics, work by Cameron (1997), Coates (2007), Leap (1996), Morrish and Sauntson (2007, 2010), Motschenbacher (2011) and others has shown that the semiotic resources associated with gender categories are deployed as a means of constructing sexual identities in and through discourse. Gender and sexual identity cannot be separated as the construction of both identities tends to rely on the same discursive resources. Such work suggests that there is a clear relationship between gender and sexuality, that the two are not experienced separately and that they cannot be separated for the purpose of analysis.

Contemporary approaches to gender and language question the assumption that language merely reflects gender and sexuality. Rather than language simply reflecting gender differences, current research views gender (and, now, sexuality as well) as being *discursively constructed through language*. We will consider this idea, along with other current theoretical and conceptual approaches in the field, in Chapter 2. For now, the remainder of this introductory chapter will elaborate on the central problem of all earlier approaches – why it is problematic to focus on 'gender difference' in research – as well as introducing some other key concepts in the field.

Problems with 'gender difference'

As stated earlier, early approaches to language and gender (sexuality did not appear until later) tended to focus on identifying 'gender differences' in language, for example, how women and men talk differently. Despite these early approaches receiving so much critical attention, Sunderland (2014) states that looking for alternative work on similarities across women/men and girls/boys is not easy. This, she argues, is because there is still a dominant, probably universal, discourse of 'gender difference' which pervades non-academic contexts. This discourse is easily and broadly appealing, and its popularity is evidenced through the high sales of best-selling books, such as John Gray's *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus* (2002);[1] Pease and Pease's *Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps* (2001); and Deborah Tannen's *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (1992).[2] The commercial success of such books points to the popularity of publications which are concerned with isolating and exaggerating 'gender difference'. And books such as these also play a role in perpetuating these kinds of gender stereotypes and exaggerated differences.

In a Google Scholar search for 'gender difference/s' and 'gender similarity/ies', Sunderland (2014) found that there were five times more hits for 'difference' than for 'similarity'. When searching for 'gender differences language' and 'gender similarities language', the difference was even greater with hits for difference being eight times higher than hits for similarity.

Findings from Sunderland's (2014) search of Google Scholar:

Gender difference:	2,250,000 hits
Gender differences:	2,240,000 hits
Gender similarity:	428,000 hits
Gender similarities:	501,000 hits (5 times fewer)
Gender differences language:	2,160,000 hits
Gender similarities language:	282,000 hits (8 times fewer)

These results point to a pervasive interest, even amongst scholars, in gender difference. Sunderland argues that a key reason for this is that the idea of gender difference itself has become commodified. Put simply, gender differences can be sold, whereas gender similarities can't. As Cameron sums up in her extensive critique of these kinds of publications and ideas,

> If these points were acknowledged, the science soundbites would be headed 'Men and women pretty similar, research finds' and popular psychology books would bear titles like *There's No Great Mystery about the Opposite Sex* or *We Understand Each Other Well Enough Most of the Time*. Of course, these titles do not have the makings of best-sellers.
>
> (Cameron, 2007: 163–164)

The prioritising of gender differences in academic research has led to what are now deemed to be inappropriate questions being asked in earlier research. Scholars now consider issues such as, 'Why are questions that strengthen the female-male/woman-man dichotomy so frequently asked, while those that explore other types of variation evoke much less interest?', and 'How much of this apparent dichotomy is imposed by the questions themselves?' This is quite a complex and important theoretical question – do the questions we ask about gender actually play a role in constructing gender itself? As researchers, these are important critical questions to consider when designing a research project.

The gender difference discourse is also routinely embodied in the ubiquitous 'gender stereotyping' which, Sunderland (2014) argues, pervades our everyday lives. Sunderland argues that visual and linguistic stereotypes of 'gender difference' are everywhere and exemplifies this with images of such products as pink packaged Sellotape, which is described on the packaging as being 'for girls'. Other images examined by Sunderland include gender-targeted sweets in packages labelled with the phrases 'Boys Rule' and 'Girls Rule' and the packaging of babies' teething rattles which contain the words 'for a sweet baby girl' and 'for a busy baby boy'. The rattles themselves take the form of a diamond ring (targeted at girls) and a handsaw (targeted at boys), and these manifestations create different expectations about behaviour and future aspirations for girls and boys. For more discussion of these examples, see Sunderland (2014). Sunderland takes these examples from the Tumblr site *Pointlessly Gendered Products* (https://pointlesslygenderedproducts.tumblr.com/), and this site (and others like it) can provide a good source of data for research projects focusing on multimodal analyses (see Chapter 4) of product packaging in relation to gender difference stereotyping.

'Behaviour' vs. 'representation'

Because gender difference stereotyping is so culturally prevalent, as shown in the previous examples, Sunderland (2014) argues that, in the questions we ask about language, gender and sexuality, there is actually a case for seeking out 'gender differences' in (or at least being explicitly vigilant about) the way women and men, and boys and girls, are represented (particularly in different text types and in multimodal discourse). In other words, it is important to examine *representations* of gender difference in order to expose them with a view to then problematising and challenging them.

Sunderland goes on to explain that 'representations' of any kind are often the privilege of the powerful (especially those with access to media), with their own interests to protect. So in a society which is still, in many ways, patriarchal, we would expect there to be many representations which serve to potentially disempower (some) women and girls. In fact, many media representations of gender have been shown to ferment the 'gender differences' discourse (see, for example, studies by Cameron, 2014a; Freed, 2014; Talbot, 2014). Sunderland argues, therefore, that there is a need to be vigilant about all sorts of possibilities/manifestations of *represented gender difference* (including ironic and subtle ones). Throughout this book, we will consider discourses of gender difference as they are represented in a range of texts and contexts. Building on Sunderland's work, we will also pay equal consideration to the ways in which difference discourses about sexuality often co-occur with those about gender.

In fact, the very idea of binary constructs in relation to both gender and sex has been criticised by a number of queer theory scholars in recent years (see, for example, the contributions in Zimman et al., 2014). In Chapter 2, we examine how work in queer theory and elements of feminist theory have influenced the field of language, gender and sexuality to the point where dichotomies such as 'male' and 'female' and 'man' and 'woman' are critiqued and challenged much more than they used to be.

Nevertheless, Barrett (2014) notes that, despite the challenging of binaries in queer theory, they do often have material consequences (i.e. their 'reality' is felt and experienced in physical and observable ways). Phenomena such as gender pay gaps and the numbers of hate crimes committed against gender and sexual minorities, for example, are well-documented examples of structural inequalities between women and men and people of differing sexualities. This means that language analysis can examine gender binaries and 'difference' as long as it is in a way which explores how the physical and material effects of gender ideologies are experienced and constructed through language. In some contexts examined in this book, for example, a binary distinction between 'men' and 'women' is potentially important when examining gender-based violence and sexual offences committed by men against women (Chapter 7). Furthermore, Davis et al. (2014) suggest that gender and sexuality binaries should not necessarily be rejected or understood as oppressive. Rather, they urge researchers to be sensitive to how binaries work in particular sociocultural contexts and to pay attention to contextual detail. And they also encourage researchers to consider how binaries relating to gender and sexuality always *intersect* with other social categories and systems.

Gender and 'intersectionality'

So far, we have discussed 'gender' and its related terms (such as 'women') as a coherent and unified concept. As stated earlier, however, gender is multi-faceted and often culturally and socially contingent, and, for this reason, it is more useful to refer to *genders* to capture a more pluralistic understanding. Even though 'women' as a social category are structurally disadvantaged in the patriarchal gender order, the intersection of gender with other systems of power based on race, social class, sexuality and so on means that gender oppression is neither materially experienced nor discursively enacted in the same way for women everywhere. Starting from the idea that gender discrimination may be compounded by other identity positions, Crenshaw (1989) devised a theory of intersectionality in which language, gender, sexuality, race, age, class, nationality and a range of other facets of 'identity' intersect to produce particular identifications and linguistic practices. In fact, much gender theory beyond the discipline of linguistics holds this view of gender intersecting with other aspects of a person's identity. The concept of intersectionality, then, disrupts the notion of a singular and coherent identity in relation to gender and sexuality. It recognises that there is no one way to be a woman, man, gay, straight and so on. Furthermore, intersectionality theory does not simply view other identity categories as 'add-ons' to gender. Rather, intersectionality describes what Piller and Takahashi (2010: 540) term a 'fusion of subjectivities'. Or, as Levon (2015: 298) puts it, categories not only intersect but also mutually constitute each other. Levon goes on to further explain,

> It [intersectionality theory] asserts that intersections are not to be viewed as 'crossroads' of two or more discrete and already existing categories but rather that intersections are themselves formative of the categories in question. In other words, mutual constitution maintains that constructs such as class, race, and gender do not exist as entities unto themselves. Instead, they crucially depend for their meaning on their relationship to the other categories with which they intersect.
>
> (Levon, 2015: 298)

Lazar (2017) highlights that this concept of intersectionality is particularly important in contemporary language, gender and sexuality research because it encourages researchers to view identities as plural, intersecting and mutually constitutive, rather than as isolated categories. Levon (2015) notes additionally that intersectionality reminds language, gender and sexuality researchers that no one category (e.g. 'woman' or 'lesbian') is sufficient to account for individual experience. Wodak (2008) also adopts this position arguing that it is problematic to 'isolate' gender as a variable or factor in investigating social phenomena. Wodak (2008: 193) continues,

> Clearly, every human being belongs to many groups and has multiple identities, some of which are sometimes backgrounded due to context, others foregrounded. The constellations change due to, *inter alia*, situational and socio-political contexts, functions of the interaction, intentions of the participants.

Levon (2015) points out that another crucial principle of intersectionality theory is that intersecting and mutually constituting identities are dynamic in nature – that is, they emerge in specific social and interactional configurations and therefore are not stable over time or context. Drawing on earlier intersectionality theorists, Levon encourages researchers to 'ask other questions' when adopting the approach. For example, we may ask how speakers use African American Vernacular English (which usually has a raced meaning) to enact gender and sexuality identities. Or we may ask how language usually related to 'place' or 'nationality' may contribute towards constituting gender and sexuality identities.

Some contemporary gender and sexuality-focused research points to the importance of intersectionality. For example, the 2017 Stonewall Survey of LGBT hate crime and discrimination in Britain (Bradlow et al., 2017) found that young people are at greater risk, with 33 per cent of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) young people (aged 18 to 24) and 56 per cent of trans young people having experienced a hate crime or incident in the 12 months preceding the survey. Therefore, the intersection between age and sexuality is important for this study. The study also found that black, Asian and ethnic minority LGBT people, LGBT people who belong to non-Christian faiths and disabled LGBT people were all more likely to have experienced gender and/or sexuality-based hate crimes or incidents.

Examples of intersectional *language* studies of gender and sexuality include Eckert's (1989) study of identities in a Detroit high school. In this study, Eckert examines how gender intersects with social class locality to create socially stratified aspirations for the participants and how these aspirations are achieved and expressed through language. Other intersectional studies which take gender and/or sexuality as their primary focus include Barrett's (1997) research on language appropriation among African American drag queens, Pichler's study of the language used by Bangladeshi girls in London and Davis's et al (2014) language-based analysis of gender, sexuality and 'indigenous' ethnic identities among two-spirit Native Americans. Levon (2015) does point out that intersectional approaches do not necessarily need to be applied to all research investigating language and identity because, at times, identities such as gender and sexuality are clearly foregrounded. However, in certain research projects, an intersectional analysis may be more appropriate and effective to make sense of how people use language to mutually constitute multiple identities which include gender and sexuality.

Transnational approaches and globalisation

Another key issue emerging in contemporary language, gender and sexuality research is globalisation and the importance of what have come to be termed 'transnational approaches'. Whilst these approaches may be beyond the scope of your own research project, it is, nevertheless, useful and important to be aware of these developments in the field. Lazar defines a *transnational perspective* as examining 'contextualised concrete local instances of stereotypes in conjunction with a wider lens on other local and specific instances so that transnational connections and patterns across locales can be brought into relief without making sweeping generalisations' (2017: 576). Transnational approaches involve looking at gender- and sexuality-related language practices and issues across national contexts but without making generalisations about those practices. Lazar posits that transnational perspectives are useful for the study of language, gender and sexuality because they can account for widespread phenomena, such as gender and sexual stereotyping, which often transcends national contexts. In her introduction to a special issue of the *Gender and Language* journal, Lazar (2017) exemplifies a transnational approach by considering gender and sexual stereotyping in a variety of East Asian contexts, including Japan, Korea and Hong Kong. In applying this approach, Lazar notes a commonality that gender and sexuality are closely implicated in the constitution of the stereotypes in all of the contexts included in the issue, even though there may be specific variations at a local level. Transnational approaches, then, can enable researchers to identify shared enactments of gender and sexuality across contexts, as well as how those practices may be distinctively articulated across different locales. Moreover, gender and sexuality also intersect with other manifest categories in stereotyping, including age, class, culture and nationalism. Thus, transnational approaches also tend to draw heavily on intersectionality.

An example is Piller and Takahashi's (2010) study in which they adopt a transnational and intersectional approach when examining the gendered nature of transnational migration and the role that language plays in the unequal distribution of access to social and economic capital in such contexts. They specifically focus on migrant women and their language experiences in the contexts of sex work and 'reproductive work' (i.e. work in the care and service sectors – childcare, cooking, cleaning etc.). The authors explore how each of these contexts of work feature significant *intersections* of gender, race, class, nationality and language. They examine how the employment opportunities of these particular women are constrained by their intersectional identities, concluding that migration, as a global phenomenon, is inextricably embedded in gender inequalities in their countries of origin *and* in their destination countries. And linguistic factors (e.g. lack of access to particular languages) are integral to constraining these opportunities and leading to exploitation and discrimination.

'Ideology' and 'discourse'

Two final concepts to be introduced in this opening chapter are 'ideology' and 'discourse'. These concepts are so central to language, gender and sexuality research, and have been so heavily theorised and applied from a range of perspectives, that we will also continue to explore them in more detail in subsequent chapters. 'Ideologies' are broadly understood as ways of seeing the world or versions of reality that are produced within systems of power. First used by Karl Marx, the term refers to,

> the systems of ideas, beliefs, speech and cultural practices that operate to the advantage of a particular social group.
>
> (Mesthrie et al., 2009: 320)

Fairclough (2003: 9) provides a similar definition of ideologies as 'representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation'. Fairclough claims that we both shape and are shaped by, ideologies, including ideologies of gender. In other words, an ideology is a particular 'world view' which is partially representative of society in that it only represents the views and values of those groups holding the most power. Althusser (1971) developed the work of Marx by arguing that ideologies are not upheld or perpetuated in society by force, rather they become naturalised so that people consent or 'sign up to' ideologies without really questioning them. Althusser proposed the term 'ideological state apparatuses' to refer to various organisations and institutions within a society that function to naturalise and promote particular ideologies – these include the family, religious institutions, the legal system and education. Ideological power, according to Fairclough (2001), involves being able to project one's own practices as universal and 'common sense' and is usually exercised in discourse. If we consider the previous examples of gender difference stereotyping in toy product packaging examined by Sunderland (2014), we could say that the ideologies of tools being for boys and jewellery being for girls are presented as 'common-sense' practices which are universally accepted. They are certainly not 'marked' as unusual in any way.

Sunderland (2004) further explains that 'discourse' (realised through language practices) is seen as *carrying* a particular ideology or set of ideologies. If we continue to take the product packaging texts as examples, we could say that the texts use language (and other semiotic resources such as colour and images) to convey a particular ideology (world view) of what it means to be a boy (masculine gender) and a girl (feminine gender). In other words, the texts work to create discourses which carry ideologies about girls and boys having particular interests, abilities, characteristics, expected behaviours and so on. And these ideological messages, because they are imbued with power, come to be seen as 'common sense', and this contributes to sustaining existing power relations. Such ideologies, because they reinforce taken-for-granted assumptions, are difficult to challenge and resist. As we will see in Chapter 4, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an analytical framework commonly used in language, gender and sexuality research, which is specifically concerned with ideologies and power and the ways in which they are achieved, reinforced and contested through language (and other semiotic resources).

'Discourse' itself is actually a contested term, and there are a number of slightly different definitions. And Cameron (2001) points out, 'Discourse analysis' is often used as an umbrella term for many different approaches. But it is generally accepted that there are two broad meanings of the term which, although drawing on different interpretive frames, are, nevertheless, related to one another. The first 'linguistic' meaning of 'discourse' is that it refers to language above the level of the sentence. In other words, it refers to longer stretches of spoken and written text. This definition also tends to have a 'functional' meaning of referring to language in use and language in context, rather than to notions of language as an abstract decontextualised system. The second meaning of 'discourse' is used in more of a social, rather than a purely linguistic, sense. In this sense, 'discourse' has been defined as a form of social practice (Fairclough, 1992). These social meanings of discourse often draw on the work of Foucault who defines discourses as socially produced forms of knowledge which organise experience and understandings of the world. According to Foucault, because there can clearly be different ways of organising and understanding reality, these 'social' discourses always embody a power dimension and form sites of potential struggle. Moreover, discourses do not simply reflect particular understandings, but they actively shape and construct them. Foucault (1972: 49) famously describes discourses as being able to 'systematically form the objects of which they speak'. When using the term 'discourse' in this second sense, researchers often refer to the 'discursive construction' of particular aspects of the social world, and this can include gender and sexuality. These constructions can be varied and multiple; therefore, 'discourse' in its social sense can be plural – different discourses can be constructed within any context. And, as Sunderland (2004: 45) points out, discourses do not exist in isolation but in 'constellations' or, to use Foucault's term, 'orders' of related discourses. In other words, they exist in relation to other discourses, often in hierarchical ways. We will see this in a number of the empirical studies discussed throughout the book.

Sunderland (2004) similarly makes a distinction between 'descriptive discourses', which operate at a linguistic level, and 'interpretive discourses', which operate at a broader societal, post-structural level. She explains that these two meanings of 'discourse' are interrelated as social (or interpretive) discourses are realised and enacted through linguistic (or descriptive) discourses, as well as through other semiotic modes of expression. Linguistic analysis can reveal 'traces' (Jaworski and Coupland, 1999) of particular gender and sexuality discourses as they are enacted through linguistic discourse.

Therefore, it is the uncovering of ideological representations and enactments of gender and sexuality which lie at the heart of discourse analysis. Ideology, then, is a crucial component of much current language, gender and sexuality research, and we will see examples of how different researchers have exposed gender- and sexuality-based ideologies in language as we go through the book.

How to use this book

This book is structured so that the theory, research methods and analytical frameworks commonly used in the field of language, gender and sexuality are introduced in Chapters 2–4. Chapters 5–9 then focus more on presenting illustrative empirical studies which explore particular areas of research within language, gender and sexuality. After the content has been presented in each chapter, you will find a list of study questions and activities. These are designed to help you to engage with the content of the chapter in more detail and to consolidate and develop your learning with an emphasis on how you might use and apply ideas in your own research. There is variety in the questions and activities – some ask you to think about theoretical points and issues whilst others ask you to reflect on aspects of your own experience. Other activities aim to give you practice in analysing linguistic data.

You do not have to read the book in the order in which it is presented, nor does it need to be read in its entirety. There is enough flexibility for you to use the book in ways that are the most useful to your particular research project. The book can also be used simply to gain an understanding of the field, even if you are not engaged in actively researching language, gender and sexuality.

A note on the presentation of data extracts

Throughout this book, various data extracts will be presented. When conversational data is transcribed by researchers, it often contains symbols and particular types of formatting to show conversational features (such as pauses, hesitations and overlapping speech) if they are relevant to the analysis. The conversational data extracts included in this book are presented in Courier New font in order to retain the original formatting as much as possible. If a particular transcription method has been used to indicate conversational features as well as speech content, a transcription key is provided in the appendix. Some extracts have no transcription key because they have been transcribed for content only where the conversational features are not relevant to the analysis.

Non-conversational data extracts (e.g. interview data, online texts, written media data) are presented in a normal font style with no specialised formatting or annotations.

Study questions and activities

1. Read, discuss and evaluate the ways that the authors in the list that follows have defined 'sex', 'gender' and 'sexuality' in their introductory books on language, gender and sexuality (page numbers are provided to help you to locate where the definitions appear):

    - Baker, P. (2008). *Sexed Texts: Language, Gender and Sexuality*. London: Equinox. 3–7 ('Sex', 'gender' and 'sexuality').
    - Cameron, D. and Kulick, D. (eds.) (2006). *The Language and Sexuality Reader*. London: Routledge. 2–6 ('Sexuality').
    - Jule, A. (2017). *A Beginner's Guide to Language and Gender* (2nd edition). Bristol: Multilingual Matters. 7–11 ('Sex' and 'gender') and 11–13 ('LGBTQ' terminology).
    - Litosseliti, L. (2006). *Gender and Language: Theory and Practice*. London: Hodder Arnold. 10–12 ('Sex' and 'gender').
    - Sunderland, J. (2004). *Gendered Discourses*. Basingstoke: Palgrave. 14 ('Gender').
    - Talbot, M. (2010). *Language and Gender: An Introduction* (2nd edition). Cambridge: Polity Press. 7–14.

2. Compare the definitions in the previous readings with Davis et al.'s problematising of binary concepts in language, gender and sexuality in this chapter:

    - Davis, J., Zimman, L. and Raclaw, J. (2014). Opposites attract: Retheorizing binaries in language, gender, and sexuality. In L. Zimman, J. Davis and J. Raclaw (eds.) *Queer Excursions: Retheorizing Binaries in Language, Gender and Sexuality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1–17.

3. Discuss and evaluate your own experiences of everyday 'gender differences'. In a similar way to Sunderland (2014), find and analyse texts which visually and/or linguistically perpetuate a 'gender difference' discourse.
4. Consider the ways in which your own gender identity may be seen or experienced as *intersectional*. What other aspects of identity intersect with, and therefore help to constitute, your own gender identity?

Notes

1 According to HarperCollins, the book has sold more than 50 million copies. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Men_Are_from_Mars,_Women_Are_from_Venus
2 This book was at number one on the *New York Times* best-seller list for nearly four years. www.deborahtannen.com/you-just-dont-understand/

2 Theorising gender and sexuality

Feminism, queer theory and performativity

This is the main theoretical chapter of the book. It provides a brief historical overview of the early development of the field, including academic, social and political influences. The bulk of the chapter then focuses on feminist and queer theoretical approaches and principles in the study of language, gender and sexuality. Particular attention is paid to Judith Butler's work on performativity and how this social theory of gender and sexuality was influenced by, and now continues to inform, linguistic studies. We will see how Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) is a pivotal publication which has shaped contemporary research in language, gender and sexuality. Unsurprisingly, this chapter is quite 'theory heavy', but examples from linguistic data are included in the final section to illustrate and exemplify some of the key theoretical ideas discussed in the preceding sections.

Historical development of gender and language research

It is not the purpose of this book to provide a comprehensive account of the historical development of the field. There are plenty of existing textbooks which usefully provide such accounts (see, for example, Baker, 2008a; Bucholtz, 2014; Jule, 2017; Sunderland and Litosseliti, 2008; Talbot, 2010). But for the purpose of 'setting the scene' and explaining why this book approaches researching language, gender and sexuality in the way that it does, it is perhaps helpful to provide a very brief overview of landmark historical developments in the field.

An academic interest in gender developed alongside the second wave feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s (for details of second wave feminism and its role in the development of the field, see Bucholtz, 2014). The 1960s were a time of great social change across Europe and North America. There was a growing concern with several areas of 'social inequality', and this was reflected in the rise of the civil rights movement in the US and the feminist movement which began to emerge and become politically and intellectually active. In the UK, the biggest achievements of these movements were perhaps the legal ones, with the Sex Discrimination Act being passed in 1975 and the Race Relations Act being passed in 1976. These laws made it illegal to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of their sex and race, respectively. The coining of the term 'sexism' occurred around this time, as did the term 'racism'. Both sexism and racism define individuals as inferior, limit their options and subject them to exploitation and demeaning treatment on the basis of their membership of some general class.

These advances in social equality provided a useful context for a rising intellectual and academic interest in studying social inequalities, including those around gender. The 1960s and 1970s saw the emergence of much academic study of gender across a range of disciplines. The work of Lacan (1977), Kristeva (1986), Foucault (1990), Irigaray (1985) and de Beauvoir (1949) was all extremely influential in the development of gender and sexuality studies (for further details, see Baker, 2008a; Cameron, 1992).

In language-focused research on gender, it is well documented elsewhere that early work in the field was historically characterised by the theoretical approaches of 'deficit', 'dominance' and 'difference' more or less consecutively (see the references cited in the first paragraph). But a commonly cited criticism is that all of these early theoretical positions tended to view language as merely reflecting 'gender differences' which already exist. More contemporary approaches to gender and language question this assumption. Rather than language simply reflecting gender differences, current research views gender (and, now, sexuality as well) as being *discursively constructed through language*. Within the discipline of linguistics, the first influential publication on gender and language was Robin Lakoff's book *Language and Woman's Place* (1975), based on an earlier article that Lakoff had published in 1973. Lakoff was active in the feminist movement, and her political beliefs were reflected in her writing. Lakoff argued that the social inequalities and power relationships that existed between women and men were reflected in many aspects of language use. Although Lakoff's work has since been heavily criticised (primarily for its use of anecdotal, rather than empirical, evidence), it is still seen as a 'landmark' publication because it ignited widespread interest in the academic study of gender and language. The field of gender and language became a recognised area of sociolinguistics after the publication of Lakoff's book, and the field saw the emergence of a plethora of publications from that point onwards.

The emergence of 'discourse-based' approaches

Regardless of some differing interpretations of language data, early gender and language research (up to the 1970s and 1980s), as stated earlier, tended to view language as merely reflecting 'gender differences' which were presumed to already exist. A common criticism of this early work in language and gender is summed up by Cameron:

> Gender should never be used as a bottom line explanation because it is a social construction needing explanation itself. We need to look, then, for the specific practices that produce gender roles rather than stopping at the roles themselves. Restrictions on and beliefs about language may be part of the construction of gender rather than a simple reflection of it.
>
> (Cameron, 1992: 61)

Because early work failed to ask what gender actually is, the work inadvertently tended to end up reinforcing gender stereotypes, rather than challenging them. More contemporary approaches to gender and language question assumptions of 'gender difference' as well as critically interrogate the ideological relationship between gender and sexuality. Rather than language simply reflecting gender identities, current research views gender and sexuality as being discursively constructed through language and is informed largely by post-structuralist philosophy. This means that gender and sexuality are not necessarily seen as existing outside or prior to language. Rather, language itself is one means through which gender and sexuality are actually brought into existence. These recent approaches to gender and language are often referred to as *discourse* or *discourse-based* approaches (see, for example, Baker, 2008a; Holmes and Meyerhoff, 2003; Sunderland, 2004). In these approaches, language is seen as a system of communication consisting of various resources which users can draw on, whilst the term 'discourse' refers to the practice of using language to construct identities. As we saw in Chapter 1, Sunderland (2004) defines 'discourse' as language practices which carry particular ideologies.

In these approaches, gender itself is viewed as a phenomenon which is constructed in and through discourse rather than treated as an a priori category. As Holmes and Meyerhoff explain,

> Gender is treated as the accomplishment and product of social interaction. The focus is on the way individuals 'do' or 'perform' their gender identity in interaction with others, and there is an emphasis on dynamic aspects of interaction. Gender emerges over time in interaction with others.
>
> (Holmes and Meyerhoff, 2003: 11)

Within this approach, it becomes usual to see gender and sexuality referred to as being performed, enacted, constructed, accomplished, achieved, effected and produced through language. This kind of language reflects the fact that discourse-based approaches are seen as being more empowering than the older approaches. Gender is not fixed and stable – it is something that we, as language users, can play an active role in constructing, maintaining and, sometimes, challenging. Of course, we can also do this through other 'semiotic modes', such as dress and appearance. But language is another semiotic code whose resources we can draw on to construct gender. This approach is important because it draws attention to the fact that gender is a construct or a 'fiction'. Gender is something which is often 'naturalised' in society – in other words, there are lots of normative, populist assumptions made about gender which are often simply not true. Gender is also frequently constructed as binary, with the differences between women and men, feminine and masculine and so on being emphasised and exaggerated whilst the many similarities and 'in-between' aspects of gender are often ignored and downplayed (again, see the examples of gendered toy product packing analysed by Sunderland [2014] in Chapter 1 as an example of this process). Discourse-based approaches aim to expose gender, and the gender binary, as a discursively constructed fiction which simply exists to maintain the social status quo (i.e. to ensure that women never become completely equal to men). They do so through the systematic analysis of language as a key resource for upholding the fiction of gender.

For further information, you will also find good introductions to the different theoretical and methodological approaches in any of the textbooks on gender, sexuality and language (some of which are listed in the references list at the end of this book; e.g. Ehrlich et al., 2014; Harrington et al., 2008). There are multiple influences on contemporary research in the field of language, gender and sexuality. Again, other sources will provide you with more detail on how each of these has developed historically and how they have influenced the development of the field. To help you engage with *current* theoretical approaches to language, gender and sexuality research, I will spend the rest of this chapter introducing key elements of queer theory and how these elements have subsequently facilitated the development of what is now known as 'queer linguistics' (QL). This has probably been the most significant analytical and theoretical contribution to the field of language, gender and sexuality in recent years. In the following section, I discuss how elements of contemporary feminist and queer theory have played a vital role in the introduction of sexuality as an integral part of the study of gender. Importantly, queer theory has helped to reconceptualise both gender and sexuality in ways which have significantly moved the field forward in recent years. It is to these theoretical developments that we now turn.

Feminism and queer theory

In order to understand QL, it is first necessary to introduce key elements of feminist and queer theory. Although queer theory is prioritised in this section, it is important to recognise that its development has been influenced by elements of feminist theory and, indeed, there is a great deal of overlap between the two. It is for this reason that I combine discussion of these theoretical approaches in this section rather than presenting feminist theory as separate from queer theory. Queer theory is helpful for language, gender and sexuality research because it takes 'normality' itself as its main object of investigation. Rather than presenting gender as an a priori category – as something which is already there waiting to be 'discovered' – queer theory interrogates the underlying preconditions of gender identity and how these may be enacted and formulated in discourse. One of its main aims is to challenge all forms of gender and sexuality-based 'essentialism' (the assumption that identities are innate, static and able to be reduced to simple binaries) and to focus, instead, on how gender and sexuality identities and normative ideologies are *constructed* – partly through language. In this way, it is consistent with the 'discourse-based' approaches to language, gender and sexuality that emerged out of critiques of the 'older' approaches and their preoccupation with gender difference. The term 'queer' became popularised in the 1990s, but its meanings remain quite diverse. It can be used simply as a shorthand term for 'lesbian and gay' and has historically been used in certain contexts as a term of abuse directed towards those who identify as non-heterosexual. Intellectually, though, 'queer' is not a term of abuse but simply refers instead to that which interrogates identity and resists binary categorisation. In this way, the term has been 'reclaimed' as a positive way of asserting non-hegemonic identities.

Elements of queer-informed feminist theory have been influential in revealing how oppressions surrounding sexuality are intricately tied to oppressions surrounding gender. Rich (1993: 227), for example, describes heterosexuality as 'a political institution which disempowers women' and proposes challenging and denaturalising heterosexuality by arguing that it is more 'natural' for women to align themselves with other women and for men with other men. Wittig (1993) also proposes that the categories of gender ('women' and 'men') are political categories which are complicit in the maintenance of heterosexuality. But, unlike Rich, Wittig places lesbianism outside the categories of gender by arguing that 'the refusal to become (or to remain) heterosexual always meant to refuse to become a man or a woman' (1993: 105). Thus, to refuse heterosexuality is the most direct way to refuse male economic, ideological and political power (otherwise known as 'patriarchy'). However, both authors share a commitment to challenging and destabilising what Rich terms 'compulsory heterosexuality', and it is this aspect of feminism which has informed queer theory. Butler (1990), for example, develops this notion in her claims that heterosexuality is naturalised by the performative repetition of normative gender identities.

Within queer theory, Butler's (1990, 1993, 1997, 2004) theories of performativity are of crucial importance for enabling us to question socially sanctioned concepts of normality in relation to gender and sexuality. In Butler's queer theory, gender (and sexuality) is something that we 'do', not what we 'are' (gender becomes conceptualised as a verb or process rather than a noun or a state). In other words, we *perform* our gender through language (and other semiotic means). Butler describes gender as 'an enactment that performatively constitutes the appearance of its own interior fixity' (1990: 70). What this means is that, through performing gender, one simultaneously constructs one's subjectivity and gendered identity and conceals the means by which that identity has been constructed so that it appears as though it has not been constructed at all. According to Butler, identity is not fixed or inherent in the individual or society but is rather fluid, shifting in different contexts of interaction. In Butler's notion of performativity, identities do not pre-exist, but rather they are brought into being by a series of 'citational' acts – including linguistic acts – which are understood to produce those identities. Within this performativist approach, Butler argues that 'gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original' (1990: 6), and gender is thus a 'construction that regularly conceals its genesis' (Butler, 2006: 63) in that the same discursive practices which are deployed to construct gender simultaneously conceal the very fact that gender is nothing more than a fabrication.

A common misreading of Butler's work is to assume that gender and sexuality can simply be performed at will. This is an over-simplification and does not accurately reflect what Butler argues in her work. Butler defines sexuality as 'an improvisational possibility within a field of constraints' (2004: 15) and argues that both gender and sexuality are mobilised and incited by social constraints as well as distinguished by them. Butler introduces the idea of 'hierarchies of constraint' which come from essentialised ideologies of gender and sexuality. Idealised or 'hegemonic' masculinities and femininities stereotypically associated with heterosexuality are ranked higher than more marginalised genders often associated with non-heterosexuality. For example, in Chapter 6, we will see how a number of studies of gay men's personal advertisements place a high value on versions of masculinity that emphasise physical toughness and strength in ways that are understood as 'straight-acting' – i.e. associated with heterosexuality.

Queer theory argues that heterosexuality is an integral identifying component of the most powerful 'hegemonic' genders. Without heterosexuality, the most powerful forms of gender lose their powerful status. Thus, hegemonic gender and heterosexuality are mutually perpetuating – gender hierarchies serve to maintain the ideological power of heterosexuality and vice versa. Butler also notes that performative accomplishments of hierarchised genders are also often compelled by social sanction and taboo. The result of this hierarchisation is that idealised or hegemonic masculinities and femininities stereotypically associated with heterosexuality are ranked higher than the marginalised genders typically associated with homosexuality. Drawing on the work of Connell (1995) and Kiesling (2002), as well as Butler, Coates (2003, 2007) notes that heterosexuality is an integral identifying component of the most powerful genders in society – 'hegemonic' masculinity and femininity – as we will see later in this chapter when we examine some of Coates's data. Moreover, powerful ideological mechanisms for linking gender to biological sex are crucial for maintaining hierarchies of gender.

Butler argues that, over time, some gender performances have become dominant because they are constantly repeated. Butler argues that it is these *repeated* performances of gender which have evolved into culturally dominant concepts of masculinity and femininity whereby it seems natural that there is only one universal kind of masculinity and femininity, that the two are polarised and mutually exclusive and that they are premised upon the binary sexes of male and female. Butler argues that, when people perform their gender in what is contextually understood to be mundane and ritualised ways, their gender becomes 'intelligible' – this means that other people can make sense of a person's gender when they interact with them. Those who do not perform gender in this way produce an 'unintelligible' gender which lies outside societal norms. Following Butler, then, 'queer' comes to refer to any 'non-normative' performances (including linguistic performances) of resistance. The verb 'queering' can refer to a process of challenging and resisting the norm and anything which is imbued with ideological power (especially in relation to gender and sexuality).

Queer theory also presents a unified view of gender and sexuality in that it recognises that cultural ideologies of gender normativity are bound up with assumptions of heterosexuality. This is generally referred to as the concept of 'heteronormativity', defined by Cameron (2005: 489) as 'the system which prescribes, enjoins, rewards, and naturalizes a particular kind of heterosexuality – monogamous, reproductive, and based on conventionally complementary gender roles – as the norm on which social arrangements should be based'. This focus on analysing processes of heteronormativity is a key tenet of queer theory and, subsequently, QL, which distinguishes it from the other approaches used in the field of language, gender and sexuality.

A related principle of Butler's notion of gender performativity is that, in making performative statements about sexuality, we inevitably make performative statements about gender and vice versa. So gender and sexuality often follow similar lines of enquiry. Butler subsequently argues that gender and sexuality have become 'causally entangled in knots that must be undone' (1998: 225–226) in order to gain a deeper understanding of both. There is thus a unique relationship between gender and sexuality – one can only be expressed in terms of the other. In other words, without the concept of 'gender', there could be no concept of 'homo/bi/heterosexuality' and vice versa. In fact, McElhinny (2003) argues that the very idea of two genders is conflated with a presumption of heterosexuality. Thus, the semiotic resources associated with gender categories are often deployed as a means of constructing sexuality identities in and through language as we will see in the data examples later in this chapter.

Of course, it is important to be wary of over-simplifying the relationship between gender and sexuality and of uncritically conflating the two terms. We should take heed of Cameron and Kulick's (2003: 53) useful summation: 'Sexuality and gender may be interdependent, but they are not reducible to one another'. However, it seems clear that the study of gender and language has benefitted from investigating Butler's 'knots that must be undone' in terms of the close relationship between gender and sexuality. Linguistically based work which explicitly examines sexuality alongside gender has suggested that sexuality is produced in relation to particular material conditions and relations of power and has revealed some of the ways in which people deploy the semiotic resources culturally associated with gender to perform sexual identity in discourse. Moreover, people frequently draw on ideologies of gender essentialism to understand and construct sexual identities for themselves and others. For example, Morrish and Sauntson's (2007) analysis of coming out narratives reveals that references to gender are commonly deployed in such texts as a means of enabling the narrators to organise and understand sexual identities, as we will see in the examples in the final part of this chapter.

Having explored some of the key principles of queer theory, with a particular focus on the importance of Butler's performativity theory, we can now turn to examine how these theoretical principles are applied specifically to the study of language in the approach that has become known as 'QL'.

Queer Linguistics (QL)

QL draws on the principles of queer theory outlined earlier and applies them to the study of language. Motschenbacher and Stegu (2013: 522) helpfully define QL in concise terms as 'critical heteronormativity research from a linguistic point of view'. Most definitions and explanations of QL are based on the concept of heteronormativity and use it as a theoretical and analytical starting point:

> The central target of QL is the linguistic manifestation of heteronormativity and, connected with it, binary gender and sexual identity discourses.
>
> (Motschenbacher, 2011: 161)

Hall (2003: 366) similarly defines QL as 'a field that is primarily concerned with how heterosexual normativity is discursively re/produced and sometimes resisted through specific linguistic practices'.

Motschenbacher and Stegu (2013) importantly note that QL is not the same as gay and lesbian linguistics in which the object of study is 'queer subjects'. As they explain,

> Using a Queer perspective [. . .] is not so much a matter of deciding what is Queer, but of choosing to view certain behaviours in a non-heteronormative light or from the perspective of the sexually marginalised.
>
> (Motschenbacher and Stegu, 2013: 520)

Importantly, and in support of an earlier point made by Cameron and Kulick (2003), within this explanation, QL can be applied to the critical investigation of *heterosexual* identities and desires as well as those which are sexually marginalised. They note that research on language and sexual minorities tends to focus on analysing linguistic manifestations of homophobia and other kinds of sexuality discrimination, whilst QL more broadly encompasses an analysis of discursive formations of all sexual identities, including heterosexualities. Part of this analysis involves exploring the linguistic means by which heterosexuality comes to be seen as the assumed default sexuality whilst other sexualities become marked as 'non-normative'. Furthermore, it is certain kinds of heterosexualities which are privileged (e.g. monogamous, dyadic, focused on marriage and reproduction), and this is also a concern of QL (also discussed by Leap and Motschenbacher, 2012).

QL can provide a very helpful theoretical framework for examining how normative and non-normative (queer) constructions of sexual identity are enacted through and inscribed in language practices and how these language practices may effect particular discourses of sexuality. And QL draws on queer theory by questioning how language functions to construct particular binaries relating to gender and sexuality (e.g. man and woman, gay and straight). Drawing on previous work by McElhinny (2003), Zimman et al. (2014) importantly note that, in the past, these binaries have actually been useful in language, gender and sexuality research in that they have been used as a strategic and political tool for rendering women (and LGB people) more visible rather than treating men (and heterosexuals) as representative of all language users. This can still be useful in contemporary language, gender and sexuality research as long as the binary categories are not treated as a priori or pre-existing language, are not seen as static and are examined critically.

We will now examine some data examples in order to illustrate the theoretical points made throughout this chapter and to exemplify a QL-based approach.

Examples of gender and sexuality performativity

The first example by Coates (2007) is taken from a study investigating how men construct masculine gender in their casual friendship talk using various strategies, one of which is sexuality-focused homophobic talk. In the example that follows, the two young male participants are discussing a recent event that occurred during an evening out.

[Two male friends, aged 19/20][1]

1 and er night before I left to come here right
2 I um ((xx)) Bill ((xx)),
3 I told you this.
4 I was driving down the road
5 and I've just seen this long hair little fucking miniskirt.
6 I've beeped the horn,
7 this fucking bloke's turned round,
8 I've gone 'aaaggghhh!' <SCREAMS>
9 <LAUGHTER>
10 Bill's gone 'what what what?',
11 'it was a bloke',
12 I've gone, 'turn round, turn round',
13 and he's turned round
14 and you could just see these shoes hiding under this car
15 and he must've thought we were just gonna literally beat the crap out of him.
16 [. . .]
17 I've driven past,
18 opened the window,
19 'come out, come out, wherever you are,
20 here queerie, queerie, queerie'.

(Coates, 2007: 46–47)

What Coates observes about this conversational narrative extract is that it does important work in terms of the narrator positioning himself as unquestionably heterosexual through talk about gender in various ways. Firstly, Coates notes how he constructs himself as heterosexual by expressing an initial interest in the person with long hair wearing a miniskirt – symbols of a certain type of feminine gender identity (line 5). His heterosexual identity is then further affirmed through his reported horrified reaction when he realises the person is actually a man (lines 7–8). According to Coates's analysis, the narrator then constructs a fantasy whereby the man in question is afraid and the narrator is in a position of power, expressed through implied violence (line 15). The narrator expresses a hostile attitude towards what he perceives to be a subversion of gender norms and, in doing so, constructs his own identity as a 'normal heterosexual'. The narrator is performing a certain kind of gender and sexuality through the way he tells the story. This story is just one of many that Coates found in her study, and she argues that such narratives function as powerful tools of self-representation and self-construction in terms of gender and sexuality identity.

The second example set is taken from a different kind of data – a corpus[2] of LGB 'coming out' stories written in an online public forum (from Morrish and Sauntson, 2007). The stories were collected and analysed as part of a larger project exploring how language is used to construct LGB identities in a range of contexts. The examples that follow are extracts taken from some of the stories in which the narrators say something about gender in order to self-construct their own sexuality identity as lesbian, gay or bisexual. Morrish and Sauntson found that such references to gender occurred in many of the stories.

a Well my story is pretty <u>average</u>. I was something of a tomboy when I was younger.

b I'm the boring old cliché of feeling different from my friends . . . was a typical tomboy with older brother when I was really young like 5 years old copied his hair cut and had short hair and rode bikes and climbed trees and played football.

c You could say I'm just the typical tomboy. I grew up playing soccer, GI Joe's and lego. I never liked dolls and all girly toys. I still don't like dresses, skirts and make-up.

d I was harassed for being feminine, who did not fit the masculine mould, not liking to participate in sports, and having the best grades in my class.

e When I was young I'd play hopscotch with the girls instead of touch football with the boys.

f I tried to be as manly as I could be because I was scared that people might start calling me a faggot or an equally as hurtful name. I was heavy into sports, playing football, hockey, and lacrosse, and then basketball on the side.

g I was the average teenage girl. I didn't appear to be a lesbian and have always been very girly.

h I was not a tomboy at all. I had a million barbies and dolls, so I guess I am not your typical lesbian.

(Morrish and Sauntson, 2007: 66–68)

In these examples, some of the narrators express feelings of 'difference' in terms of their gender which are then interpreted retrospectively by the narrators themselves as indicators of their emerging homo- or bisexuality (examples a–e). Such references centre on aspects of gendered behaviour such as dress and appearance, toys, play activities and reluctance to participate in the homosocial behaviour socially expected of young children. The term 'tomboy' is used frequently by the lesbian narrators to indicate early non-conformity to socially recognisable gender norms (examples a–c). Interestingly, there is no corresponding noun used by the gay and bisexual men – instead, the adjective 'feminine' is more often used (example d). Morrish and Sauntson also note the frequent use of words such as *average*, *typical* and *cliché* which indicate the narrators' recognition of gender non-normativity as a common experience in the early lives of those identifying as LGB.

Morrish and Sauntson conclude that these examples suggest that gender and sexuality are not experienced separately by the narrators and seem to support and exemplify Butler's claims about the norms of gender being directly tied to the norms of sexuality. Many of the narrators express negative emotional and judgemental feelings about the possibility of performing a gender which is not socially expected of them because of their biological sex. Identities are 'realised' by the narrators by the very fact that they do not conform to culturally recognisable dominant discourses of gender and sexuality, thus inciting them in some way. Homosexuality is frequently experienced negatively by the narrators, to the point where they attempt to deny the existence of both their homosexuality and their non-normative gender identity. Instead, they try to conform to cultural models of gender and sexuality normativity, thus 'extinguishing' their non-normative identities (example f).

However, Morrish and Sauntson also find that some narrators express awareness that there is no one-to-one correspondence between gender non-normativity and homosexuality and report on their resistance to cultural stereotypes of gay men as feminine and lesbians as tomboys in early childhood (examples g–h). Interestingly, these narrators often describe themselves as 'typical' in terms of their gender but 'atypical' in terms of their sexual identity. All references to gender, however, indicate that whether conforming or not to socially dominant gender norms, these narrators draw on ideologies of gender to understand and construct sexual identities for themselves and others.

In sum, both of the previous example sets provide illustrations of how the semantic resources associated with gender are often used to discursively construct sexuality. In doing so, they exemplify some key theoretical principles of queer theory and QL as approaches which are currently driving forward the field of language, gender and sexuality.

Summary: performative 'discourses' of gender and sexuality

In sum, the theoretical influences briefly discussed in this chapter have brought forward research in the field of language, gender and sexuality to adopt the following key principles:

- Language does not simply reflect gender difference, rather gender is discursively constructed and performed *through* language (and other semiotic processes);
- Gender does not exist outside or prior to language;

- Language is a system of communication consisting of various resources which users can draw on, whilst the term 'discourse' refers to the practice of using language to construct identities;
- Gender is not fixed and stable;
- Gender is something which is often 'naturalised' in society – there are lots of normative, populist assumptions made about gender which are often simply not true; and
- Gender is frequently constructed as binary, with the differences between women and men, feminine and masculine and so on being emphasised and exaggerated whilst the many similarities and 'in-between' aspects of gender are often ignored and downplayed.

Although QL and discourse-based approaches have different names, they are similar in many ways that they approach the study of language, gender and sexuality. QL probably just draws more explicitly and heavily upon elements of queer theory.

Although there are differences in the various strands of language, gender and sexuality research, most researchers today argue that nobody 'has' power – rather, it is something that is 'achieved', 'produced' and 'effected' through discourse. Contemporary feminist theories, even if they do not explicitly draw on queer theory, are also characterised by their view that there are different kinds of 'masculinities' and 'femininities' and 'non-binary genders', and we will see examples of this in some of the empirical studies discussed in later chapters.

This chapter has provided an overview of key contemporary theoretical developments relevant to the field. You can read further to consolidate and develop your theoretical knowledge. Some of the theoretical points made in this chapter are also picked up and developed in Chapter 4 ("An Overview of Analytical Frameworks") in which a number of specific analytical approaches and frameworks are discussed in greater detail.

Study questions and activities

1. How might elements of queer theory and feminist theory help you to identify an appropriate and timely research topic in the field of language, gender and sexuality?
2. Find your own examples of spoken or written texts in which the semantic resources associated with gender are used to discursively construct sexuality. In other words, can you find texts in which people refer to gendered behaviour and practices in order to say something about sexuality (or vice versa)?
3. Reflect on your own 'performances' of gender and/or sexuality. Do you perform gender and/or sexuality in different situations, with different people? Has your own gendered presentation/performance changed over time? If so, how? Can you identify particular 'constraints' (to use Butler's term) on how you perform/present your gender and/or sexuality in particular situations?

Notes

1 See the appendix for transcription key.

2 A corpus is a computer-held database of language samples. See Chapter 4 for further details.

3 What does it mean to do research in language, gender and sexuality?

Having outlined some theoretical issues in language, gender and sexuality, we now turn to the more practical elements of conducting research in this area. This chapter is more skills-focused rather than content-oriented and provides a step-by-step guide to designing a language, gender and sexuality research project. The chapter addresses the skills required to undertake research in this area, whilst recognising that the field lends itself to highly varied ways in which aspects of language, gender and sexuality can be investigated. The chapter starts by offering advice on how to devise and craft appropriate research questions and how to produce a strong research rationale. The chapter then offers guidance on how to familiarise yourself with relevant literature and how to use existing work to inform your own research. You are then guided through the processes of designing and executing data collection and analysis for a research project. This includes making decisions about what data to collect, how much, how to collect it and so on. The chapter briefly refers to how to select an appropriate analytical framework to use, although this is primarily the focus of Chapter 4. Finally, this chapter includes a consideration of the kinds of ethical issues which are often encountered in conducting language, gender and sexuality research and how to address them.

A key principle of 'research' in quite general terms is that it is systematic. For example, there is a difference between simply noticing that toy product packaging differs depending on whether it is targeted at girls or boys and setting out to *research* that particular phenomenon. The latter may proceed in a variety of ways, of course. For example, the project might be *descriptive* and set out to investigate the pervasiveness of such texts. This might involve collecting numerous examples of toy product packaging and then systematically analysing them for signifiers of gender. The researcher might alternatively choose to randomly analyse all of the product packaging in a single toy store to ascertain how much of the packaging contains gendered discursive features. The research project alternatively could be *explanatory* rather than descriptive – seeking to explain *why* some products are packaged in a gendered way. This might involve, for example, interviewing the designers of the packaging or interviewing consumers of the products about their reactions to the packaging and its gendered messages. The research could even be experimental whereby the researcher observes the effect of gendered product packaging on a sample of pre-selected participants or where participants are asked to interpret the packaging texts in controlled conditions. Regardless of the approach taken, what all of these examples have in common is that they are *empirical* – they involve the researcher basing their claims on some kind of evidence. Furthermore, that evidence is subjected to systematic analysis and inquiry in order to help the researcher support their claims and arguments.

Research projects in any area require careful planning, and the planning process can take time. The advice for planning a research project outlined in the remainder of this chapter may suggest that the research process is linear, but that, in reality, is not the case. Decisions may be re-evaluated, revisited, adapted or even changed completely as the research progresses. This is a normal part of the research process. The outlined guidance that follows does not necessarily indicate a linear process but should simply be used as a guide which you may keep coming back to at any point throughout the planning or conducting of a project.

It is also not the aim of this chapter to explore in any detail the philosophical positions involved in various research paradigms, nor do I explore in detail the different kinds of research methods routinely used in applied linguistics. There are a number of useful books available to read for more information on these topics, and the full references are included at the end of the book (see, for example, Dornyei, 2015; Holmes and Hazen, 2014; Litosseliti, 2018; Paltridge and Phakiti, 2015; Podesva and Sharma, 2014).

Throughout this book, we will look at research in the field of language, gender and sexuality, which covers a wide range of topics and approaches. However, any research process usually contains the key elements of identifying a research topic, identifying research aims and/or questions, reviewing literature relating to the topic, selecting appropriate research methodology, collecting and analysing data, drawing conclusions and presenting research findings. Throughout the rest of this chapter, we will briefly consider these key elements with the exception of drawing conclusions and writing up research findings – this will be covered in Chapter 10.

What is research?

At the very start of the process, it is worth briefly considering what 'research' actually is. Research involves investigating a phenomenon in order to discover or create new knowledge. In designing a research project, you are outlining what new knowledge you intend to discover and how you intend to go about doing it. In any research project, it should be made clear how your research is original, valuable and feasible/practical. Some ideas about what each of these characteristics involves are detailed next:

Original – How does your project differ from what has previously been researched within the area? Originality does not necessarily mean having to research an entirely new topic (in fact, it is very rare that research projects actually do this) but can, for example, involve using existing frameworks to analyse new data, conducting an updated study based on something that is now considered very dated, combining analytical frameworks in ways that may not have been done before in relation to particular data sets or using a different theoretical or analytic perspective to analyse existing data. There are many ways to conduct research that is 'original'. What is key is that you clearly explain *how* your research is original in your introduction.

Valuable – How does your research help readers to further understand the topic in question in ways which are of potential value to them? Why and how might readers be invested in your research and how might they be able to make use of your research? It is also useful to think about who are the potential users of your research. A project which investigates interaction patterns in courtrooms in gender- and sexuality-related trials (e.g. sexual offences cases) might, for example, be of interest to lawyers and other legal professionals working in that area. An analysis of how gender and sexuality identities are constructed through the language used in magazines might be of interest to those working in the media who desire to address issues around gender- and sexuality-based inequalities. Research on discriminatory language could potentially be of use to many people working in a range of contexts.

Feasible – In terms of feasibility, make sure that your research can be completed within the time that you have available. Be aware that even experienced researchers often underestimate the time needed for a project, so the general advice from research methods literature is to build in an extra 20 per cent of estimated time needed to complete any project. It is always good practice to draw up a research plan (detailing when each task will be carried out and completed) before you start. Another feasibility issue is ensuring that you select a topic that is within your own capabilities – i.e. do you have the required knowledge and skills to carry out the research? If you are planning to do a corpus-based project, for example, do you have the resources and skills for building and analysing corpora required for such a study? If you want to analyse image-heavy texts, such as magazines or adverts, do you know how to do multi-modal discourse analysis? (See Chapter 4 for introductory information about corpus linguistics, multimodal discourse analysis (MMDA) and other analytical frameworks.)

In the early stages of your project, you should provide relevant background information on your chosen research topic. The introduction to your project should be written in a way which is persuasive and essentially functions as a means of justifying your research topic (providing a strong *rationale*). Next are some examples of published introductions to language, gender and sexuality research projects in which the topic is introduced and explained clearly, and a strong rationale is provided. In the examples that follow, note how the authors in each case emphasise the importance of the research and clearly identify a research gap. Some annotations are added to help you.

Introduction: Example 1

Reading is often presented as a necessary skill for individuals learning an additional language in both foreign and second language contexts; this is true from a variety of theoretical frameworks regarding language learning, including the currently popular communicative language teaching (CLT) approach (Dubin and Olshtain 1986). Given the importance of gaining literacy in the second language (L2), finding, deploying, and effectively utilizing texts and textbooks is of great importance. However, as Shardakova and Pavlenko (2004) suggest, it is important to keep in mind that textbooks are not neutral resources; they are resources that have been constructed in a particular social, economic, political, and ideological environment. This adds a layer of complexity to selecting and to making use of texts and textbooks in the English as a second language (ESL) or the English as a foreign language (EFL) reading classroom. However, there is another layer of complexity that goes unnoticed – namely sexuality (Vandrick 1997; see also Curran 2006, Moita-Lopes 2006). That is, often times when making text/textbook decisions, teachers may not consider the normative stance that the text/textbooks either explicitly or implicitly take in regards to sexual identity. This can lead to the perpetuation of a heteronormative discourse in the classroom, which can be seen as detrimental to the learners and instructors in the class.

(Paiz, 2015: 78)

Look at how the author highlights a real-world 'problem' relating to gender and sexuality as the basis for their original research. This then provides a strong rationale for the research. Note also how the research 'problem' is supported through references to literature throughout the paragraph.

Writer provides a context for the research topic by referring to relevant literature.

Clear explanation of research topic in first sentence.

Introduction: Example 2

The aim of this paper is to explore some of the main linguistic features that characterize the discourse of peer sexual harassment at an institution of higher learning in Zimbabwe. This discourse has fascinated researchers for a very long time. Some of the early studies were conducted in the 1960s by researchers such as Coser (1960). In the 1990s, sexual harassment research is associated with scholars such as Buzzanell (1992) and Kissling and Kramarae (1991), while in more recent times, studies into sexual harassment are often associated with Ahrlich (1999, 2004, 2012) as well as Boland (2002), Holland (2006), Swift (2010), Chaudoir and Quinn (2010) and Foa and Street (2001).

In Zimbabwe, sexual harassment research is associated with the work of Zindi (1994). However, the present study differs from previous studies on sexual harassment in Zimbabwe. Whilst previous studies focus on the harassment of female students by lecturers, this study focuses on the harassment of female students by their male peers. And most importantly, unlike previous studies, this study explores the linguistic expression of male students' discourse of sexual harassment. In this study, I argue that this discourse is characterized by (a) the use of monologic utterances, (b) extensive use of code mixing and (c) the use of hostile jokes that are embedded in excessive politeness.

(Mlambo, 2014:245-246)

Highlights how this study differs from previous ones and, therefore, what makes it original.

(Continued)

The extract from this introduction highlights a real-world problem which the research is going to address.

Introduction: Example 3

Administrative directives and computer filters in schools deny access to teens' preferred online texts, and school librarians are constrained by budget cuts to limit library purchases to materials that align with the curriculum. Therefore, teens have been finding other outlets, such as the public library, to read and compose what they like [...] As teens engage with their preferred texts and each other, they actively explore gender and sexual identities in the YA area, or "the zone" as participants call it.

(Berg, 2012: 15)

Selecting a research topic and writing research questions

One of the most challenging aspects of conducting independent research in any area is often the initial selection of a research topic. Some people have trouble coming up with a topic, whereas others have so many ideas for projects that they feel overwhelmed and find it difficult to select one topic from all of their ideas. If you fall into either of these categories, try mind-mapping some initial ideas to get you started – list as many ideas as you can think of within a particular area. At this stage, it doesn't matter how vague each idea seems. The purpose of mind-mapping is simply to gather ideas and to get you thinking about your research. Once you have mind-mapped a list of ideas, you can then go through and evaluate each one. When evaluating, consider whether each idea is original, interesting, valuable and feasible using the criteria outlined in the previous section. This should help you to narrow down your list of possible topics. After mind-mapping and then evaluating a list of possible topics, it should be easier for you to select the one that you most want to do and that you think will be the best. Once you have selected your research topic, you can begin to think about it in more detail. This will probably involve refining it so that it becomes more focused and specific.

Once you have selected and refined your research topic, you can begin thinking about your specific research questions. In writing your questions, think about the following question: 'What is this research trying to show/do?' Research questions should be focused and specific rather than broad and vague. You should try to state your research aims and questions as clearly and as succinctly as possible. You may have one overarching research question and several sub-questions. Some general principles of writing effective research questions are that they should be:

- clear;
- researchable, practical and realistic;

- linked together (if you have more than one); and
- connected to relevant theory and prior research.

Listed below are some examples of effective research questions from published language, gender and sexuality research, along with one example of a question expressed as a 'research aim':

Research Questions: Example 1

In order to begin investigating the issues of heteronormativity in English as a second language (ESL) reading texts and textbooks, this paper explores the following questions:

1. What is the average degree of heteronormativity reflected in the sampled ESL reading texts/textbooks?
2. What is the average degree of heteronormativity reflected in the materials for each publisher in the sample of ESL reading texts/textbooks?
3. What are the average degrees of heteronormativity reflected in materials across targeted proficiency levels?
4. What is the average degree of heteronormativity reflected in materials for each type of text examined (text vs. textbook)?
5. Has there been any change in the average degree of heteronormativity reflected in the sample over time as measured from a five-year period to five-year period?

(Paiz, 2015: 84–85)

Research Questions: Example 2

The analysis of the selected text will help answer the following questions:

> Do the text and its context reinforce and/or subvert hegemonic discourses of gender and sexuality?
>
> How are the discourse features of transitivity and metaphor used to reinforce and/or subvert such discourses, and what role do the distribution and consumption of the text play in this respect?

(Koller, 2015: 257)

Research Questions: Example 3

> We explore the following questions: how is masculinity construed in our selected sample of texts from Nitro, explicitly concerned with

masculinity? What types of masculinity are there? Is there a prevalent hegemonic masculinity type? Are there alternative, more progressive construals?

(Kosetzi and Polyzou, 2009: 144)

Research Aim: Example 1

The purpose of this article is to examine adolescents' talk about/around the texts they choose to compose and explore outside of schools, focusing closely on the practices of three teens in particular who routinely used texts prohibited in their schools.

(Berg, 2012: 15)

You may find that research questions become more refined as the research progresses – this is a normal part of the research process. Research questions tend to become more focused as you conduct more secondary reading around your topic and as you develop your methodology. Moreover, your research methodology will be informed by your research questions – how you choose to select, collect and analyse linguistic data will be informed by the questions you are asking.

The literature review

The literature review is a vital component of any research project. The literature review should show that you are familiar with your research area and should provide a justification for the research that you are proposing to do. You should also use the literature review to construct the main arguments presented in your project. The literature review should be shaped by, but also help to shape, your research question/s. Hart (2018) summarises the main purposes of a literature review as being:

- to communicate your argument,
- to help with the narrowing and focusing of the research topic,
- to ensure the 'researchability' of your topic,
- to enable you to become familiar with the appropriate academic style of writing, and
- to illustrate a 'gap' in current research (this will justify your proposed research).

The literature review should be selective; therefore, you do not need to read everything in your research area. In fact, this is an impossible task, even for specialised research projects in the field of language, gender and sexuality. Use library electronic databases to locate the literature you need for your review. Once you have located the relevant literature, skim read texts to find the most relevant sections and then read these more carefully. And remember to always keep a record of your literature searches and reading.

In writing a literature review, you are essentially constructing and justifying your argument. It is vitally important that your line of argument is clear to the reader. In order to achieve this, your review should contain both knowledge-based elements (showing you know the field) and argumentational elements (showing how your own research fills an existing gap and why this is important). Hart defines these elements as follows:

> Knowledge-based elements:
>
> - A description of previous work on the topic, identifying leading concepts, definitions and theories
> - Consideration of the ways in which definitions were developed and operationalized as solutions to problems seen in previous work
> - Identification and description of matters other researchers have considered important
>
> Argumentational elements:
>
> - A description of what you find wrong in previous work on the topic
> - A proposal for action that might solve the problem – your research
> - An explanation of the benefits that might result from adapting the proposal
> - A refutation of possible objections to the proposal
>
> (Hart, 2018: 174)

These are important points. A common misunderstanding of the purpose of a literature review is that it is simply an annotated bibliography. Instead, the literature review functions to enable you to begin to formulate the arguments that you make throughout the rest of the project. The review also helps you to identify a research gap and show how your own research contributes towards filling this gap. It also enables you to show that you can evaluate existing work in the field and make it relevant to your own research project.

Listed next are some references to literature reviews from studies in the field of language, gender and sexuality (specific page references for the literature review sections of each article are indicated in square brackets at the end of each reference). Look at how the authors construct the reviews so that they show both knowledge of existing work in the field and, at the same time, justify the selection of their own research topic.

Baudinette, T. (2017). Constructing identities on a Japanese gay dating site: Hunkiness, cuteness and the desire for heteronormative masculinity. *Journal of Language and Sexuality*, **6** (2), 232–261. [pp. 234–238]

Motschenbacher, M. (2018). Corpus linguistics in language and sexuality studies: Taking stock and looking ahead. *Journal of Language and Sexuality*, **7** (2), 145–174. [pp. 147–149]

Van Compernolle, R. (2009). What do women want? Linguistic equality and the feminization of job titles in contemporary France. *Gender and Language*, **3** (1), 33–52. [pp. 35–38]

Zimman, L. (2013). Hegemonic masculinity and the variability of gay-sounding speech: The perceived sexuality of transgender men. *Journal of Language and Sexuality*, **2** (1), 1–39. [pp. 3–11]

Because it has to be selective, it is sometimes difficult to know when your literature review is finished, and it can be tempting to carry on reading and writing about literature at the expense of other parts of the project. Remember that a literature review is never really 'finished' – you just need to reach a stage where the literature review does enough to contextualise your research sufficiently and clarify what research gap is being addressed.

Bell (2018: 133–135) provides a useful literature review checklist for a student research project, and this provides a good framework for guiding you through the process of preparing for and writing the literature review. More information about literature reviews can also be found in Hart (2018) and Ridley (2012) and in sections of the research methods books listed in the references at the end of this book.

Data collection methods

Having selected a research topic, devised research questions and critically reviewed relevant literature, the next step in designing your language, gender and sexuality research project is to think about the *data collection methods*. This initially involves thinking about issues such as what the data is (what form does it take – e.g. survey responses, interviews), how much data is going to be used, the population to be sampled (if appropriate), the context in which data will be collected and analysed and the way that the data will be analysed once it has been collected. As noted earlier, the research methods used at this stage will be informed by the research questions being asked in the project.

Here are some types of data which have been used in language, gender and sexuality research, with some examples of published studies that have used such data indicated in brackets (the full references to each cited study can be found at the end of the book). Read some of these published studies to further your understanding of how particular types of linguistic data can be used in language, gender and sexuality research.

- Questionnaire and survey response data (Jones et al., 2017)
- Interviews (Angouri, 2011; Baxter, 2012; Charteris-Black and Seale, 2009; Pawelczyk, 2017; Sauntson, 2012, 2018)
- Observation data (Pichler, 2008; Sauntson, 2012, 2018)
- Ethnographic field notes (Schneider, 2013; Serra, 2014; VanderStouwe, 2015)

- Multimodal texts (Bouvier, 2016; Brookes et al., 2016; Caldas-Coulthard and Moon, 2016; Hiramoto and Teo, 2015; Jaworski, 2016; Machin and van Leeuwen, 2016; Milani, 2013)
- Linguistic 'landscapes' (Milani, 2013)
- Spoken conversational data (naturally occurring) (Cameron, 1997; Coates, 1996, 2003, 2007; Jones, 2012; Kitzinger, 2005; Leap, 1996; Pichler, 2008; Sauntson and Morrish, 2012; Stokoe, 2008)
- Elicited spoken narratives (Zimman, 2013, 2015)
- Institutional interactional data (e.g. classrooms, courtrooms, workplaces) (Angouri, 2011; Baxter, 2010, 2012; Holmes, 2006; Holmes and Marra, 2011; Jones, 2000; Marra et al. 2006; Mcdowell, 2015; Mullany, 2011; Saito, 2013; Sauntson, 2012, 2018; Sunderland, 2004)
- Social media online interaction (Chen and Chang, 2015)
- Political texts (Atanga, 2012)
- Coming out stories (spoken or written) (Liang, 1997; Morrish and Sauntson, 2007; Zimman, 2009)
- Email communication (Mills, 2008)
- Textbooks and literature (Gill, 2014; Jones and Mills, 2014; Paiz, 2015; Ruano, 2018; Sunderland, 2004)
- Music lyrics (Casey, 2018; Eberhardt, 2016; Wambura, 2018)
- Written policies and procedures relating to gender/sexuality (Sundaram and Sauntson, 2015)
- Legal documents/texts relating to gender/sexuality (Baker, 2005; Ehrlich, 1998; Seals, 2012; VanderStouwe, 2013)
- Corpus data (Baker, 2005, 2008b, 2013; Harrington, 2008; Jaworska and Hunt, 2017; Paterson and Coffey-Glover, 2018; Zottola, 2018)
- TV programmes (transcribed dialogue) (Baker, 2005; Dlaske and Jantti, 2016; Kosetzi, 2008, 2013)
- Radio (transcribed dialogue) (van der Bom et al., 2015; Yoong, 2017)
- Advertisements (print, TV, radio, online, etc.) (Gill, 2007; Hiramoto and Teo, 2015; Lazar, 2014; Milani and Levon, 2016)
- Magazines (Benwell, 2003; Coffey-Glover, 2015; Eggins and Iedema, 1997; Gauntlett, 2008; Koller, 2008; Kosetzi and Polyzou, 2009; McLoughlin, 2000; Sunderland, 2004; Talbot, 1995, 2010; Turner, 2008)
- Newspapers (Baker, 2005; Baker and Levon, 2016; Litosseliti, 2006; Morrish and Sauntson, 2007)
- Online chatrooms (Bogetic, 2013; King, 2011, 2012; Mackenzie, 2018; Milani, 2013)
- Posters and signage (Milani and Levon, 2016)
- Product packaging (Sunderland, 2014)
- Websites (Caldas-Coulthard and Moon, 2016)

You could use any, or a combination, of these data types in a language, gender and sexuality research project of your own. And these are only suggestions – the previous list is not exhaustive. We will explore examples of projects using some of these different data types in more detail throughout other chapters in this book (including some of the studies listed earlier).

The data collection methods that you choose should enable you to answer your research question/s. They should also be feasible (i.e. ensure that you have the required access, time, equipment and technical skills to be able to collect your data without too many risks of data collection failure). It is also important to consider the ethical issues involved in data collection, especially given the sensitive nature of some of the topics in the field of language, gender and sexuality. We will consider ethical issues in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

Describing the methodology

When writing up your project, a general 'rule' is that the research methodology should be reported in such detail that the study can be replicated by anyone reading it. The methodology section of a research report usually contains the following sub-sections:

Participants – You only need to include this sub-section if you used human participants in your project. This may be, for example, through interviewing people, asking people to complete questionnaires or observing and recording them interacting. If you are including this section (i.e. if your project *does* involve human participants), then describe the relevant *characteristics* of your participants – e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, linguistic background. Provide information about the basis on which you selected the participants (e.g. was it a random population sample or were they selected for specified characteristics or roles?). Remember to protect the *anonymity* of participants by giving them the opportunity to be referred to by pseudonyms or other methods of concealing identity.

Materials – If relevant, include a description or copy of any research *instruments* used – e.g. survey, interview questions and so on.

Procedures – In this section, you should describe exactly what you did in undertaking the study. For example, if you used observation, what sort of role did you play as an observer? How did you set up the observation? If you used a survey, how was it designed and administered and so on?

Analysis – In this sub-section of the methodology, you should describe how you went about *analysing* the data. Give details of the analytical framework/s you used (some key frameworks are introduced in Chapter 4). This might include the frameworks examined throughout this book (e.g. CDA, MMDA, corpus linguistics). If your project involves the analysis of pre-existing texts (including multimodal texts), you will not need to include information about participants, materials or procedures, but you do need to explain how you analysed the data. You should also explain how and why you selected particular texts for analysis – in other words, provide a *justification* for your selection of texts.

There should also be a section in which you outline and address any relevant ethical issues. This is an important aspect of the methodology for any language, gender and sexuality project, so this is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

Ethical issues

Researchers have responsibilities to themselves and to other people who they engage with during the research process. The design, execution and writing up of research must take into account these responsibilities. It is your responsibility as a researcher to ensure that any potential risk or harm is minimised throughout the research and to identify ways to respect the rights of all those involved. The British Educational Research Association (BERA) have produced a detailed and very helpful set of guidelines for conducting ethical research in education, but these guidelines are easily applicable to any research in linguistics and the social sciences more broadly. I have taken most of the information in this section from these guidelines and adapted them to the content of language, gender and sexuality research. The guidelines are detailed, so my summary of key points in this section is fairly brief. But you can read the full version of the guidelines here: www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018. (The guidelines are usually updated every two years.)

BERA outlines the key ethical responsibilities of researchers as follows:

- Responsibilities to participants
- Responsibilities to sponsors, clients and stakeholders in research
- Responsibilities to community of researchers
- Responsibilities for publication and dissemination
- Responsibilities for researchers' well-being and development

(Adapted from BERA, 2018)

Responsibilities to participants involves respecting the rights, sensitivities and privacy of any people who contribute towards providing you with data. It is important to consider how to respect all aspects of your participants' identities and to avoid or minimise any stress or intrusion they may feel. The guidelines state,

> Individuals should be treated fairly, sensitively, and with dignity and freedom from prejudice, in recognition of both their rights and of differences arising from age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, nationality, cultural identity, partnership status, faith, disability, political belief or any other significant characteristic.
>
> (BERA, 2018: 6)

It is always necessary to obtain informed consent from anyone participating in your research. This means letting your participants know about your project and what it involves so that they can then make an informed decision about whether they are willing to participate. Page et al. (2014: 71) define informed consent as follows:

> Informed consent is the process by which researchers can allow participants to negotiate, document and agree their contribution to a research project.

Participants usually want to know what their participation will entail, how much time it will take, how you will maintain confidentiality and how any data relating to them will be stored. For participants under the age of 18, you will also need permission from a parent or an adult who has legal responsibility for them. It is good practice to provide participants with the right to remain anonymous if they wish and to anonymise other identities which may emerge during the research process (e.g. other people's names, names of organisations, pictures, voices that can be audibly identified and so on).

Informed consent should always be voluntary and, as a researcher, you should remain open to the possibility that participants may wish to withdraw their consent at any time without being obliged to provide you with a reason for this. This right to withdraw should be made clear to participants at the start of the data collection process. Informed consent requirements are, of course, more complex if your participants are children or are considered 'vulnerable' in some way. Vulnerable groups or individuals include those who are more open to exploitation than others.

These principles apply to data drawn from social media and online communities, as well as from face-to-face contexts. BERA reminds us that digital data is also generated by individuals, and so informed consent should still be obtained wherever possible. In cases such as these, it is important to remember that the producers of such data may not have considered the fact that it might be used for research purposes when they first produced it. BERA states clearly that 'seeking consent would not normally be expected for data that have been produced expressly for public use' (2018: 10), but they, nevertheless, urge researchers to consider consent issues and to pay attention to whether the data identifies specific individuals or organisations and the overall sensitivity of the data.

Researchers also have a responsibility to inform participants of the outcomes of the research. This may, for example, involve an informal debrief session or the production of a short report in accessible language which is written and sent to participants. Alternatively, a website could be set up through which the findings of the research could be shared.

At all stages, researchers have a responsibility to ensure the safe and secure storage of data (e.g. through secure computer networks, use of password protection and data encryption) and the confidential treatment of participants' identities. UK-based researchers must comply with the legal requirements relating to data storage as stipulated in the UK Data Protection Act (2018) and in the General Data Protection Regulation Guide (2018). These regulations mean that researchers are required to gain participants' consent for them to share their data with any third parties, and it also gives participants the right to have access to any personal data that is stored and which relates to them. Outside the UK, researchers must comply with the data protection laws of the country in which the research is being conducted.

Responsibilities to sponsors, clients and stakeholders is less likely to be an issue in student research projects. But this issue relates to research that has been sponsored or commissioned – in these cases, this needs to be made clear to participants and in any research reports. Sponsors also need to be acknowledged in the writing up of such research.

Ethical responsibilities to the community of researchers involves aiming to 'protect the integrity and reputation of [educational] research by ensuring that they conduct their research to the highest standards' (BERA, 2018: 29). This principle covers attribution and academic integrity. All text, images, diagrams, presentations and other forms of content taken from other sources need to be attributed accurately. Plagiarism refers to the 'unattributed use of text and/or data, presented as if they were by the plagiarist' (BERA, 2018: 30) and should always be avoided.

As a researcher, you also have an ethical responsibility for disseminating your research. As a student, this is likely to simply involve writing up the research in the form of assessed work. If you are an academic researcher, this could also involve writing up research for publication. In all cases, BERA recommends that research is written up in an accessible way which takes into account the needs and interests of the communities that were involved in the research (if applicable).

An often neglected dimension of ethical research is the responsibility for the researcher's own well-being and development, and this is sometimes particularly pertinent to language, gender and sexuality research. This dimension involves safeguarding the physical and emotional well-being of you, as a researcher. The institutions in which you are studying or working actually have a responsibility for safeguarding your welfare, so you have a right to ask them for advice about any aspect of research ethics, including those relating to your own well-being. Particular attention should be paid to safety if you are undertaking fieldwork in a specific context or if the research involves addressing sensitive issues. This may arise in language, gender and sexuality research if, for example, the research involves exploring potentially sensitive issues, such as hate crimes, sexual offences, sexuality-related issues and discriminatory language. In these cases, it is best to seek advice from your institution or from organisations, such as the International Gender and Language Association (https://igalaweb.wixsite.com/igala) or the British Association of Applied Linguistics special interest group for language, gender and sexuality (www.baal.org.uk/what-we-do/special-interest-groups/).

In addition to the detailed BERA guidelines cited throughout this section, you can read more about research ethics in applied linguistics research by referring to the relevant sections in any of the research methods books provided in the references at the end of the book. If you are using online or social media data for your project, Page et al.'s (2014) book contains a useful chapter dedicated to conducting ethical research using this kind of data.

Although very little has been written specifically about research ethics in language, gender and sexuality research, one source comes from Kohler Mortensen (2015) who provides a detailed and insightful discussion of the ethical issues involved in researching intimate spontaneous interactional data in a heterosexual online dating context. Kohler Mortensen focuses particularly on gaining informed consent from participants in that context, given that it is notoriously difficult for researchers to access human subjects' romantic and sexual interactions in ways that feel safe and unobtrusive to both participants and researchers. Kohler Mortensen's project involves participant observation of offline dating interaction, which is then supplemented with online content taken from two Danish heterosexual dating sites. She emphases the importance of considering issues of power in such research and argues for respecting and prioritising participants' agency in producing their own informed consent. Kohler Mortensen's article contains a very useful section on 'informed consent' with specific reference to language and sexuality research. She outlines how informed consent includes three dimensions:

1 That participants are provided with knowledge about the research project
2 That participants can decide voluntarily
3 That participants have the competence to make a qualified choice

Furthermore, Kohler Mortensen points out that sensitivity to context is of paramount importance in language and sexuality research. As we have already seen, attitudes towards sexual and gender diversity vary widely across different contexts so research that may pose few ethical issues in one context may be extremely complex, or simply not possible, in another (in contexts where homosexuality is illegal, for example).

Ethical issues may appear to be numerous and often complex in language, gender and sexuality research, but they need not be overwhelming. BERA emphasise a key principle underpinning all considerations of research ethics – that research 'should aim to maximise benefit and minimise harm' (2018: 4). This basic principle is worth bearing in mind and returning to at all stages throughout the design and conduct of any research project in language, gender and sexuality. Doing so should ensure that you adhere appropriately to ethical guidelines. And, if in doubt, ask for advice or consult the references included within this chapter and at the end of the book.

Other sources of information for research ethics

American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL). *Ethics Guidelines*. www.aaal.org/ethics-guidelines (Accessed 1 April 2019)

British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL). *Recommendations on Good Practice in Applied Linguistics*. https://baal.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/goodpractice_full_2016.pdf (Accessed 1 April 2019)

British Educational Research Association (BERA). *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (4th edition). www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018 (Accessed 1 April 2019)

Cameron, D., Frazer, E., Harvey, P., Rampton, B. and Richardson, K. (1993). Ethics, advocacy and empowerment: Issues of method in researching language. *Language and Communication*, **13** (2), 81–94.

Markham, A. and Buchanan, E. (2012). *Ethical Decision-Making and Internet Research: Version 2*. https://aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf (Accessed 1 April 2019)

McKee, H. and Porter, J. (2009). *The Ethics of Internet Research: A Rhetorical, Case-Based Approach*. New York: Peter Lang.

Whiteman, N. (2012). *Undoing Ethics: Rethinking Practice in Online Research*. New York: Springer.

Study questions and activities

1. Once you have decided on a research topic, explain how your topic is original and valuable.
2. What are the main ethical considerations you will need to address when planning and carrying out your research project? Use the sources cited earlier to help you to identify these issues. Once you have identified the ethical issues, explain how you will address each one.
3. What are the main practical/feasibility issues you will need to consider when planning your own research project (e.g. time, resources, data access, skills required)?
4. When you know what kind of data you want to collect and analyse for your project, read a relevant study from the list in the 'Data Collection Methods' section, and write a short evaluative summary about how the author/s collected and analysed their data set. In this summary, think about the following questions:

   a. Did the author/s collect enough data to adequately answer their research questions?
   b. Was the analysis of data sufficient for enabling the author/s to illustrate and support their main arguments?
   c. What things can you learn from reading about this study that you could apply to your own research project?

4 An overview of analytical frameworks

Once you have planned your project and decided what sort of data you want to work with, you will then need to think about how to analyse the data in ways that enable you to answer your research questions. This chapter introduces some of the most commonly used analytical frameworks in contemporary language, gender and sexuality research. Whilst this chapter contains explanations of each framework, *applications* of the frameworks within particular empirical studies are explored in subsequent chapters. Based broadly on Harrington et al.'s (2008) volume, which maps key methodologies in the field, the chapter defines, explains and exemplifies the following frameworks: conversation analysis, corpus linguistics, (feminist) critical discourse analysis (F/CDA), feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis, multimodal CDA, linguistic landscapes (LL) and sociolinguistics. All of these (and other) frameworks can sit within broader approaches, such as QL (introduced in Chapter 2). Whilst queer theory and queer linguistics can orient the researcher theoretically (which then helps to identify the priorities and purposes of the research), the analytical frameworks can then offer ways of looking at language in specific data sets in order to realise those theoretical priorities.

In other reading, you will probably find some other frameworks used and referred to. Within the limited space of this book, it is not possible to provide overviews of every analytical method available within the field – what is presented in this chapter and throughout the book are the main frameworks that are most commonly covered on undergraduate modules in British universities at the time of writing and which are used in the studies referred to in subsequent chapters. Other volumes, for example, include more extensive information about variationist sociolinguistics, sociophonetics and linguistic anthropological approaches to the study of language, gender and sexuality (e.g. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2013; Ehrlich et al., 2014). But these sources concurrently do not include some of the approaches included in this and other books. No volume is entirely comprehensive in its coverage of the analytical frameworks used in the field. If you find that you want to use a framework not covered in this chapter (or throughout the book), please refer to other published textbooks included in the references at the end of this book. The frameworks that follow are simply presented in alphabetical order for ease of reference.

Conversation analysis (CA)

Conversation analysts are interested in uncovering the tacit rules which regulate everyday, spontaneous conversation. CA focuses upon analysing the details of conversation structure and management. So in relation to gender and sexuality, CA provides a framework for analysing spoken data and analyses how conversational features contribute to the discursive construction of gender and sexual identities as they unfold during the course of conversations.

Conversation analysts work with *actual real-life instances* of talk-in-interaction. The main aim of CA is to describe the basic characteristics of talk-in-interaction. The analytic procedure depends on the repeated inspection of recorded naturalistic data (either ordinary everyday conversation or institutional talk in settings, such as courts, classrooms or doctors' surgeries). A key interest in CA is not in talk as *language* but in talk as *action*. Kitzinger (2008) outlines the interactional features examined when applying CA as including the overall structural organisation of the interaction, turn design and turn-taking organisation, storytelling in conversation, repair and error correction, lexical choice, person reference and forms of linguistic asymmetry. CA-influenced research on gender and sexuality includes Kitzinger (2005), Land and Kitzinger (2005), McIlvenny (2002), Speer (2005), Speer and Stokoe (2011), Stokoe (2000, 2010), Stokoe and Weatherall (2002) and Tainio (2003).

In a similar way to other frameworks introduced in this chapter, the questions asked by contemporary CA move beyond a preoccupation with gender difference to an exploration of how gender and sexuality are produced and reproduced in interaction (i.e. consistent with underlying theoretical principles of discourse-based approaches, queer theory and QL). The focus is on how participants themselves use language to make gender and sexuality relevant to the context in which the interaction is taking place. Kitzinger (2008: 136) summarises that CA offers 'a powerful, systematic and contextually sensitive analytic method grounded in co-interactants *own* practices and actions' which 'may enable us better to understand where and how gender is oriented to and achieved in talk'. Although Kitzinger only looks at gender in her own work, these same principles can be applied to the use of CA for analysing sexuality in conversation. The specific CA-oriented studies examined through this book include the following:

Coates (1996) (2003) – Chapter 5
Jones (2012) – Chapter 5
Leap (1996) – Chapter 5
Stokoe (2008) – Chapter 5

Corpus linguistics

Sinclair (1991: 171) defines a corpus as 'a collection of naturally occurring language text, chosen to characterize a state or variety of a language'. Corpus linguistics is a largely quantitative method which involves using a computer-held body of naturalised texts, and a range of computerised methods, to explore aspects of language use. McEnery and Hardie (2012: 1–2) define corpus linguistics as:

> a group of methods for studying language [. . .] dealing with some set of machine-readable texts

An advantage of using corpus linguistics is that it enables us to make observations about language use which go beyond intuition and, because it is computer-based, it allows the exploration of patterns of language use which are not observable to the human eye. The more quantitative methods of corpus linguistics are well-placed to identify repeated patterns across large stretches of text. Indeed, a concern which has been levelled at critical approaches to language analysis, such as F/CDA (see the next section) is that the analysis can be biased. If analysts set out to find evidence of particular kinds of discrimination or inequality in texts, this potentially leaves the analyst open to the criticism that they will simply find what they are looking for and will make the analysis fit their own political agenda. Analysts may also be selective in terms of only presenting texts which support and illustrate the kinds of inequality they have been focusing on – it may be the case that many similar texts are not discursively imbued with the inequality but can be conveniently ignored by the analyst. Baker et al. (2013) suggest that one way of reducing this potential bias is to combine F/CDA with more 'objective' methods of analysis. Baker (2008b) has argued that corpus linguistics and CDA can be used productively together and that using a combined approach can go a long way to addressing some of the criticisms which have been levelled at both approaches when they are used in isolation.

In language, gender and sexuality research, the specific corpus techniques commonly used are word frequency lists, keywords and concordance analyses, available using software programmes such as Wordsmith Tools (Scott, 2014) and AntConc (Anthony, 2019). Word frequencies can be a useful starting point for word-based corpus analysis as they can begin to reveal information about themes within the texts comprising the corpus. Over-wording and absences can also be revealed through the application of word frequency analysis. This can then provide a basis for further analysis.

Another corpus method commonly used in language, gender and sexuality research is the analysis of keywords. Scott (2014) defines a 'keyword' as a word that occurs in a corpus more often than would normally be expected when compared to another corpus. A keyword list is another useful starting point for word-based corpus analysis as it can begin to reveal information about themes and discursive priorities within the texts comprising the corpus. As Baker explains,

> A keywords analysis operates by comparing expected/unexpected frequencies rather than small/large frequencies. Therefore, words that appear a relatively small number of times can still be key, as long as there is a significant difference in their expected frequencies.
>
> (Baker, 2005: 160)

Stubbs (2001: 48), cited in Mautner (2009: 100), defines keywords as 'nodes around which ideological battles are fought'. Examining keywords can highlight unexpected, or marked, frequencies in the corpus, rather than just the high frequency words, and this can be quite revealing in terms of the more unusual meanings and trends presented in the corpus. A keyword analysis requires the corpus under scrutiny to be compared with a 'reference corpus' which is a larger and more general corpus. This might be, for example, the British National Corpus (www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/) or the Corpus of Contemporary American English (www.english-corpora.org/coca/). It is standard practice in corpus linguistics to remove the grammatical words from a keyword list so that the words presented are the lexical, or content, words. This is done in the empirical studies discussed in Chapter 5–9 which make use of corpus linguistics.

A next stage commonly used in corpus analysis is to consider the semantic environment of some lexical items by looking at their collocations. Sinclair (1991: 170) defines collocation as 'the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text'. Examining a word's collocations can help to build up a semantic profile of that word, which can contribute to revealing any underlying discourses and ideologies in the corpus. Collocation can be either lexical or grammatical, with lexical collocation involving an exploration of the lexical words co-occurring with the node word in question and grammatical collocation involving looking at the grammatical categories of words found in the semantic environment of the node word (the 'node word' refers to the specific lexical item under investigation). Examining a word's concordances (a specified number of words to the left and right of the search term) can help to build up a semantic profile of the collocations of that word, which can contribute to revealing any underlying discourses and ideologies in the corpus. Using keyword and concordance analysis together can provide a fairly good overview of the main themes, discourses and ideologies prevalent in the corpus. Stubbs (1996) argues that the semantic patternings revealed by these techniques can contribute to the production of certain discourses in the corpus, and he defines a discourse as 'recurrent phrases and conventional ways of talking, which circulate in the social world, and which form a constellation of repeated meanings' (Stubbs, 1996: 158). These points are supported by Mautner (2009), who provides a comprehensive discussion of the mutual benefits of combining corpus linguistics with CDA. Corpus linguistics, therefore, is a helpful way of revealing particular discourses around gender and sexuality as they are embodied in texts.

When used in combination with CDA (see the next section), corpus linguistics also facilitates a critical analysis of large amounts of text and, therefore, enables a critical analysis of language *patterns* to be conducted. Baker (2008b), Baker et al. (2013), and Motschenbacher (2018) have written extensively on the combination of corpus linguistics and CDA and have examined in detail how corpus linguistics can be used to enhance and support the claims made through the application of CDA. Some language, gender and sexuality studies which have used corpus linguistics (either as the sole framework or in combination with others), and which will be outlined later in this book, include the following:

Baker (2005) – Chapter 6
Baker (2008a, 2008b) – Chapter 6
Bogetic (2013) – Chapter 6
King (2011) – Chapter 6
Milani (2013) – Chapter 6
Baker (2014) – Chapter 8
Zottola (2018) – Chapter 8
Sundaram and Sauntson (2015) – Chapter 9

(Feminist) Critical Discourse Analysis (F/CDA)[1]

The explanation of this framework is a little longer than the others, primarily because it has been used so extensively within contemporary language, gender and sexuality research[2] and, therefore, has come to feature heavily in the field. As we have already seen, early language and gender work has come under criticism for having a tendency to espouse the view that language is simply reflective of gender. Criticisms of viewing language as merely reflective of aspects of society, such as gender and sexuality, centre on the idea that 'society' is not just something that is 'out there' waiting to be reflected in various modes of communication and practice. An alternative viewpoint is that we, as language users, can actively shape and construct society through the language we use. As Fowler argues (1991: 62), 'Language is a reality-creating practice'. In fact, language is so powerful that it can actually misrepresent and distort the 'truth' of what actually happens in society and the social relationships and practices that we engage in. It is ideas such as these that form the basis of what has come to be known as 'CDA'. This analytical framework is concerned with social inequalities and the ways in which these inequalities become not only encoded but also constructed and perpetuated through particular uses of language. However, CDA can also be helpful to investigating how social inequalities may be resisted and challenged through language.

Fairclough (2001) argues that exploring the relationship between texts, interactions and contexts is a key principle of CDA, with a specific focus on how power is enacted and reflected through language. As explained in Chapter 1, ideologies which prevail in the wider social context in which texts circulate become inscribed in texts, often in subtle ways. Thus, CDA may be used to uncover ideologies about gender and sexuality which are embedded in texts. In this way, the principles underlying the framework, based on questioning 'naturalised' ideologies, are similar to the theoretical principles of queer theory and QL. Therefore, CDA, as an analytical framework, sits comfortably within overarching queer theoretical approaches to language, gender and sexuality research. Although individual CDA-based studies may differ in their focus and in terms of the specific language features analysed, what they have in common is a socially transformative goal.

Proponents of CDA argue that it is a diverse approach containing different 'strands' of analysis, which arguably may include other frameworks. Wodak and Meyer (2001) note that there is no monolithic CDA, rather it can incorporate different elements and analytic approaches, depending on the data, context and purpose of study. But what all types of CDA share in common is a concern with ideologies and power and the ways in which they are achieved, reinforced and contested through language (and other semiotic resources). CDA is, therefore, explicitly concerned with social injustice, power struggles and in/equalities and with examining the role that discourse plays in constructing, reifying and contesting these issues.

CDA is rooted in critical linguistics and early work, informed largely by Marxist theory, tended to be concerned with the effects of capitalism, social class and power relations. Such work was criticised by some language and gender scholars (Cameron, 2001; Lazar, 2005) for downplaying gender issues and failing to consider how feminist theory could usefully be incorporated into CDA as a means of interrogating gendered power relations. This led to the development of a body of work termed 'F/CDA' (Lazar, 2005), and it is this strand of CDA which most directly informs much work in the field of language, gender and sexuality.

CDA, including the subsidiary field of F/CDA, attempts to uncover processes of social control and sources of ideology in texts, most notably texts which circulate in institutions such as schools, workplaces and the media. Many texts, produced by and for consumption by members of society, are ideologically laden. CDA examines texts with a view to uncovering the 'hidden' meanings and implicit ideologies, which they create, support and uphold. In relation to gender and sexuality, the hidden meanings tend to be concerned with the way language is used to construct ideologies around gender and sexuality. Those ideologies are 'naturalised' in that it seems as though they are naturally occurring rather than discursively constructed. This works not through single or occasional instances of particular kinds of language use, but through the repeated and systematic patterning of language. This argument is similar to Butler's (1990) idea of particular performances of gender accruing greater power through their continual repetition over time – they come to be seen as 'natural' simply because the performances are repeated so routinely. In analysing these patterns, Cameron (2001) urges us to pay attention not only to the surface features of language (*what* is said or written) but also to more subtle underlying features, presuppositions and patterns (*how* certain things are said or written). For this reason, the kind of linguistic analysis used at a descriptive level within CDA needs to be systematic and able to identify repeated patterns across stretches of text.

Lazar (2005) states that one of the key aims of F/CDA as being to show that social practices which may appear to be neutral and natural are actually gendered in ways which sustain a patriarchal social order in the wider socio-political context. She argues that dominant relations of power systematically privilege men as a social group and disadvantage and exclude women. The work of F/CDA is to uncover how this is achieved discursively with the idea that understanding is a pre-cursor to social transformation. Although Lazar's initial outline of F/CDA does not explicitly address sexuality, the same principles can be applied. Recent work has started to apply F/CDA to a more explicit analysis of sexual identities in discourse (Koller, 2008; Pakula et al., 2015; Pawelczyk and Pakula, 2015).

To illustrate the approach, let's take a look at an application of the framework to an advertisement. An excellent source for advertisement texts is The Advertising Archives website – www.advertisingarchives.co.uk/en/page/show_home_page.html (Figure 4.1).

In the Iceland advert noted earlier, one of the main ideologies being conveyed in this text is concerned with gendered relations of power. It is only 'mums' who go to Iceland, because 'mums' (i.e. women) have primary responsibility for domestic duties, such as grocery shopping. There is no mention of 'dads' going to Iceland. So this ideology clearly places women in the domestic sphere and assigns an identity to them which is primarily centred on raising and caring for children and looking after the home. This, of course, is not a true reflection of society. It constructs a very partial (and actually very old-fashioned) view of gender relations within heterosexual familial contexts. Despite the fact that many women have jobs and careers, the women in these texts are not represented in those domains – they are restricted to the domestic domain (home, garden, supermarket, etc.). Although gender ideologies are perhaps the most obvious ones which are conveyed in this text, there are also other ideologies in operation. I have yet to see an Iceland advert in which the actors are not white. They are always able-bodied, and the more recent adverts have featured wealthy female celebrities. So what we have is a partial representation

Figure 4.1 Iceland advertisement

Source: Reproduced courtesy of The Advertising Archives – www.advertisingarchives.co.uk/detail/53385/1/TV-Advert-Grab/Iceland/2000s of society along dimensions of gender, race, class, sexuality and dis/ability. This would not be so much of an issue if it did not happen so frequently. The problem is, of course, that these partial representations are extremely common in media texts (and other types of text) and circulate repeatedly and widely. It is also the repeated *absence* of non-white, non-heterosexual, disabled and working-class (of the non-celebrity variety!) representations that uphold these ideologies. The cumulative effect of this is, ultimately, to perpetuate the social and cultural ideology of white, able-bodied, wealthy, heterosexual nuclear family, and 'traditional' gender relations' as the norm – a kind of 'ideal' construction which everyone is encouraged to aspire to.

Why, then, are such ideologies so difficult to challenge, or even to recognise? Many people regularly consume these texts without ever questioning the partial and unequal representations that they convey. Foucault (1990) partially answers this question by arguing that we, as 'subjects', are constituted through ever-shifting and unstable power relations. And power relations are upheld and perpetuated in particular contexts not through force or coercion, but through our own *consent*. We do not challenge them because, most of the time, we simply do not recognise them. Gramsci's notion of *hegemony* is useful here. Hegemony refers to the processes by which we internalise the norms and values of the dominant social order in any given context. The norms and values are so imbued with power and are so pervasive that they appear as if they are 'natural' and complete, rather than constructed and partial (another commonality with Butler's concept of 'naturalisation' in her performativity theory). The views of gender conveyed in the Iceland adverts are a good example of hegemony. What is conveyed in those texts is a hegemonic view of gender relations – the view is so powerful and pervasive that it almost seems 'natural' for women to be the domestic caregivers. In reality, this is a fiction that has simply been constructed over time through dominant social discourses. It is these (often very complex) processes of social power, ideology and identity that F/CDA seeks to explore and uncover by focusing on the role that language plays. Importantly, Lazar (2005) notes that hegemonic structures themselves are never static and are, therefore, always susceptible to challenge and resistance. In order for any sort of social hegemony to be maintained, it must be able to adapt over time to social changes. This creates a tension between hegemonic structures as powerful and resilient but, at the same time, fragile and open to contestation.

F/CDA, then, takes inequality based on gender and sexuality, rather than variation, as its starting point and aims to expose those inequalities through linguistic analysis. And in exposing inequalities, it hopes to challenge them. Some of the key questions asked by F/CDA are as follows:

1 What are the power relations between participants in the discourse?
2 Whose world is being represented in the discourse? What is the predominant ideology in the discourse, and how is that ideology being represented and constructed through language?

Various types of linguistic analysis are used to uncover these power relations and ideologies. The main author who has contributed to developing detailed and systematic frameworks for the critical analysis of language is Fairclough, so it is useful to spend some time outlining key elements of his framework.

Fairclough's CDA framework

Fairclough (2001) famously devised a three-layered model of discourse in which 'discourse' consists of three dimensions:

> *Text*
>
> Texts have formal features (linguistic and visual): these are traces of how they were produced and cues for their interpretation (texts have only meaning potential – their meanings are not fixed).
>
> *Discursive practices*
>
> The text is a resource for the interaction between writer and reader – i.e. the processes of text production and interpretation. How a particular text is interpreted will depend on the resources that people bring to it – their knowledge of the conventions of a particular type of discourse and their knowledge of the social world, their values, their beliefs and their ideologies.
>
> *Social/cultural practices*
>
> Processes of text production and interpretation are part of wider sociocultural practices and/or processes of change. They take place within specific social and institutional conditions and are shaped by social structures.

As well as providing a three-layered model of discourse, Fairclough provides an overlaying three-part system of analysis for investigating the three dimensions of discourse. He refers to these three layers of analysis as: description, interpretation and explanation (Fairclough, 2001: 21–22), and they are defined as follows:

> ***Description*** is the stage which is concerned with analysing the formal properties of the text (e.g. vocabulary, grammar, text structure). This stage of analysis maps onto the *text* dimension of discourse. There are various formal linguistic features which can be focused on in the description stage, such as (but not limited to) lexical items, metaphors, evaluative language (e.g. semantic fields and adjectives), intertextual references and grammatical and syntactic structures.

Interpretation is concerned with exploring the relationship between text and interaction – with seeing the text as the product of a process of production and as a resource in the process of interpretation. Texts do not just appear in a vacuum. They are both produced and received by language users who are performing specific roles, engaging in certain practices and holding particular views and beliefs which all affect how the text is produced and received. This stage of analysis focuses on the *discursive practices* dimension of discourse – what goes on around the text itself. Specific questions asked at the interpretation stage of analysis might include the following:

What assumptions about social identities are represented as 'common sense'?
What assumptions about shared knowledge are being made?
What social relations of power are being taken for granted?
What use is made of *intertextuality* (explicit and implicit references to other texts)?
Whose voices are heard in the text and how?

Explanation is concerned with examining the relationship between the text, its immediate context of interaction and its wider social context. Explanation involves examining how the discursive practices which surround the text's production and reception are linked to much broader social and cultural ideologies. The explanation stage of analysis maps onto the *social/cultural practices* dimension of discourse. Specific questions asked at the explanation stage of analysis might include the following:

How is the discourse determined by social structures?
(How) is the discourse aimed at sustaining or changing these structures?

Even though Fairclough did not have gender and sexuality in mind when he devised this framework, it has subsequently been used and applied extensively in studies that make use of F/CDA. It is the uncovering of ideological representations and enactments of gender, then, which lie at the heart of F/CDA.

Some language, gender and sexuality studies which have used F/CDA, and which will be outlined later in this book, include the following:

Litosseliti (2006) – Chapter 5
Sauntson (2012) (2018) – Chapter 5
Benwell (2003) – Chapter 6
McLoughlin (2000, 2017) – Chapter 6
Page and Sauntson – Chapter 6 and Chapter 9
Sunderland (2004) – Chapter 6
Turner (2008) – Chapter 6

Feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis

There is a great degree of overlap between F/CDA and feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis (FPDA). However, there are some differences between the two frameworks, which is why I am introducing them separately. Baxter, who developed the framework, (2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2008) describes FPDA as a 'supplementary' approach in that it values a multi-perspectival approach and should be used in conjunction with other methods. Baxter (2008: 245) defines FPDA as follows:

> An approach to analysing intertextualised discourses in spoken interaction and other types of text. It draws upon the poststructuralist principles of complexity, plurality, ambiguity, connection, recognition, diversity, textual playfulness, functionality and transformation.

Like F/CDA, FPDA moves away from focusing predominantly on the structural details of texts and resists notions that meanings are only embedded within textual structures. But FPDA has a less overtly political agenda than CDA. Whilst CDA's work on gender has an avowedly ideological agenda and a commitment to focusing on social problems and working on behalf of oppressed groups, FPDA downplays this element in its approach. Rather than focusing on issues concerning power and explicitly advocating an emancipatory agenda, FPDA does not presume, in an a priori way, that women as a social group category are necessarily going to emerge as powerless. Instead, it views gendered subject positions as complex, shifting and multiply located. There are competing discourses of gender in any given context, and the interplay between discourses means that speakers can continually fluctuate between subject positions on a matrix of powerfulness and powerlessness. Having a degree of *agency*, individuals can recognise how and through which discourses they are being 'positioned', and they can then take up or resist particular subject positions.

Importantly, FPDA aims to 'release the words of marginalised or minority speakers' (Baxter, 2002a: 9) and entails giving space to marginalised or silenced voices in localised interactions. CDA does this too, but FPDA often places more emphasis on this aspect of its analysis. Baxter's analyses have focused, for example, upon certain girls who say little in classroom settings. This ultimately allows for a greater richness and variety of debate, discussion and freedom to speak from all social groups, not just those that are heard more often and are, in that sense, considered to be more dominant.

Specific analytical methods in FPDA include an analysis of what Bakhtin (1981) terms 'polyphony' (competing voices) in discourse. In focusing on competing voices, FPDA is not simply concerned with identifying discourses but focuses more on how discourses interact, how they variously position speakers in relation to other discourses and how speakers shift between subject positions. Baxter (2002a), for example, examines how competing gender discourses are sometimes produced in the context of public speaking in the classroom. This kind of analysis focuses more critically on the contextualised emergence of (multiple) gendered discourses, competing discourses and interplay between subject positions. For example, Baxter identifies the use of humour to construct some speakers as confident and popular and as a means of gaining peer approval, which leads to the emergence of a 'peer approval discourse'. And she notes that the speakers' own unelicited references to gender contribute simultaneously to the construction of a 'gender differentiation discourse'.

In sum, FPDA enables a more explicit examination of how participants may move between dominant and marginalised discourses. Importantly, FPDA stresses that individuals have agency – they are able to recognise, take up or resist positionings. Within a F/CDA framework, a greater emphasis is often placed on social structures which position individuals within matrices of power. A starting point for F/CDA is usually a set of social problems or issues, whereas this is not necessarily the case for FPDA. Data is presented from Baxter's (2010, 2012) and Angouri's (2011) studies of workplace interaction in Chapter 5, where we will look at how both authors make use of elements of FPDA in their analysis.

Linguistic landscapes

Linguistic landscapes (LL) are an approach based on the premise that any language use is always situated in physical or virtual 'space' and that the characteristics of that place need to be considered when attributing meaning to language. Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) define LL as focusing on visual language as it is inscribed in, or publicly displayed on, the landscape. In other words, LL brings together the *verbal* and the *visual* and examines their interrelationships. Landry and Bourhis (1997: 25) state that linguistic landscape research aims to analyse the 'language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, commercial shop signs, and public signs'. King (2012) adds that this should also include oral discourse as part of the landscapes. Within the approach, language and other modalities of meaning do not simply sit within a landscape; rather, social actors are continually engaged in performatively constituting place itself.

Jaworski and Thurlow (2010: 3) define 'landscape' as a broad concept 'pertaining to how we view and interpret space in ways that are contingent on geographical, social, economic, legal, cultural and emotional circumstances'. Thus, the idea of landscape is not only physical or geographical but also positioned within spheres of social and cultural practice. In LL work, landscape can be viewed as a 'text' and analysed as such. Although there is much overlap between LL and MMDA (see the following section), LL differs in that multimodal texts can be situated *within* broader LL. Furthermore, the same multimodal text may take on different meanings when it is positioned within different landscapes.

King (2011) further argues that landscapes can be online or virtual, as well as physical. Indeed, much of King's research focuses on analysing language, sexuality and cyberspace (King's study is discussed in Chapter 5). Space is not just physical and is also not neatly bounded. More recently, Milani and Levon (2016) note that LL work has broadened the boundaries of the 'linguistic' even more so that it now encompasses visual images, smells, tastes, materiality and corporeality and looks at how all of these elements of the landscape in question combine to create meaning.

Like early CDA work, Milani notes that early LL work (e.g. Jaworski and Thurlow, 2010; Landry and Bourhis, 1997) also overlooked gender and sexuality. The approach is valuable to the field because LL can produce gender and sexuality ideologies. Milani (2014), for example, uses LL in his study of 'sexed signs' in a university landscape. Milani defines 'banal sexed signs' as 'those mundane semiotic aggregates, which, precisely because of their fleeting character, can easily be ignored, but, nonetheless, (re)produce and/or contest particular ideas and beliefs about gender and sexuality' (Milani, 2014: 204). The kinds of examples Milani provides are stickers on office doors, T-shirts and posters in corridors, all of which contain both linguistic and visual elements and are situated and, therefore, interpreted, within the physical space of the university. Milani points out, quite rightly, that LL overlaps with MMDA in many ways. The former focuses more on how language and other modes function to *constitute* the space itself.

Another gender and sexuality-focused LL study comes from Piller (2010), who focuses on the highly visible sex industry in the Swiss city of Basel. Piller observes that the sexualisation of public space is largely restricted to travel spaces in the city, such as the airport, central station, checkpoints and public transport. These spaces are significant, as Basel is an international centre for conference travel. Piller's data comes from shop fronts, advertising in local newspapers, prostitutes', nightclubs' and escort agencies' websites and clients' blogs. Piller concludes that sexualisation of women is one way to visibly mark a space as travel related. Furthermore, the sexualisation of space does not simply follow the international conference and exhibition facilities of the city but is actually seen as enhancing its appeal as a conference destination.

Another gender and sexuality-focused study which makes use of a LL framework is that of Milani and Levon (2016); this is discussed in Chapter 6.

Multimodal discourse analysis (MMDA)

Whilst traditional and F/CDA, as well as FPDA, focus predominantly upon language, Rogers (2011) notes that discourse can be understood as a multimodal practice which reflects and constructs the social world through different communicative modes. Machin and Mayr (2012) also observe that meaning is communicated through other semiotic modes as well as language. Language is just one amongst many resources for meaning making. Other resources include music, gesture, still or moving images and three-dimensional objects. Different semiotic modes, with language, can all be drawn into a coherent meaning-making whole. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 20) define 'multimodality', therefore, as 'the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined'. MMDA examines the specific ways in which these modes of communicative resources are *combined* in the production of particular texts and this is an analytical approach that has been used in some language, gender and sexuality studies.

Taking a critical approach to the analysis of multimodal texts, then, involves analysing the multimodal features in order to uncover the values and ideologies underlying the multimodal choices made by the text producer, and these values and ideologies include those relating to gender and sexuality. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) and Kress (2011) have done extensive work on applying CDA to semiotic modes of communication other than language. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) develop a detailed and systematic descriptive framework, informed by a social semiotic theory of representation, that can be used as a tool for visual analysis. This work has also been developed by O'Halloran (2004), who specifically explores how systemic functional linguistics can inform the multimodal analysis of a range of texts. Machin and Mayr (2012) go on to explain,

> Both text and image can be thought of as being composed of communicative choices by authors that seek to do certain kinds of work for them. The job of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis is to identify and reveal these choices [. . .] Texts will use linguistic and visual strategies that appear normal or neutral on the surface, but which may in fact be ideological and seek to shape the representation of events and persons for particular ends.
>
> (Machin and Mayr, 2012: 9–10)

MMDA in relation to language, gender and sexuality then seeks to 'denaturalise' gender and sexuality representations as they are manifested through a range of modes of communication. It is interested in examining the ideological motivations behind particular semiotic choices and how those choices communicate power relations. Wodak and Meyer (2009) suggest that any form of CDA, including MMDA, can take into account features such as how texts are designed, their use of statistics, photographs and pictures, as well as layout and the use of symbols alongside the linguistic elements of texts. Like in F/CDA, they also encourage attention to be paid to any topics which are conspicuous by their absence. Examples of studies on language, gender and sexuality which use MMDA include Eggins and Iedema's (1997) study of women's lifestyle magazines and Caldas-Coulthard and Moon's (2016) study of media representations of grandmothers. The latter is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Sociolinguistics

Whilst 'sociolinguistics' does not refer to an 'analytical framework' as such, it is a broad sub-field of linguistics which has a set of established methodologies that have been applied to studies of language and gender, and language and sexuality. In fact, sociolinguistics often make use of a range of frameworks, including some of those discussed earlier, such as CA, F/CDA and FPDA. Within the field, there is a widely accepted distinction between 'variationist' sociolinguistics and 'interactional/ist' sociolinguistics. These two strands of sociolinguistics tend to differ in terms of their purposes, methodologies and the way they approach 'categories' or units of linguistic analysis.

In variationist sociolinguistics, categories (e.g. gender and sexual orientation categories) are pre-determined at the start of the research. Variationist studies tend to make use of quantitative methods, such as surveys and quantifiable phonetic and grammatical methods of analysis which examine linguistic features in terms of frequency. These approaches place an emphasis on the collection and analysis of data sets that it is then claimed can be representative of the speech of members of the community that is being researched. And the analysis tends to focus on establishing correlations between linguistic variables and the gender or sexual orientation categories of the speakers. A criticism of variationist studies is that they use very broad categories when grouping speakers, often in quite an uncritical way which assumes gender and sexuality identities are clear-cut and static. Whilst variationist studies can be very useful for providing evidence of sociolinguistic patterns of gender and language use, they do not provide *explanations* for those patterns. As Eckert (2009: 137) explains,

> If we want to get at explanations for the patterns we see, we need to get closer to the social practices in which the patterns are created.
>
> (Eckert, 2009: 137)

Interactionist approaches, on the other hand, focus more on naturally occurring speech with greater importance being placed on the context in which speech is produced. There is greater interest in the various *meanings* and *functions* of the language being analysed, not just the distributions of different language *forms*. Interactionist sociolinguistics also emphasises and explores the role of language in managing social relationships between speakers and makes greater use of qualitative and ethnographic methods. Interactionist approaches do not use traditional survey methods which had dominated previous variationist studies. Instead, they use ethnographic methods which involve the researcher interacting with the community of speakers they are studying. In interactionist approaches, gender and sexuality (and other) categories are not treated as pre-existing but are constructed *through* the linguistic interaction itself. In this way, these approaches are compatible with queer theory and the discourse-based theoretical approaches outlined in Chapter 2. Language itself is seen as a resource through which speakers can create shared meanings within communities. (See Holmes, 2013 for a more detailed explanation of the differences between variationist and interactionist sociolinguistics.)

Whilst early work in language and gender drew almost exclusively on variationist sociolinguistics (e.g. Labov, 1972; Milroy, 1980; Trudgill, 1974), later work moved towards using interactionist approaches (e.g. Bucholtz, 1999; Bucholtz and Hall, 2005; Jones, 2012) or a combination of the two (e.g. Eckert, 1989). One of the key reasons why interactionist sociolinguistics has become so useful to the study of language, gender and sexuality is that it enables researchers to explore how people construct local (and often temporary) gender and sexuality identities and meanings within specific 'communities of practice'. Eckert (2000: 16) defines a 'community of practice' as:

> an aggregate of people who come together on a regular basis to engage in some enterprise [. . .]. In the course of their engagement, the community of practice develops ways of doing things – practices. And these practices involve the construction of a shared orientation to the world around them – a tacit definition of themselves in relation to each other, and in relation to other communities of practice.

These 'practices', of course, include linguistic practices as well as other 'meaning-making' practices. An example of a community of practice based on the shared engagement of a group of lesbian-identified speakers comes from Jones (2012). Jones spent a number of years conducting ethnographic research with a walking group who all identified as 'lesbian'. Jones collected spoken data from the group during the course of the research and used interactionist sociolinguistics to explore how the speakers used language to co-construct their shared lesbian identity within the community of practice they were routinely engaging in. In doing so, they were simultaneously constructing the community itself as one based around their shared lesbian identity and not just the shared practice of walking. Some of the data from Jones's study is examined in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Other language, gender and sexuality studies which make use of interactionist sociolinguistics to explore gender and sexuality identity construction in the language of particular communities include: Barrett's (1995) study of language use in a community of African American drag queens; Eckert's (1989) study of language, gender and class in a high school community; and a number of contributions to edited volumes by Hall and Bucholtz (1995) and Livia and Hall (1997). Levon and Mendes's (2016) edited collection also contains a number of more recent studies which use sociolinguistics to explore intersectionality in a range of contexts in relation to language and sexuality.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the frameworks and approaches described earlier are not exhaustive, and the descriptions are necessarily limited in terms of the amount of detail they provide. But it is hoped that this chapter has provided a 'flavour' of each framework sufficiently for you to be able to make an informed choice about how to approach the collection and analysis of linguistic data in your own research project. It is also useful to remember that frameworks can be combined and do not have to be used in isolation. Again, in subsequent chapters, we will explore illustrative studies which have drawn on fruitful combinations of frameworks in their explorations of language, gender and sexuality.

Study questions and activities

1. Why do you think feminist-informed CDA has been so influential and widely used in the field of language, gender and sexuality? What are the key benefits of F/CDA to the field?
2. Think of a language, gender and sexuality research project in which you might fruitfully *combine* different analytical frameworks. What might be the advantages of using different analytical frameworks within the same study?

3. When you have decided which analytical framework/s you want to use in your own research project, read one of the studies cited in this chapter which has made use of your chosen framework/s and write a summary of the study, explaining how the framework was applied and what findings it revealed. What were the main benefits of using the selected analytical framework within the study you have read and summarised, and were there any limitations associated with the framework?

Notes

1 I present the term as 'F/CDA' throughout the book to reflect the fact that, in some studies, authors describe their approach as 'CDA' whilst others describe their approach as 'F/CDA'. When applied to any analysis of language, gender and sexuality, the approaches are so similar that they do not warrant being described in separate sections or referred to as completely different approaches. I only separate 'CDA' from 'F/CDA' when initially outlining the approach in this section. Therefore, referring to 'F/CDA' is a catch-all for any approach which falls within CDA that takes gender and/or sexuality as its primary focus of investigation.

2 A review of articles published in journals such as *Gender and Language* and the *Journal of Language and Sexuality* shows that this particular framework has been used (as a single framework or in combination with others) more extensively than others in recent years.

5 Researching language, gender and sexuality in private and public contexts

In this chapter, we begin to examine some of the real-life applications of work in language, gender and sexuality. Since work in the field began, some researchers have investigated interactions in private settings, such as the home. This kind of data, however, is notoriously difficult to obtain, and key issues in early work examining gender and interaction in private contexts entail its inability to be generalisable and its tendency to reaffirm existing gender stereotypes. Early studies were also criticised for failing to question how gender is achieved in interaction. More recent work on gender and interaction has responded to criticisms of earlier work by incorporating a consideration of sexuality alongside gender (in line with the principles of queer theory) and has focused on how participants themselves produce and often problematise gender and sexuality categories. Leap (1996) and Jones (2012), for example, look at how gay men and lesbians, respectively, use conversation to co-construct identity – these studies are discussed in the following section.

Some studies on private contexts draw on interactionist sociolinguistic approaches to analysing interactional data, whilst other work has utilised the tools of CA more explicitly to analyse how gender is produced in conversational interaction (see Chapter 4 for an explanation of these and other analytical frameworks). Coates, for example, has conducted in-depth studies on same-gender women's and men's friendship talk in informal contexts. Stokoe (2008) examines how gender and power are produced moment by moment in the course of interaction, and how speakers orient to gender and sexuality by using particular conversational features. We will look at examples of studies using these approaches to analysis in the next section of this chapter. After that, we move to examining how gender and sexuality identities are linguistically constructed in more institutionalised settings, taking education and workplaces as examples of these kinds of contexts.

Gender, sexuality and conversation

As discussed in Chapter 4, conversation analysts are interested in uncovering the tacit rules which regulate everyday, spontaneous conversation. CA focuses on analysing the details of conversation structure and management. So in relation to gender, CA analyses how conversational features contribute to the discursive construction of gender identities as they unfold during the course of conversations. In two major studies focusing on single-gender friendship talk of groups of women and men, Coates (1996, 2003) draws on the tools of CA to focus on how gender is constructed in interaction by focusing on the conversational features of interruptions and co-operative overlaps, hedges, minimal responses, use of conversational narrative, co-constructed utterances, topic control and management. Although Coates did not find mutually exclusive differences across the men and women participants in the respective studies, she did find notable differences in the frequencies with which particular conversational features were used and distributed across the gender groups. In the 'women talk' study, Coates found that the women participants used notably high amounts of co-operative overlaps, collaboratively constructed utterances, minimal responses, positive feedback, use of 'we' (which Coates termed the 'collective mode' to indicate a primary focus on collegiality and shared identity), hedging and facilitative tag questions. Coates interpreted the high use of these conversational features as evidence of the women in the study orienting towards a 'collaborative discourse' in which they prioritised connection and solidarity in their friendship groups. This contrasted with findings from the later 'men talk' study in which the groups of men participants more frequently deployed the conversational features of individually constructed utterances, direct challenges to each other's utterances and use of 'I' (termed the 'individual mode' by Coates). Coates noted that the men made much lower use of minimal responses than the women friends in the earlier study. She also noted that the men often produced what she referred to as a 'lone male protagonist' narrative in which the narrator presented himself as a 'winner' or 'hero' in whichever situation or event was being narrated. Coates found that these types of conversational narratives occurred very rarely in the earlier women talk data. Coates argued that the cumulative effect of the repeated use of these conversational features by the men in the study functioned to reinforce the values of 'hegemonic masculinity'. Hegemonic masculinity, as defined by Connell (1995), refers to the most highly valued and idealised version of masculinity in a social context. In the case of the men in the study, this involved using their conversational narrative to reaffirm values, such as physical strength and ability, competitiveness, (hetero)sexual prowess, power over women and power over gay and bisexual men and other heterosexual men who are perceived by the participants to be less strong, successful and so on. Coates noticed that hegemonic masculinity was often linguistically constructed in the men's conversations through the production of lone male protagonist narratives which function to devalue women and celebrate the values and norms of heterosexual masculinity. She also found, rather ironically, that the heterosexual men in the study often constructed their heterosexuality by talking about other men, rather than by talking about women (similar findings are revealed in a study by Cameron, 1997). Coates consequently concluded that hegemonic masculinity is often signalled in men's talk through the marked absence of references to women as well as through the repeated use of the conversational features outlined earlier.

Whilst extensive empirical studies such as those conducted by Coates are extremely valuable, a potential problem is that they focus too much on gender differences, leaving them open to the criticism that the analyst imposes gender on the participants when it may, in fact, not be relevant to them within the interaction being analysed. In an important development in gender and CA, Stokoe (2008) argues for a shift away from looking at 'gender differences' to focusing on 'gender relevance', in other words, focusing only on interaction from a gender perspective when participants themselves explicitly make it relevant. Stokoe calls for a need to 'warrant' an analytical claim that a particular category (e.g. gender, sexuality) is relevant to any stretch of conversational interaction. Stokoe's work uses CA to explore how gender and power are produced moment by moment in the course of interaction. In a move away from the approach adopted in earlier studies of gender and conversation, Stokoe looks at how speakers 'orient to' gender by deploying particular conversational features. Thus, analysis of gender and conversation is based on what participants *themselves* do and say, rather than on what the *analyst* takes to be relevant. Stokoe argues that we can look at participants' explicit uses of categories in existing data. Explicit invocations would include gendered terms such as *girls, boys, women, men, ladies, guys, blokes, males, females* and so on. Therefore, in Stokoe's approach to gender and CA, gender only becomes subjected to analysis when the participants themselves make it relevant. Below is an example from Stokoe's study. In this extract, four first-year psychology students are in the process of carrying out a collaborative writing activity.[1]

```
001   N:   D'you reckon she's an instructor then.
002                 (0.2)
003   N:   of some sort,
004   B:   → Is somebody scribing. who's writin' it. =
005   N:   = Oh yhe:ah.
006             (0.8)
007   M:   Well you can't [read my] =
008   N:   [She wants to do it.]
009   M:   = writin' once I've [wri:tten it.]
010   K:                       [.hehhhh ]
011   N:   → We:ll secretary an' female.
012                (0.3)
013   K:   .Hh heh heh heh
014                (0.4)
015   M:   It's uh::,
016   K:   Yeah: I'm wearing glasses I must be the
           secretary.=
017   B:   = I think- (.) we're all agreed she's
           physical.
018                  (0.2)
[. . .]
```

```
027   M:   Make a good start.
028   K:   Heh heh heh. hhh (.). hhh Okay what's her
           name.
029                (0.5)
[. . .]
104   K:   Am I wri:ting (then.)
105   N:   Yes: go on.
[. . .]
123                    (0.3)
124   M:   <Are you getting all this down. =Come on.
125               (1.6)
126   N:   You've gotta learn this short hand before
           you get into
127        the- (0.4) the job market.
128               (0.7)
```

(Stokoe, 2008: 145–146)

In her analysis of this extract, Stokoe observes that in order to meet the task demands, one member of the group must write down his or her ideas (as stated by B in line 4). Neil nominates Kay in line 8 ('she wants to do it') and a second time on line 11. This time Neil explicitly suggests that Kay should be the scribe (or 'secretary') because she is female. This second nomination of Kay by Neil orients the group to gender and displays his reasoning that coupling 'occupational' and 'gender' categories is both common sense and recognisable to everyone involved in the interaction. Stokoe suggests that a gloss for the gendered discourse produced in this part of the interaction might be 'secretaries *in general* are female, you're female, so *you in particular* are our secretary'. Kay responds to Neil's second nomination by picking up her paper and pen, thus aligning herself with the secretary role that has been offered to her. However, she does not join in with Neil's formulation of 'secretary' as 'female'. Stokoe notes that, instead, Kay draws on a different stereotypical characteristic for 'secretary': 'Yeah: I'm wearing glasses I must be the secretary' (line 16). It may be that this utterance demonstrates a degree of resistance by Kay to Neil's gender categorical references. Thus, Stokoe points out that not only do gender categories get evoked in interaction, as in the previous extract, but people actually do things with them too – i.e. they can affirm them, take them up, or resist them, and so on.

Drawing on earlier work by Pomerantz and Mandelbaum (2005), Stokoe notes, however, a methodological problem with analysing gender categories as and when they are explicitly evoked in conversation – it cannot be known in advance when participants will explicitly invoke a category which means data collection cannot easily be planned. Jones (2012, 2014) goes some way to addressing this issue by analysing conversational data from participants who explicitly come together in a group based on their shared sexuality identity. In her extensive study of a lesbian walking group, Jones uses elements of CA within an interactional sociolinguistic approach to analyse performative enactments of gender and sexuality through the women's conversational interaction. This context made it more likely that sexuality might become an explicit topic of conversation. What Jones finds is that the participants themselves make gender and sexuality categories relevant in their conversations and almost always link them together in terms of understanding their own and others' identities. An example of this can be seen in the extract that follows.[2]

```
Key: C - Claire; E - Eve; S - Sam; L - Lucy (Author);
H - Hannah; J - Jill

1 C So yes he could be gay (.) the one who likes (.)
  the dolls.
------------------------------------------------------
2 C (.) @(.) yeah I
  E (2) Does that explain everything? I hated dolls.
------------------------------------------------------
3 C have this theory that all lesbians liked teddies
  and not dolls
------------------------------------------------------
4 C you see [mm yeah and
  S Yeah [I-] [I'd go with] that one [Yeah I never
  L [I] liked [teddies.]
------------------------------------------------------
5 C I used to] push [a pram round with] a teddy in it
  and everybody
  S liked dolls]
  H [I hated dolls.]
------------------------------------------------------
6 C used to look at me really funny [and like-]
  S [Well there's] four there's
------------------------------------------------------
7 C [And they'd they'd look at you like that <pulls
  face>]
  S [you? <To Lucy> Dolls or teddies?]
  L Teddies.
------------------------------------------------------
8 S <To Jill> Dolls or teddies? [There we] go. [QED
  @(1)]
  J Teddies.
  L [We we all]
  H [Teddies-]
------------------------------------------------------
9 S @(1)
  L have to say that now though don't we?
  H Teddies and coal
------------------------------------------------------
```

```
10 L [I did have two dolls::]
   H apparently [I chucked the babies out] the [pram]
   apparently
   J [Coal?]
-------------------------------------------------------------
11 S @(2)
   H and I'd fill it with coal <@ from the coal bunker @>
   J @(2)
-------------------------------------------------------------
```

Jones argues that the construction of an authentic/inauthentic binary was a part of the women's typical practice in all of the data collected for the study – across the larger data set, the women routinely positioned themselves as either a 'dyke' or a 'girl', the former being constructed by the women as a more genuine or legitimate lesbian and the latter as a more heteronormative woman or inauthentic lesbian. Jones observes that the women repeatedly associate certain concepts with authentic or 'real' lesbian identity (in this case, liking teddy bears) and other concepts (liking dolls) are associated with inauthentic sexual (lesbian) identity. Jones notes how the women actively position themselves as different from heterosexual women by positioning dolls as a symbol of straight womanhood. The women index a 'dykey' (i.e. authentically lesbian) persona through the construction of a temporary gendered binary, and they position themselves within that binary via stance-taking against dolls. What Jones stresses as important, though, is that the women's construction of a binary, with dolls on the one side and teddies on the other, is a response to the discourse unfolding at this moment in the interaction and does not necessarily need to carry weight outside of this conversation for it to be a useful and legitimate way of orienting to an authentic lesbian identity at the time. The women are using the authentic/inauthentic binary in a deliberately ironic way at this point in the conversation in order to co-construct a shared identity.

Similar conversational practices are found by Sauntson and Morrish (2012) in their study of interaction and sexual identity in a women's university football team. Sauntson and Morrish are interested in analysing the conversation to explore how these particular young women interrogate the nature and meaning of boundaries relating explicitly to sexuality. What they find is that the women, regardless of their various sexual orientations, subdue distinctiveness, whilst celebrating the emancipatory potential for experimentation with both identity and sexual desire available to them whilst at university. The participants are eight young women between the ages of 19 and 21. Similar to Jones's study, the authors note that much of the conversation focuses on the question, 'What counts as an 'authentic' gay identity?' The speakers engage heavily in contestation of the identity categories of 'gay woman' and 'straight woman' and in acknowledgement of the fluidity and temporality of sexual identity and its dependence on context.

For example, many parts of the women's conversations centre on whether physical and behavioural characteristics can be attributed to homosexuality (i.e.

looking and acting gay) – this is a similar finding to that of Jones's study. The speakers discuss whether it is possible to 'tell' whether someone is gay or straight from their appearance and behaviour. In this sense, the speakers are engaging in discussions about the possibility of constructing an 'authentic' gay (or straight) identity. One way in which authentication or 'realness' is deployed is through speakers' references to symbols or markers which are culturally associated with gay identities. Linguistic markers which make reference to authenticating strategies occur several times during the conversation, although what is interesting about these occurrences is that the speakers use them to engage in questioning about the possibility of authenticating *both* gay and straight sexual identities. In the first example that follows, the opening assertion that 'Foghorn looks gay' suggests that there is an authentic, and culturally recognisable, way of 'looking gay'. And similarly, usage of the phrase 'she doesn't act gay' implies that 'acting gay' exists as an authentication strategy and that it is possible to recognise gay people through their behaviour as well as their appearance.

```
Josie =Foghorn looks gay and most people don't think
she is bu:t
Doris: yeah she's straight
Barbara: [but]but but she's not gay is she she doesn't
act gay
```

The speakers go on to discuss whether the wearing of gilets can be interpreted as an authentic marker of gay identity.

```
Doris: no no it's ((gilet-wearing)) not meant to be
a gay
Betty: cos like cos like ahh a labelled that a gay
thing
Doris: YEAH OH YEAH OH people have just labelled it as
being gay
Betty: it is gay though in't it
All: laughter
```

The reference to labelling the gilet[3] as 'a gay thing' is a reference to authenticity, but this is immediately questioned in the following line ('people have just labelled it as being gay'). This is further countered by Betty's assertion that 'it is gay though in't it'. This almost forensic scrutiny of in/authentic gay identities can be read in very essentialist ways – she's a lesbian; therefore, she wears a gilet – or she wears a gilet; therefore, she's a lesbian. However, it is difficult to read it as anything other than deliberately ironic, especially as this whole exchange is followed by laughter. In previous work (Morrish and Sauntson, 2007), we discussed how groups of lesbian speakers in casual conversation ironically reference essentialising gender stereotypes, and stereotypes of lesbians in particular, in order to expose and ridicule them. Because the stereotypes are referenced in such a self-conscious, exaggerated and humorous way, the effect is not to reinforce them but to challenge and deconstruct them. A similar process seems to be at work in the previous extract. In evoking essentialising discourses around lesbian sexual identities (i.e. particular symbols are clear identifiers of lesbian identity) in an exaggerated and ironic way, the speakers do not reinforce them but end up bringing those very assumptions into question.

Whilst the studies by Jones and Sauntson and Morrish focus on how gender and sexuality identities can be constructed and displayed linguistically using a range of features, researchers such as Leap (1996) suggest that gay men can, likewise, display their male homosexuality in conversations. In his analysis of conversational interaction in the private context of the home, Leap argues that gay men's conversations can be both co-operative and competitive and that gay men can construct a gay sexual identity by drawing on the conversational resources stereotypically associated with heterosexual women's and heterosexual men's conversations. In other words, there is not simply a straightforward 'reversal' of expected conversational behaviour based on gender binaries. Gay men do not 'talk like women' but instead seem to deploy a greater range of conversational features than either heterosexual women or men. Leap also argues that gay men often index their shared sexual identity through coded references (e.g. references to gender) which have specific meanings to the speakers involved in that particular interactional context. Leap's *The Water Pitcher* extract that follows illustrates these points.

```
A:  can I get a glass of water?
[Moves toward sink where B is washing dishes]
B:  There is ice water in the fridge.
A:  OK. Thanks.
[Opens refrigerator door, looks inside]
B:  [Notices pause in action] In the brown pitcher.
A:  [Continues to look; looks toward B] I don't see a
    brown pitcher in here
B:  Sure. It's brown, and round, and on the top shelf.
A:  [Looks inside again] Nope.
B:  [Stops washing dishes, dries hands, moves to
    fridge, removes pitcher, pours water]
A:  That pitcher is not brown, it is tan. [Pause; B
    remains silent] It is light tan.
B:  It is brown to me. [Slight smile]
A:  No, you said brown so I looked for something dark
    chocolate.
```

(Leap, 1996: 7)

In his analysis, Leap points out that 'tan' and 'dark chocolate' are colour words stereotypically associated with women's use of language (e.g. Lakoff, 1975). By using words such as these, the men are drawing on linguistic stereotypes of femininity to indicate their gayness in this situation. Leap argues that these kinds of 'gay' meanings are largely context-related and are dependent upon all of the speakers 'co-operating' in the discourse. However, Leap also points out that there is disagreement and the potential for conflict in this conversation – i.e. the speakers seem to be almost arguing about both the location and colour of the pitcher. But this seems more like a parody of the kinds of competitiveness associated with hegemonic masculinities as seen in the heterosexual men's conversations analysed by Coates (2003). Thus, these gay men draw on both the linguistic resources of cooperation and competition to produce what Leap calls 'gay discourse'. In extracts such as *The Water Pitcher*, we see that the speakers' sexual desire towards other men does not explicitly feature in the conversation. Expressions of sexual desire are also absent from the gay women's conversations analysed by Morrish and Sauntson (2007), Jones (2012) and Sauntson and Morrish (2012). Leap argues that, despite this absence, we can still deduce that the speakers all identify as gay men through a close analysis of the conversational features discussed. Leap argues that it is largely a reading of the conversation in relation to contextual factors that gives the conversation its 'gay' meaning.

We can see that work which analyses gender and spoken interaction now tends to incorporate an analysis of sexuality. There is also closer attention paid to the required 'warrants' for focusing on gender and sexuality in analysis of conversation with most studies focusing on how speakers' themselves draw attention to aspects of the gender and sexuality identities of themselves and others using linguistic means.

In addition to studies which analyse face-to-face conversational interaction (such as those discussed earlier), some work has started to explore gender and sexuality in online interaction, which often blurs the boundary between 'private' and 'public'. King (2011), for example, analyses performances of gender and sexuality in online chatrooms using a corpus of online talk-in-interaction. King focuses his analysis on how these performances sexualise the 'space' of the (virtual) room in ways which allow for queer performances which are often marginalised elsewhere in heteronormative society. In this study, King created a word list from the chat room data and then grouped together words from the list which served as useful lexical markers for 'performative construction of queer social constructs' (King, 2011: 9). These groups of words were:

- feminised vocatives (e.g. use by men of terms like 'sweetie' and 'darling' to refer to other men),
- camp use of French (e.g. 'He has a certain je ne sais quoi!'),
- gender inversions (e.g. referring to a man as 'she' or 'girl'),
- reappropriations (e.g. queer, fag), and
- whore-stigma gender inversions (e.g. referring to a man as a 'slut' or 'hussy').

From these findings, King concluded that the men interacting in this chatroom had particular linguistic resources that they used to construct queer identities in the virtual space of the chatroom, much in the same way as the men in Leap's study did in a face-to-face private setting.

Having examined some empirical studies on private settings, in the remainder of this chapter, we examine work which has looked at gender and sexuality in the language used in the public domains of education and workplaces.

Language, gender and sexuality in education

Within the broad domain of 'education', it has been noted that schools, in particular, are highly significant sites for the production and negotiation of gender and sexuality identities and relationships. This is why school contexts have received so much attention within the field. Since the 1980s, work on language, gender and education has examined areas such as gender and classroom interaction (teacher-pupil interaction, pupil-pupil interaction); gender and playground interaction; gender, language and achievement (e.g. reading, language development); gender and language in the foreign language classroom; gender and teaching materials; and treatment of gender in the development and implementation of educational policies. Again, this early work has since been criticised for focusing too much on 'gender differences' rather than critically interrogating gender categories themselves and treating them as performative and dynamic. Additionally, there was no focus on language, sexuality and education until the 1990s.

In an analysis of a corpus of LGB coming out stories, Morrish and Sauntson (2007) found that the narrators made frequent reference to school as an important site for their discovery of their own sexual identities. Narrators drew attention to the ways that their school environments function to produce particular sexual and gendered subjectivies. In subsequent work, I have repeatedly found that LGBT+- identifying young people view school as a place where gender and sexuality are heavily policed (Sauntson, 2012, 2018). Findings such as these have prompted renewed examinations of the school context and how the discourses operating within it may function to produce restricted possibilities for producing gender and sexuality. In contemporary studies of language, gender and sexuality in schools, work has generally fallen into two broad areas. The first area focuses on the presence and use of discriminatory discourses around gender and sexuality in schools. The second focuses on the analysis of classroom discourse and the construction of gender and sexuality identities. In this second area, work focuses on how gender and sexuality are 'performed' through language in the context of the classroom. I will exemplify both of these areas by looking at data from some of my own research.

In relation to the first area of discriminatory language use in schools, interviews I conducted with teachers and LGBT+ youth (analysed using F/CDA) show how discriminatory language is experienced in schools (Sauntson, 2018). Some of the young people and teachers in the interviews firstly noted that explicitly homophobic or transphobic language was routinely used in their school environments, as in the following examples (all examples in this section are taken from Sauntson, 2018):

> Neil (teacher): the most obvious one as I said the other week is children using the word 'gay' as an insult or pejorative term and it's very difficult I find to combat it not from my point of view but it's become such a socially

accepted word that it ceases to mean 'homosexual' any more and the children don't even see it as meaning that it's just become that accepted

Carl (young gay man): every time we had an assembly if there was an award ceremony and he had to go up and get a certificate or anything they'd all shout out hide your arse or watch your arse something like that

But, more often, interviewees reported that gender and sexuality-based discriminatory language was more frequently experienced not as explicit verbal homophobia but as the routine *erasure* of non-heterosexual sexualities and non-binary genders and a concurrent reinforcement of a strict gender binary and heterosexuality. They report there being simply no references at all to anything other than heterosexuality and cisgender identities in their school environments. Ashford (a young trans-identified woman), for example, notes this routine erasure of non-binary gender identities:

Ashford: another thing that schools need to change is segregating or like putting people in different things because of their gender [. . .] with when the fire bell goes why do I need to line up with a bunch of girls I mean I'm not out fully to everyone in school but they don't know that I am it's like I have friends at school that are non-binary they don't fit in either line so why should they be forced into it and boy-girl seating it doesn't matter what gender you're sat next to

In the same work, other examples of linguistic discriminatory practices of homophobia/biphobia/transphobia operating through silence and erasure occurred when the young people talked about a perceived lack of visibility around LGBT+ identities specifically in relation to the curriculum, as in the examples that follow (which all focus on the English curriculum):

Hannah: I can't recall ever in English it ever being ever being discussed I don't know whether that was purposely or whether it just didn't come up but no it wasn't really spoke about at all

Amy: it wasn't really discussed if it was discussed at all it was discussed in passing and then it's gone I remember reading what's the book called brilliant book *The Color Purple* fabulous book I stayed up all night reading it was one of those books for me but even with that it wasn't really mentioned which to me was like surely that's a huge part of this book.

Abby: [discussing studying Oscar Wilde in English] the teacher would be like brush it off oh you're reading a bit far into this [. . .] he'd be like Abby you're just looking a bit too far

As well as stating that LGBT+ identities and issues were absent from the English curriculum, Amy points out how this can have a negative and confusing effect. In discussing the teaching of *The Color Purple*, she reflects on her confusion about the absence of discussion of the lesbian relationship which she considers to be at the very heart of the novel. This contributes to Amy's overall view of her school as unaccepting and hostile in relation to LGBT+ identities. Similarly, Abby reflects on her experience of studying the work of Oscar Wilde in English and offers an interpretation of the work in relation to Wilde's known homosexuality. Abby reports that the teacher claimed she was 'reading a bit far into this', thus closing down an opportunity for discussing sexuality issues in the context of the lesson.

The young people in this study also specifically note a marked absence of references to non-heterosexuality and non-binary genders in their Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) lessons. In fact, RSE featured highly amongst the negatively valued phenomena by the young people because it is a subject where the topic of the lesson is expected to address issues around sexuality, to varying degrees. Such negative valuations were often realised as students commenting on their experience of RSE as irrelevant and meaningless due to its exclusive focus on binary gender and heterosexuality. Even within the discourses of heterosexuality, the students perceived these to be restrictive in only focusing on physiology, pregnancy and contraception. Given the high levels of dissatisfaction with RSE expressed by the young people, the study subsequently involved recording and analysing real-life classroom interaction from a series of RSE lessons.

An example from the same study which illustrates research in the second area comes from an analysis of classroom interactional data collected from RSE lessons. Analysis of this data confirmed what the participants reported in the interviews – there appear to be several ideological assumptions made about normative gender and (hetero)sexuality, and these ideological assumptions construct particular 'discourses' of gender and sexuality within the lessons. In the first two examples that follow, explicit reference is made by the teacher to 'mum and dad' (underlined), thus inferring that a heterosexual two-parent family structure is the expected norm:

```
Teacher: diseases it can be something as simple as
your mum or dad have found condoms in your bedroom or
the pill
Teacher: and you've got your mum and dad there and
you're like [singing noise] or your gran is even worse
isn't it
```

In other examples, the teacher makes reference to 'the guy' and 'the girl' (underlined) when discussing 'relationships' in a general sense, thus reinforcing heterosexuality as the expected norm:

```
Teacher: when we watched that 'A to Z of Love and Sex'
there was a guy on there that talked about his first
intimate relationship was with a girl it was her first
time
```

```
Teacher: just glide it out don't just pull your penis
out because what happens is the condom will stay inside
the girl
```

The main focus of all of the RSE classes observed in this study is on heterosexual reproduction, and there is a continual reinforcement of heteronormativity. There is often an implicit, taken-for-granted assumption of heterosexuality, including in families as well as in the future sexual orientation of the students themselves. Heterosexuality is very much constructed as the expected norm. This is despite the fact that there is recognition and explicit acknowledgement in the wider school environment of a wider range of sexual and gender identities. Furthermore, heterosexuality itself is represented in a very restricted way. It is constructed as always monogamous and, in terms of sexual activity, enacted through vaginal intercourse only. Other possibilities for heterosexual desire, activity and identity are entirely absent.

A range of other problematic discourses emerged from the analysis of the RSE interactional data, and these discourses echo the findings of a number of other interview-based studies in which young people reflect on their experiences of RSE (e.g. Brook and Family Planning Association, 2013; Hilton, 2007; Sundaram and Sauntson, 2015). For example, girls are routinely constructed as having greater responsibility for 'safe sex' than boys. And, more broadly, discourses of gender emerge that present differential values for girls and boys. Girls are responsible for their own behaviour and are more heavily judged (negatively) for their sexual behaviour. It is discursively implied that girls have a greater responsibility for safer sex than boys. All of these discourses which emerge show how the analysis of language can reveal how ideologies of heterosexuality as the norm are routinely upheld in schools.

What this and other research in language, gender, sexuality and education show is that schools appear to be public domains in which restricted discourses of gender and (hetero)sexuality are routinely reinforced. These discourses are difficult to challenge because they are often achieved through routine absences and silences around non-heterosexuality and non-binary genders. Whilst this book was being written, regulation was passed in the UK for teaching RSE in England's primary and secondary. These new regulations mean that, from September 2020, all secondary schools will be required to teach pupils about sexual orientation and gender identity, and all primary schools will be required to teach about different families, which can include LGBT families. Therefore, it remains to be seen whether the heteronormative discourses routinely found in school-based language practice will continue once the new regulations are implemented.

In the following section, we move on to examine some key work which has been conducted in another public domain – that of workplaces. As in schools, there appear to be similar tensions between equality policies and legislation and on the ground practices in workplaces, and language-based research functions to expose and challenge these tensions.

Language, gender and sexuality in the workplace

Research in this domain has been prompted by continued inequalities based on gender in many workplaces both in the UK and around the world. There are plenty of sources available showing statistics on gender and employment, and these are continually being updated. Statistics on the continually updated UN Women website, for example, show that only 24 per cent of all national parliamentarians were women as of November 2018. The same source found that, as of January 2019, only 11 women are serving as heads of state and 10 are serving as heads of government. UN Women also reports that globally, women are paid less than men. Women in most countries earn on average only 60 to 75 per cent of men's wages. Furthermore, women bear disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work. UN Women estimates that women devote one to three hours more a day to housework than men, two to ten times the amount of time a day to care (for children, elderly and the sick) and one to four hours less a day to market activities. This directly and negatively impacts women's participation in the global labour force. As well as examining the general picture of gender and employment, particular attention has also been paid to women and men in senior leadership positions. In the UK, the Davies Report (2011) suggested that companies should set quotas for the proportion of women on senior management boards to address issues of gender inequality in senior positions in companies. However, as of 2018, women were still only occupying 35.4 per cent of leadership positions in the top-100 UK public limited company boards (according to the Female FTSE Board Report – Vinnicombe et al., 2018).

One of the reasons for the continued difficulty of achieving gender equality in employment is the oft-cited 'glass ceiling' for women. The 'glass ceiling' (Morrison et al., 1987) refers to an implicit or covert barrier which hampers women from reaching higher positions of power within workplaces. Furthermore, because 'leadership' is more often associated with masculinity, women often face what is commonly referred to as a 'double-bind' in terms of professionalism and femininity. What this means is that if a woman leader 'talks like a manager she is transgressing the boundaries of femininity: if she talks like a woman she no longer represents herself as a manager' (Jones, 2000: 196). This leaves women in a 'double-bind' relating to gender and leadership, arguably, another reason for the continued gender inequality in workplace leadership positions. Baxter (2010, 2012) observes that, in 'male-dominated' corporations, women leaders may face prejudice regarding their competence because they are highly visible within perceived masculine areas of business and therefore subject to greater scrutiny. This second reason, in particular, has led researchers to examine the *linguistic* dimensions of workplace leadership in relation to gender. As Mullany explains,

> As long as significant gender inequalities in workplaces throughout the world are still present, it remains fundamentally important for gender and language

> scholars to investigate workplace practices and produce empirical evidence which can make a contribution towards redressing persistent gender-based inequalities.
>
> (Mullany, 2011: 304)

A number of studies address these issues. In her research, Holmes (2006), for example, deploys the term 'relational practice' (RP) and claims that it functions as gendered workplace talk in that it is something that women are observed to routinely engage in. Holmes investigates three manifestations or 'themes' of RP which she identifies as preserving (damage control), mutual empowerment and creating teams. These first two themes are defined by Holmes as follows:

> *Preserving* focuses on relational practices that are primarily aimed at advancing the project's objectives [. . .] it includes RP which is oriented to constructing and maintaining the dignity of people at work, to saving face and reducing the likelihood of offence being taken, to mitigating potentially threatening behaviour, and to minimizing conflict and negotiating consensus.
>
> (Holmes, 2006: 77)

> *Mutual empowering* [. . .] includes such activities as making connections or putting people in touch with others who can assist them to achieve their goals.
>
> (Holmes, 2006: 80)

Using CA and elements of interactional sociolinguistics, Holmes reports on a number of examples of the RP themes of preserving and mutual empowering in her data and argues that these activities are gendered in that they are typically associated with women in the workplace, especially when they are performed 'backstage' or discreetly. In the extract from Holmes's study that follows, Jan (a woman manager) asks questions to encourage Kiwa (a man) to think about his own solutions and to assist him in identifying the most relevant strategies for managing problematic situations. It is this encouraging use of questions which, Holmes argues, is typical of mutual empowerment as a manifestation of RP in this context.[4]

1 Kiw: yeah it just i- it's just um it's just knowing
2 when the thing is actually completed
3 and how we know it's completed
4 for example w- when we p- pulled together
5 those maths resources you know. . .
6 [*detailed description of how the maths resources had been dealt with*]
7 Jan: god that must have been a long time ago wasn't it. . .
8 Kiw: [*further description of what happened*]
9 Jan: yeah

```
10        /and in actual fact\
11 Jan:   /so it could have fallen\ into a
12        /black hole and\ no one would have known
13 Kiw:   /right right\ exactly and there were a
          couple of
14        things I think. . .
15        like like that um (which I'm a bit) concerned
          about
16 Jan:   okay ++
17 Kiw:   so we need to have a kind of a way of
          signing off
18        or finishing off and all that
19 Jan:   yep (well) we'll need to think about
20        have you got any ideas about how we could do
          that
21 Kiw:   well normally um. . .
```

(Holmes, 2006: 82–83)

Holmes argues that Jan's gentle and relatively indirect approach constitutes a supportive, mitigated and normatively feminine interactional style which qualifies as the mutual empowerment theme of RP. The third linguistic manifestation of RP explored by Holmes is termed 'creating team', which she defines as follows:

> *Creating team* [. . .] includes all the typically unobserved behind-the-scenes behaviours which foster group life [. . .] activities such as taking the time to listen and respond empathetically to non-work-related information, creating opportunities for collaboration and cooperation, and facilitating productive interaction.
>
> (Holmes, 2006: 87)

Holmes proposes that this sort of RP is oriented towards constructing and nurturing good workplace relationships and to establishing and maintaining solidarity between team members. The discourse strategies typically used to achieve this include small talk and social talk, use of humour, telling entertaining stories, paying compliments or giving approval. A typical example from Holmes's study of the small talk strategy for creating a team is included below

```
1 Cla:   how is the baby?
2 Peg:   [drawls]: good: still just a baby though
3 Cla:   right not a boy baby or a girl baby
4 Peg:   no can't tell /it's legs crossed\
5 Cla:   /haha you\ gonn have to wait. . .
6        are you feeling tired?
7 Peg:   yes but I just think it's summer too
```

```
8          because I didn't you know because been in
           summer
9          cos I wasn't pregnant last time or AS
           pregnant in the
10         summertime
11         so it was much easier cos I didn't know +
12         um I had help (until) December last time (so
           it was
13         easier)
14 Cla:    hey you you're hoping you're gonna work
           [drawls]:
15         through: //(what)\
16 Peg:    /well + my\ plan is to work full time up
           until the
17         end of May
18 Cla:    right
19 Peg:    and then come back as we need as I'm needed
           after
20         that
21         just dependent on what happens with Daisy and
22         Matt's group. . .
```

(Holmes, 2006: 88)

Holmes observes how this conversation moves slowly from social talk to work talk. Clara (Peg's manager) is engaging in RP by expressing interest in Peg's personal life – a typical face attention strategy which functions to construct and nurture good workplace relationships. But the discussion also addresses the implications of this information for the project team's objectives.

According to Holmes, small talk, as with other kinds of RP, is normatively associated with femininity because of its other-centred and rapport building functions. Importantly, though, Holmes finds both men and women engaging in this kind of talk in her study and, as a result, concludes that the gendering of RP is probably best considered as variously positioned along a continuum of masculine-feminine interactional styles, rather than exclusively being associated only with femininity.

Although Holmes's study and other work in the area of language and gender in workplaces has examined routine workplace interaction between colleagues, other work has focused more on the language used by women in leadership roles, especially when they occupy positions of power previously held only by men.

Baxter (2012), for example, reconceptualises a model of gender and leadership previously devised by Kanter (1993 [1977]) in linguistic terms. Kanter had previously argued that senior women in male-dominated organisations tend to be 'tokenised' when they are in a minority. Because senior women stand out as 'different', they are forced into gendered subject positions or 'role traps'. Kanter originally claimed that there are four of these culturally sanctioned 'role traps' for women leaders in male-dominated organisations: the Pet, the Seductress, the Mother and the Iron Maiden.

In Kanter's terms, the Pet role trap is viewed as a 'cute little thing', someone who is not expected to be fully competent and may get teased by male colleagues. Unlike the Pet, the Seductress is a resource who explicitly foregrounds the enactment of sexual and gender identities. It might provide senior women with a voice if used in mock-flirtatious fashion with male or indeed female colleagues to achieve good working relationships. However, according to Baxter (2012), it could be self-defeating if the gendered nature of the resource undermines the sense of a woman's professional competence. The Mother role is predominantly socio-emotional rather than reliant upon professional expertise according to both Kanter and Baxter. Baxter suggests that the Mother subject position combines authority with caregiving. The final discursive resource explored by Baxter in her study (based on Kanter's role traps) is that of the Iron Maiden. Kanter originally characterised this role trap as 'forthright', 'tough' and 'dangerous' and suggested that it may be the most powerful of the four role traps.

All of these role traps are based on historical archetypes of women in power and, although they do offer women a range of acceptable culturally approved leadership positions, they also serve to subordinate women's professional identities to their 'gender category' in male-dominated organisations. In other words, women leaders are more likely to be judged on the basis of their gender rather than their achievements and professional abilities as leaders. Moreover, Kanter argued that the role traps constrain the way senior women's abilities and expertise are perceived and valued, which may have a detrimental effect on their career progression. What Kanter does not do is explore the linguistic practices associated with each of the role traps – this is the main way in which Baxter incorporates a linguistic dimension into Kanter's work.

Using a FPDA analytical framework, Baxter conducts a study of 14 senior leaders (7 female, 7 male), each conducting at least one senior management meeting in the UK. Baxter finds that the women speakers (and sometimes the men in the meetings too) can turn the archetypical role trap subject positions into more powerful linguistic and discursive resources that are used to accomplish the goals of leadership, even though the interaction is still marked by gender. The overall question asked by Baxter in the study is 'does the language women use at the senior leadership level indicate why there are so few women in the workplace?' Baxter argues that 'leadership' itself is conceptualised as intrinsically masculine:

> The prevailing stereotype is one which assumes that an 'effective' leader is authoritative, assertive, competitive, task-focused, goal-oriented, and single-minded [. . .] As women leaders rarely fit this stereotype, they are marked as 'the other', a deviation from the male norm and therefore viewed as less professional and competent.
>
> (Baxter, 2012: 86)

This is similar to the argument made by Holmes (2006) and other language and gender in the workplace scholars – women leaders are subject to a 'double-bind' in which they are perceived to be either too assertive (and viewed as 'not women') or too tentative (and viewed as 'not managers/leaders').

Baxter uses FPDA to produce a detailed analysis of what the speakers say in the meeting data. The analysis shows how the speakers have agency to move between different role traps or 'subject positions' as Baxter re-terms them. This re-terming and reconceptualing reflects the idea that women leaders are not necessarily 'trapped' but have some agency to take up or resist the subject positions available to them. Interviews with the same senior women leaders were then used to reinforce Baxter's own analysis of the interactional data. A key finding from both data sets was that the senior women used the subject positions (role traps) of Mother and Iron Maiden as gendered resources but the resources associated with Pet and Seductress were less prevalent. Therefore, we will just focus in the remainder of this section on Baxter's analysis of the Mother and Iron Maiden subject positions (but see Baxter, 2012, for more data examples of all four of the subject positions).

Baxter finds a number of senior women in her data utilising the Mother discursive resource in order to enact leadership effectively. One such example is Anne (director of human resources [HR]) in the extract that follows in which Anne is reporting back to John, the CEO, and other team members about an HR leadership change initiative she has been developing.[5]

[Anne = HR Director; John = CEO]

1 Anne: John (.) one of the things that I'd like to share with
2 the guys and I haven't done yet is err I thought personally
3 (.) I know you did because you wrote to the [Managing
4 Directors] and told them because the last lot of the Quarterly
5 Reviews were very good (.) you went down the personal route
6 with all of them and actually I'd like to congratu-late the
7 three of you on very good presentations and err I know I
8 enjoyed them and John did and I think you dropped the MDs a
9 note to say that you were pleased with it
10 John: yeah I did yeah (*John explains*)
11 Anne: so good (.) just thought I'd share that with you when
12 we're all together (1) John (.) Nick has got a question which
13 he wants to ask

(Baxter, 2012: 96)

In Baxter's analysis of this extract, she observes that Anne shows a caregiving authority associated with the Mother discursive resource by directly informing the team of the successful outcomes of the quarterly reviews of the board in the presence of her boss (John). Anne also congratulates her boss about these outcomes – another authoritative move which also does affective caregiving work. Throughout the extract, Baxter notes that Anne balances expressions of authority with a strong, caregiving aspect in her interaction. For example, she uses a long, qualifying anticipatory clause ('one of the things that I'd like to share with the guys . . . Quarterly Reviews were very good') to prepare the team for what she says next – Baxter argues that this kind of preparatory move in the interaction shows a degree of concern about how Anne's contribution will be received. Anne also uses several verb phrases which report her thoughts and feelings (e.g. 'I thought personally', 'I know I enjoyed them', 'Just thought I'd share that'). According to Baxter, this demonstrates Anne showing a reflective and considerate manner towards her team. Anne also uses lexis which indexes a close and nurturing relationship with her colleagues (e.g. 'share with you', 'I thought personally', 'went down the personal route', 'share that with you'). Anne also compliments people several times to make them feel supported and valued (e.g. 'were very good', 'I'd like to congratulate the three of you', 'so good'). In sum, Baxter argues from her analysis of this extract that Anne is utilising the combined discursive resources of authority and caregiving associated with the Mother in order to enact the role of leader effectively and in a way that is seen as legitimate (in both leadership and gender terms) by her team.

The next example from Baxter's study illustrates the Iron Maiden subject position. In this extract, Pat (managing director of an insurance company) is challenging a view from George (marketing director) that the company should not try to promote a new kind of product. In the interaction leading up to the extract, the rest of the team (who are all men) clearly agree with George; therefore, Pat has to go on the offensive in expressing her disagreement.

[Pat = Managing Director; George = Marketing Director; Richard = Operations Director; TDs = a company product; NTLs = a company product]

1	Pat:	yes yes but (.) in those branches where regionally
2		they have advised us that the cost advantage is better
3		than actually to proactively sell it (.) in fact why
4		wouldn't you proactively sell it at the end of the month
5		when you've got the TD renewals coming in
6	George:	we know that these are (.) the branches where

7		it works better as well as the branches where TDs [go
8		together
9	Pat:	[yeah but car insurance conversion what do you
10		have
11		it off the back of?
12	George:	usually NTLs
13	Pat:	anything else? (*inquisitorial tone*)
14		Various voices: no
15	Pat:	even if even if you have it? (.)
16		[*Other voices murmuring*]
17	Pat:	sorry?
18	Richard:	excesses cross sell
19	Pat:	cross sell
20	Pat:	so so why why (.) I just can't get my head round why
21		it's such a big deal (.) why don't we say (1) this isn't
22		the focus promotion for the quarter (.) if we have a
23		focus promotion for the quarter it's for quarter four not
24		quarter three
25	Richard:	can I answer that
26	Pat:	if you must

(Baxter, 2012: 99)

Baxter notes in her analysis that Pat uses a number of contesting strategies to challenge George's view. Her use of the adversative conjunction 'but' indicates her rejection of George's assertion and signals an attempt to take the floor in order to make her case. As a legitimation strategy, she refers to the higher authority of the main board ('they have advised us') before using a negatively charged rhetorical question ('why wouldn't you'), which, according to Baxter, suggests that there is no alternative case to answer. On line 9, Pat interrupts George, and this is then followed by a series of questions. In response to these questions, team members provide monosyllabic responses (line 14) and murmuring back-chat (line 16), which subsequently prompts Pat to elicit a response from the team with the ironically used politeness marker 'sorry?' (line 17). Pat uses a series of 'why' questions to signify both her failure to understand George's case and her frustration at the team's apparent obduracy. Baxter observes how Pat's use of 'why' seems to transmute into a different speech act in line 21, where she recommends a course of action. That this is received as an order rather than as a suggestion is reinforced by Richard's answer and Pat's subsequent reply. Richard asks, 'Can I answer that' to seek permission to disagree and Pat recognises his disagreement in her abrupt riposte, 'if you must'. According to Baxter, all of these features are illustrative of Pat displaying the Iron Maiden subject position to enact her leadership in this context.

From her study, Baxter summarises that Kanter's 'role traps' can be reconceptualised as subject positions realised through linguistic interactions. People have a degree of agency to move around these subject positions (despite them being limited) so that their 'woman leader' identity is not static but dynamic.

In another study of gender and workplace interaction, Angouri (2011) investigates the linguistic construction of gender identities in a complex white-collar workplace (two multinational heavy construction companies). This is an industry in which women are highly under-represented in the UK. Angouri draws on recordings of naturally occurring routine meetings and complementary interview data and draws on similar FPDA analytical frameworks to that used by Baxter. The team comprising the participants in the study are dealing with the construction of an energy project. Angouri's analysis focuses particularly on a participant called Chloe, who is the only senior woman member of the team.

Angouri's analysis shows that a discourse of 'gender difference' prevails in this context. She refers to the well-documented 'double-bind' for women managers who are perceived in a polarised way – as either too soft (feminine) and too tough (masculine) – and observes that this same characteristic emerges in her data. Like Baxter, Angouri's analysis focuses only on data where gender was brought up as a salient issue by the participants rather than by the researcher. Analysis focuses on interactions and interviews in which employees account for the gender order as it becomes visible and relevant to them. For example, in the extract that follows, Chloe seems to be paying careful attention to Mary, a new woman employee who has just joined this particular workplace community of practice.[6]

1 Peter: we need to give him a copy of this but hmm we
2 need to translate it
3 Fil: so uhh we [uhh]
4 Gabriel: [who] is going to [translate]?
5 Peter: [either] Mary or uh P[aul]
6 Chloe: [But]
7 they need ((details)) and it's not their job=
8 Fil: =yes you are very right here I'm afraid
9 Peter: OK tomorrow I will discuss it with Mary to (.)
10 and see if she can translate uhh [. . .]
11 Chloe: hang on why Mary? Mary or Paul or both (.)
12 that's a lot of extra work for [Mary]
13 Peter: [it's ok] it's easy to
14 translate but it needs time (.) some days to translate

15 all these
16 Gabriel: hmm yes and what about ((he refers to a project
17 part of which has been assigned to Mary))
18 Chloe: how long is this going to ta [ke because]
19 Peter: [I don't know xx]xx days (.)
20 let's give Mary xxx days and Paul can take on ((Mary's
21 normal duties)) and we will take it from there.
22 Gabriel: Sounds ok [to me]
23 Chloe: [No] that's not good ((refers to
24 project)) this is Mary's (.) I want her to learn keep
25 Paul out of this
26 Gabriel: OK Chloe your wish is my command
27 ((general laughter))
28 Chloe: thanks Gab ((soft voice))

(Angouri, 2011: 388)

In this extract, Angouri notes that there is no nominated meeting chair, but Gabriel appears to have constructed himself as chair in that he assumes responsibility for assigning roles and responsibilities. A key decision being made in this extract concerns who is going to do a piece of translation work for an external company – this task is seen as 'peripheral' to the core work of the team. Peter seems to want to allocate the task to Mary, whereas Chloe proposes that the task should be done by two people rather than one. Angouri observes that Chloe seems to shift between an authoritarian and aggressive interactional style to one that could more obviously be seen to index femininity in that it is 'other-oriented' (i.e. towards Mary). Chloe seems to be very conscious when the team proposes assigning tasks to Mary. Chloe seems to position herself as a kind of gatekeeper, along with senior members of the team, to support Mary's transition from the periphery to the centre of the team. Angouri further argues that the suggestion for Mary to take on the peripheral task echoes work on how hegemonic masculinities may be enacted in everyday work practices – i.e. by men employees encouraging women to do tasks which are not considered 'core' business.

Although we have focused in detail on three illustrative empirical studies of language and gender in workplace contexts, there are many others. For other studies of gender and workplace interaction, see, for example, Mullany (2011) and Marra et al. (2006).

Whilst many of the studies directly examine gender and workplace interaction, especially in relation to women leaders, another strand of this area of research focuses more on *representation*. Litosseliti (2006), for example, looks at how women in particular professional positions are represented by the media. In an article entitled 'Men "Winning" Caring Profession Sex War' (published in the *Guardian*, 26 July 2005), for example, Litosseliti observes how the text reports on findings of academic research on men in 'caring' professions, such as nurses and primary school teachers. Drawing on a CDA of language use in the text, Litosseliti comments on the fact that the report states that men in such professions get more respect than their women counterparts. They are also given more responsibility and challenging tasks in their roles. So whilst caring work conducted by women is often devalued because it is simply seen as being a 'natural' characteristic of femininity, when the same work is performed by men, it is seen as an asset and is therefore more highly valued. Litosseliti finds similar gender discourses emerging in her analysis of another news article entitled 'Women Doctors at Top "Harm Status"' (published in the *Guardian*, 2 August 2004). If you find it difficult to gain access to workplaces for gathering interactional data for your project, media representations of language, gender and the workplace can provide an alternative rich source of data. Media representations of gender and sexuality are explored in greater detail in Chapter 6. In sum, research focusing on workplace domains shows some persistent gender-based inequalities in representation as well as in interactional practices that take place in specific workplaces. These inequalities perhaps reflect (and further contribute to) the wider social inequalities outlined at the beginning of this section.

Summary

This chapter has introduced some of the ways in which gender and sexuality can be produced through conversational interaction in informal situations as well as in institutional contexts, such as the workplace. When examining institutional contexts, other types of data can be used to explore discourses of gender and sexuality in addition to spoken conversations – this includes interview data, online data in which people write about gender and/or sexuality in institutional settings (such as schools) and media texts, such as newspaper reports focusing on gender issues in institutional and professional domains. Any text which emerges from, or refers to, these kinds of contexts has the potential to be analysed for a language, gender and sexuality research project. As with all of the chapters in this book, the specific studies referred to are necessarily selective. For more examples of empirical research projects, please refer to the readings listed at the end of the book.

Study questions and activities

1 Evaluate some of the ways that different researchers have transcribed conversational/interactional data. What do different transcription methods *show* about the interaction?
2 When analysing conversational data from either private or public contexts, what are the main *advantages* of only focusing on extracts where speakers explicitly 'orient to' particular gender and/or sexuality categories? And what

are the methodological *limitations* of using this approach (as documented by writers such as Stokoe, 2008)?

3 Write a list of the different types of linguistic data that could be collected and analysed from educational and workplace settings in a language, gender and sexuality research project.

Notes

1 See the appendix for the transcription key.
2 See the appendix for the transcription key.
3 A 'gilet' is an item of clothing. British English – gilet, American English – padded vest.
4 See the appendix for the transcription key.
5 See the appendix for the transcription key.
6 See the appendix for the transcription key.

6 Researching linguistic representations of gender and sexuality in the media

Cameron (2014b) makes an important observation that 'the media' isn't just one thing – it is many things which can include a range of mass media outlets (e.g. TV, radio, newspapers, magazines) as well as social media and other forms of online media. What all media have in common is that they are considered to be central sites where discursive constructions of, and negotiation over, gender and sexuality take place. Media texts play an important social role in offering representations of social practices and in constructing, producing and circulating cultural values and meanings. Media texts are considered important to study from a linguistic perspective because they are powerful – they reproduce and represent realities. No representations in written, oral, visual or multimodal media are ever neutral in terms of gender and sexuality. All present selective versions which can confirm or challenge the status quo through the way they construct, or fail to construct, images of femininity, masculinity and sexuality. Scholars of language and media argue that there is a dialectical relationship between media and society in that media both shapes and is shaped by society (Chouliaraki, 1999; Fairclough, 1995). This is important for the field of language, gender and sexuality as it indicates that media texts can play a role in shaping ideologies about gender and sexuality.

In the past, researchers have employed non-linguistic methods to investigate gender in media texts, such as content analysis and thematic analysis. However, these approaches have been criticised for lacking criticality and only focusing, for example, on how many characters and news sources in prime-time news are women (e.g. Gauntlett, 2008; Ross, 2012). What they do *not* do is focus on how language is used to construct certain kinds of men and/or women. For this reason, within linguistics, studies of the media have more commonly made use of F/CDA (see Chapter 4), an approach which investigates how power, dominance, inequality and abuse around gender and sexuality are enacted through language. As explained in Chapter 4, F/CDA's starting point is prevailing social problems, such as gender inequalities, discrimination and other social injustices. This makes it an appropriate analytical framework for examining how injustices around gender and sexuality are represented and linguistically conveyed in media texts.

To illustrate this approach and how it has been used to uncover and problematise gender and sexuality ideologies in media texts, we will look at some examples of empirical studies which have focused on different types of media texts. We will also, though, incorporate some studies which have made use of other analytical frameworks (either alongside or instead of F/CDA), such as corpus linguistics and LL research. The types of media texts that are examined in the following sections include newspaper articles (from the British tabloid press), print and online personal advertisements, magazines, image banks, websites and posters and merchandise. This, of course, is by no means an exhaustive list of the types of 'media texts' that can be examined in language, gender and sexuality research – and the studies discussed in the sections that follow are selected simply to give a flavour of the range of work in the field and to inspire you think about what kinds of work you could do in your own research projects. For more comprehensive reviews of work on language, gender and sexuality in media texts, see Jule (2017) and Litosseliti (2006).

British tabloid press

Zottola (2018) offers a clear rationale for critically analysing the language of news discourse:

> Among the various contexts where language plays a key role in shaping how non-conforming identities are discursively constructed in society, news discourse contributes significantly to this representational system [. . .] For this reason, news discourse is a significant source for the analysis of how ideologies, power relations and cultural values of a society are expressed and represented through language.
>
> (Zottola, 2018: 240)

News discourse, then, can contribute to representational systems of gender and sexuality identities. In an early study of language and gender in the tabloid press, Clark (1992) analysed representations of women in the reporting of crimes where sexual violence was involved. Her study showed that the *Sun* (a British tabloid newspaper) discursively assigned blame to women instead of men, including when the woman was the victim of the crime. Language-focused investigations of representations of sexuality in the media have been relatively few in number, especially those which focus specifically on the press. In the studies which do exist, Blain (2005) has used critical text analysis to explore the discourses of sexuality produced in the US by the 1994 anti-gay 'no special rights' initiative in Idaho.

Baker (2005, 2008a) and Koller (2008) examine linguistic representations of gay men and lesbians, respectively, in media texts, including British newspapers. Both use F/CDA to examine the ways in which heterosexual normativity is discursively reproduced through linguistic practices. Baker (2008a) found that conflicting positions are often adopted by newspapers in relation to stories concerning homosexuality. He argues,

> While British tabloid newspapers regularly used a 'shame and secrecy' discourse in relation to homosexuality, on the other hand, they also employed

> a reverse discourse of 'shamelessness' which was used in relation to a set of people who did not appear to be ashamed of their sexuality.
>
> (Baker, 2008a: 115)

Baker argues that both positions can effect a negative representation of gay social actors – to present them as ashamed and secretive implies that homosexuality is something to be ashamed of, yet presenting gay social actors as 'unashamed' often involves presenting them as attention-seeking, selfish and hedonistic and, ultimately, damaging to the rest of society. Both representations work to problematise homosexuality. Morrish and Sauntson (2007) use elements of pragmatics to examine how the sexual identities of particular high-profile politicians are suggested or represented in the British press. They found that, when the sexuality of the politician in question is implied as non-heterosexual, this is usually done in a negative and derogatory way. These are just some examples of work which has investigated discursive constructions of gender and sexuality in the British press.

In the remainder of this section, we'll take a look at an extended example of how F/CDA can be used to uncover sexist and homophobic ideologies in the British tabloid press. This may be used as a kind of template for conducting your own critical analyses of news representations of gender and sexuality. The example comes from an unpublished study conducted by Page and Sauntson in 2014. In this analysis, we were interested in looking at how the press reports particular crimes – those committed by women against children. We suspected that similar crimes when committed by men may be represented in quite different ways than when the perpetrator was a woman, especially in high-profile cases. The case we focused on was that of 'Baby P'. The news text from the *Sun* (by Wheeler, 2008) is related to the case of 'Baby P', in which a 17-month old infant boy died as a result of domestic abuse inflicted by his mother, her male partner and another man residing with them in London (see www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11626806 for more details on the case and a timeline of events). One of the main controversies surrounding the case was that social care workers failed to pick up on the seriousness of the situation, despite repeated injuries to the child before his death. The article belongs to a type of news text which is commonly used in the tabloid press – one in which the article does not convey core events relating to Baby P's death, instead it acts as a 'side piece', which describes a related story and situation.

Article

Baby P's mum at Monsters' Ball in jail

The vile mum of Baby P partied at the infamous Monsters' Ball in jail – while her tragic tot was given a pauper's funeral.

The cold-hearted 27-year-old joined some of Britain's most evil murderesses at the fancy dress bash.

Fury erupted two months ago when The Sun published a photo from the 2007 Halloween knees-up at London's Holloway prison – showing lifers in ghoulish costumes and dripping in fake blood.

Taxpayers footed the £500 bill for the jolly – blasted as an "insult" to victims. Baby P's mum – convicted with the tot's stepdad, 32, and a lodger of appalling cruelty after her 17-month-old son was tortured to death – was on remand at the time. She was also pregnant with a child she gave birth to in jail.

Last night a prison source said: "This woman is the most hated prisoner at Holloway. No one can believe how evil she is.

"Seeing her feasting on cake while Michael Jackson's Thriller played in the background turned everyone's stomachs.

"The fact she was pregnant was even more sickening." Days after The Sun lifted the lid on the chilling party, Justice Secretary Jack Straw outlawed any more amid outrage.

The mum cannot be named for legal reasons. She admitted causing the death of her tiny son – found in his blood-spattered cot. The stepdad, who also cannot be named, and lodger Jason Owen, 36, were convicted of the same charge. All await sentence. Despite being on an "at risk" register at Haringey council in North London, Baby P had been horrifically tortured for eight months.

Among killers at the party on the lifers' wing was Jayne Richards, 35, who butchered her lover in a row over Christmas decorations, and Rochelle Etherington, 21, who gouged out her dying victim's eye with a screwdriver.

Baby P's mum, sent to the women's jail weeks earlier, was not among those who dressed as devils and witches – and was not in the shocking picture.

The jail source said: "She wore her own clothes. She was on the lifers' wing because she was at that time charged with murder."

The article ('Baby P's Mum at Monsters Ball in Jail' by Wheeler, 2008[1]) describes a Halloween party which took place in Holloway Prison. The article suggests that Baby P's mother, who was sent to the prison after being convicted of torturing her son to death, took part in the event. The article contains descriptions of the party and is accompanied by a photograph of a group of prisoners wearing Halloween costumes and make-up. The fourth paragraph specifies that the party cost £500 of taxpayers' money. Towards the end, the names of some other prisoners are included, along with brief descriptions of the crimes they committed. The violence and gruesomeness of these crimes is emphasised. The final paragraph reports that Baby P's mother 'wore her own clothes' and 'was not in the shocking picture'. The 'Monsters Ball' article appears alongside a larger article which invites readers to sign a petition initiated by the *Sun* to remove named council workers (and a doctor) involved in the Baby P case from their jobs. The headline of the accompanying article reads '700,000 Join Justice Fight', and it contains a large photograph of a 'shrine' to Baby P covered with flowers and toys, as well as a smaller photograph of Baby P himself.

To analyse the text, we focused on a number of language elements identified in Fairclough's CDA framework (see Chapter 4) as being important to analyse. We firstly looked at the way 'social actors' (i.e. 'characters' involved in the story) and their actions are represented in the text. We identified all of the social actors referred to in the text (presented in the left-hand column in Table 6.1). We then went on to document other terms used to refer to each actor, and we identified the processes in which they were represented as active and passive throughout the text. The results of this social actor representation analysis are presented in Table 6.1.

Some key points that can be drawn from the findings presented in Table 6.1 are that the active verbs and material processes in which the 'mum' and other

Table 6.1 Social actor representation and actions in the *Baby P* text

Social actor	*Other terms used*	*Processes in which social actor is active*	*Processes in which social actor is passive*
Mother of Baby P	Mum, Baby P's mum, this woman, vile mum, cold-hearted 27-year-old, she	Partied, joined, turned everyone's stomachs, feasting (on cake), admitted causing the death of, gave birth, wore (her own clothes)	Was convicted, was on remand, was pregnant, cannot be named, await sentence
Baby P	The tot, 17-month-old son, tiny son		Was given, tortured to death, has been horrifically tortured
Prisoners	Revellers, murderesses, lifers, killers		
Taxpayers		Footed the £500 bill	
Stepdad of Baby P			Convicted, cannot be named, await sentence
The Sun	We	Published, lifted the lid, exposed	
Justice Secretary Jack Straw		Outlawed (parties)	
Lodger Jason Owen			Convicted, await sentence
Jayne Richards (prisoner)		Butchered (her lover)	
Rochelle Etherington (prisoner)		Gouged out (her dying victim's eyes)	

prisoners are the agent focus on excess, having fun and a lack of guilt. The murders they have committed are also not presented as being mitigated by any specific circumstances. The message conveyed is that these women committed the murders because they are just 'evil' and do not feel any remorse about them (as can be seen by the way they are represented as having fun and enjoying parties in prison). The verbs also tend to focus on violent and irrational behaviour on the part of the women prisoners (e.g. butchered her lover over a row about Christmas decorations). Thus, the women are represented as engaging in behaviours which are not just criminal – they are outside any moral framework and completely inexplicable and inexcusable. This discourse of women criminals as irrational is consolidated through the use of the language of evaluation, which is the next feature we considered in the analysis.

Throughout the text, there are two particularly prevalent evaluative semantic fields – the first is a semantic field of 'partying'. We see this realised through the use of words and phrases such as *Monsters Ball, knees-up, fancy dress ball, Halloween bash, jolly, chilling party, feasting* and *costumes*. The other salient semantic field is that of 'horror'. The headline 'Baby P's mother at Monsters' Ball in jail' and central photograph of women dressed in Halloween costumes (including fake blood around the mouths and on the clothes of two of the women) also constructs a core connection between horror imagery (incorporating supernatural horror) equated with violent crime in real life. The author then employs a range of lexical devices to strengthen it during descriptions of both the party and crimes previously committed by individuals at the party. Specifically, the following list of adjectives/adjectival groups (set 1), nominal groups (set 2) and verb phrases (set 3) are used:

1 *vile, sick, cold-hearted, dripping in fake blood, evil, sickening, chilling, shocking*
2 *evil murderesses, ghoulish costumes, appalling cruelty, blood-spattered cot*
3 *tortured to death, feasting on cake, turned everyone's stomachs, horrifically tortured, butchered her lover, gouged out her dying victim's eye with a screwdriver*

These two semantic fields of 'partying' and 'horror' combine so that, even though the prisoners are 'in costume' and 'performing' horror, the intertwining of the two fields suggests that the 'horror' attributes belong to the women themselves rather than their party costumes. The vocabulary of the 'horror film' genre also merges with the descriptions of the social actors as amoral to construct them as dehumanised 'monsters'. The emphasis on 'partying' also presents Baby P's mother (and the other prisoners) as 'flaunting' their crimes and their 'evilness' (especially because of the 'horror' theme of the Halloween party) and as not experiencing any guilt. A further element of the evaluative language used throughout the text is the use of adjectives to describe Baby P's mum such as *vile, cold-hearted, most hated, evil* and *sickening*. These lexical choices constrain the reader to interpret the elements of real-life violent crime, centrally the death of Baby P, in light of the constructed horror theme. There is no attempt to mitigate the reported crimes of women against men – for example, no attempt to contextualise the crimes or to describe the circumstances in which they were committed. These choices are significant from the perspective of gender, as they support Clark's (1992) assertions that violence committed by women is constructed as particularly abhorrent by the *Sun*.

Other relevant features that we noted in our analysis were the structure of the text as a whole. In particular, we are not told until near the end that Baby P's mother was *not* in costume and was *not* in the picture which accompanies the story. So, until this point, we assume that she is. The information that Baby P's mother had not yet been sentenced at the time is also quite obscured in the text. She was only on the lifers' wing because she had been *charged* with murder and not actually found guilty of murder. In doing CDA, Fairclough urges us to pay attention to which information is included and what is omitted, especially in journalistic writing. This omission or obscuring of information is deliberate and contributes to the discursive construction of gendered meanings in the text. Other features to note are the use of the feminine term 'murder*esses*', which emphasises that the prisoners at the party are women (and the fact that they are women is emphasised throughout the text). Thus, our attention is explicitly drawn to gender – these are not just criminals, they are *women* criminals. The text also makes use of a number of nominalisations which have no agent (e.g. *outrage*, *fury*). Despite the lack of agency, these are feelings that readers are expected to experience towards Baby P's mother and the story that the *Sun* is telling. The word 'shocking' also appears at the end of the text without an agent. The implication here is that we, as the readers, are supposed to be the agent – we are supposed to experience shock, fury and outrage at the actions of Baby P's mother. Thus, the article uses language in such a way that it frames the expected emotional responses of the reader.

The use of the language features described earlier means that a negative discourse around non-normative gender (i.e. a woman who disrupts the hegemonic discourse of femininity which involves women *not* committing violent crimes) is constructed. For the full effect of this connection, the author uses a structuring device which implies that Baby P's mother is a fully active participant at the event for the majority of the article – we only find out that she was not present at the party in the final two sentences.

A key issue in this illustrative study is that men who are accused of similar crimes against children are not subjected to the same forms of representation when the crimes are reported in the press. This is just as significant as the way these types of women criminals are represented. Whilst women who commit crimes against children are constructed as abnormal 'monsters', the fact that men aren't represented in this way functions to normalise the committing of such crimes by men – even though the crimes are not condoned, they are, nevertheless, seen as more 'natural' when committed by men. In this way, these representations are examples of the kind of 'naturalisation' that Butler (1990) discusses in her developments of queer theory – such representations allude to 'common sense' understandings of men as 'naturally' aggressive.

It is hoped that by presenting this detailed analysis of a single media text, you can apply a similar analysis to your own selected text/s in your research project.

Having considered how F/CDA can be used to analyse media texts, we now turn to another method of analysis – corpus linguistics.

Corpus linguistics and the analysis of media texts

As explained in Chapter 4, corpus analysis involves using computers to discover linguistic patterns within bodies of text which may not be observable to the human eye. As Baker (2005) notes, the patterns identified by computerised analysis can subsequently be subjected to more interpretative critical analyses, and this includes analysis focusing on gender and sexuality.

Forms of media texts that have been analysed using the tools of corpus linguistics include a number of studies focusing on discursive constructions of gender and sexuality in print and online personal advertisements. These are, arguably, forms of media texts because they either appear within bigger media texts, such as magazines or newspapers (as is the case with print personal advertisements), or because they appear on online advertising platforms. Baker (2005) conducted a corpus-based study analysing printed personal advertisements from gay men. The corpus tools facilitated a comparative analysis so that Baker was able to compare word frequencies across time (from the 1970s to the 2000s) in the corpus of advertisements. Baker's analysis focuses particularly on how the use of frequent adjectives is used to construct gender in the texts. As well as looking at overall frequencies for adjectives used in the advertisements, Baker focuses much of his analysis on comparing the most frequent adjectives used to describe the self (i.e. the person writing the advertisement) and the desired other (the type of man they are seeking). The results of this analysis are shown in Tables 6.2 and 6.3.

In discussing these corpus findings, Baker observes that, overall, the most frequent adjectives used in the adverts were *slim* (occurring 305 times in the corpus), *similar* (284), *young* (217), *attractive* (176), *active* (155), *sincere* (155), *professional* (147), *genuine* (133), *non-scene* (133) and *tall* (119). However, Baker also noted that descriptions of the self tended to differ somewhat from descriptions of the other, particularly in terms of how gender identities were constructed through the use of particular adjectives. Whilst advertisers were much more likely to refer to themselves as *slim*, *attractive*, *professional*, *tall* or *young*, they tended to be seeking someone who was *younger*, *genuine* or *similar*. Moreover, collocation analysis of *similar* revealed that the most frequent adjectival collocates occurring within four places to the left or right of *similar* were *non-scene* (19), *sincere* (17), *genuine* (15), *straight-acting* (13), *younger* (12), *gay* (11), *attractive* (10), *discreet* (10), *slim* (9) and *young* (9), suggesting that these terms tended to be attributes which many advertisers claimed to both possess and desire. Thus, all of these qualities were constructed as positive and desirable.

From Tables 6.2 and 6.3, it can also be seen that different lexical strategies were used at different times to refer to particular types of masculine identities: *straight-acting*, *non-camp*, *non-effeminate* and *masculine* occur at different periods as popular adjectives. Baker observes that, in 1973, advertisers were most likely to

Table 6.2 Most popular adjectives to refer to the self in gay men's personal adverts

	1973	*1982*	*1991*	*2000*	*All*
1	young (52)	slim (74)	slim (52)	slim (71)	slim (244)
2	slim (47)	attractive (47)	non-scene (49)	professional (53)	attractive (146)
3	attractive (33)	young (33)	straight-acting (40)	caring (34)	professional (132)
4	good-looking (24)	tall (32)	professional (34)	attractive (31)	young (116)
5	lonely (23)	non-scene (30)	attractive (33)	tall (30)	tall (105)
6	active (22)	professional (30)	good-looking (27)	good-looking (26)	non-scene (100)
7	tall (19)	active (22)	tall (24)	fit (25)	good-looking (93)
8	professional (17)	quiet (18)	young (23)	affectionate (24)	active (55)
9	sincere (15)	good-looking (16)	intelligent (22)	non-scene (20)	caring (55)
10	affectionate (13)	sincere (16)	sincere (18)	Good sense of humour (19)	sincere (55)

Source: Baker, 2005

Table 6.3 Most popular adjectives to describe the desired other in gay men's personal adverts

	1973	*1982*	*1991*	*2000*	*All*
1	similar (61)	similar (73)	similar (80)	similar (62)	similar (276)
2	active (47)	active (26)	young (30)	younger (20)	active (96)
3	sincere (31)	younger (24)	younger (26)	active (17)	younger (91)
4	younger (21)	sincere (22)	slim (17)	slim (14)	sincere (71)
5	non-camp (13)	young (22)	straight-acting (17)	young (13)	slim (61)
6	attractive (10)	slim (20)	smooth (13)	non-scene (12)	genuine (46)
7	non-effeminate (10)	genuine (15)	clean shaven (11)	caring (11)	non-scene (34)
8	slim (10)	discreet (12)	genuine (11)	genuine (11)	non-camp (31)
9	genuine (9)	non-camp (12)	non-scene (10)	sincere (10)	attractive (30)
10	masculine (8)	non-scene (12)	black (9)	intelligent (9)	intelligent (28)

Source: Baker, 2005

refer to masculinity by using *anti-types* – words which stated a lack of a particular trait (e.g. terms such as *non-camp*, *non-effeminate* and *not camp*). But by 1982, there appeared to be a wider range of strategies used for signalling desirable masculinity. In addition to the continued use of *non-camp* and *masculine*, references were also made to male heterosexual gender norms (e.g. *straight-looking*). By 1991, *straight-acting* had actually become the most dominant term, used in 47 per cent of cases where men wanted to overtly refer to masculine gendered behaviour. In the 2000 data set, *straight-acting* continued to be the most frequently used marker (also shortened to SA).

Baker highlights one of the most interesting findings from the tables as being that the figures for overt masculinity lexis in 1991 are much higher than in the other three time periods that were sampled. In 1991, an idealised connection between heterosexuality and masculinity emerged strongly, resulting in adverts such as the one that follows:

> Normally straight? Just happened to be looking at these pages? Clean-shaven, non-smoking young-looking guy (21+) wanted by straight-acting totally non-scene male 28. Fun/friendship. London Box 6611.

In Baker's collocation analysis of the most frequent adjectives, he finds that the main adjectival collocates of the words which refer to masculinity are *non-scene*, slim, *similar, attractive, professional, active, tall, clean-shaven, intelligent* and *young*. From this, Baker argues that there appears to be a recursive relationship between these adjectives and masculinity – the adjectives not only refer to masculinity but also help to bring it into being. Baker notes the collocate *non-scene* is particularly interesting and revealing – to be *non-scene* is, therefore, to claim to have either minimal contact with other gay people or to only meet gay people in non-gay establishments. The term *non-scene* does not appear at all in the 1973 data. It occurs 42 times in 1982 and 59 times in 1991 (when explicit references to masculinity are also highest) and then decreases to 32 times in the 2000 advertisements. Baker suggests that the repeated pairing of *non-scene* and terms such as *straight-acting* might imply a belief amongst the advertisers that social contact with other gay men is somehow emasculating which, of course, implies a devaluing of femininity and places a high value on hegemonic forms of masculinity.

This type of corpus-based analysis of gay men's personal advertisements is, then, useful for revealing ideologies of gender and sexuality which circulate amongst this particular group of text-producers. A similar study of gay men's personal advertisements which focuses on a different national context, and moves from looking at print advertisements to examining online advertisements, is conducted by Bogetic (2013). Bogetic investigates collocation patterns in a corpus of Serbian gay teenagers' online personal advertisements (from the *GaySerbia* web portal). Similar to the findings in Baker's study, Bogetic finds that lexical collocation patterns in the online Serbian teen advertisements shows strong associations of masculinity with positive characteristics and 'effeminacy' with negative properties. So the teenagers writing the online personal advertisements in Bogetic's study construct hegemonic masculinity (through the use of particular collocation patterns) and, at the same time, the cultural stigma associated with homosexuality gets discursively shifted to non-masculine gay men only. This reinforces Connell's (1995) notion that 'hegemonic masculinity' is the most dominant and desired form of masculinity in society, even amongst non-heterosexual-identifying men.

The national context is important in Bogetic's study. Sexual minorities are still largely discriminated against in Serbia, despite recent de-criminalisation of same-sex sexual acts. So the Internet serves as a safe space to be gay for Serbian youth. In order to investigate the language used in these types of advertisements, Bogetic argues that lexical phenomena deserve particular attention in analysis, as they can shed light on locally salient concepts and values. To conduct the analysis, five lexemes denoting masculinity and non-masculinity were selected based on their frequency (they occurred at least ten times in the corpus). These words were as follows:

Fem ('fem')
Nefem ('nonfem')
Feminiziran ('effeminate')
Nefeminiziran ('non-effeminate')
Muzevan ('manly')

Bogetic then conducted a collocation analysis conducted for the previous lexemes. The collocation analysis revealed that words denoting effeminacy typically collocate with negative traits whereas those denoting non-effeminacy and masculinity collocate with positive traits. In this way, the collocations indirectly index gender ideologies and attitudes towards sexuality in this community. Bogetic also observed that the adjective *normalan* ('normal') features prominently in the findings (in fact, it was the most frequent adjective) and collocates frequently with *nefem* and *nefeminiziran*. Furthermore, although *normalan* collocates with a range of properties, traits of masculinity and sexual potency feature prominently in the data. For example, it is often associated with a heterosexual-like appearance and behaviour. Bogetic notes a particularly striking pattern is the frequent use of *normalan* in the phrase *normalan strejt gej* ('normal straight gay'). This phrase is used to describe both the self and desired other in the advertisements and appears in statements such as, 'I'd like to meet normal straight gays not older than 20', and 'I like normal men, which means they act like a normal straight gay who are not effeminate' (Bogetic, 2013: 355). In these kinds of phrases which are common throughout Bogetic's data, 'straight' obviously takes on a new meaning – not heterosexual, but heterosexual-like masculine behaviour as opposed to non-masculinity and effeminacy. The frequent collocation with *normalan* shows the positive ideological value of 'straight gays' and ultimately allows community members to locate gay male sexuality within the realm of standard Serbian conceptualisations of masculinity. Bogetic argues that the term is based on shared cultural knowledge within the group that allows advertisement readers to interpret the term and its social meaning. The repeated use of the term also allows the group to shift the social stigma associated with homosexuality to one particular sub-group – that of 'effeminate' homosexuals. In sum, the teenagers in Bogetic's study construct a gay identity modelled on the basis of socially desirable masculine identities, much as they do in Baker's earlier study of print advertisements from earlier time periods.

These findings are also echoed in another study of online personal advertisements used by gay men, but this time in South Africa. Milani (2013) conducts an intersectional investigation into *meetmarket*, a South African online community for men looking for other men. Milani uses corpus linguistics to analyse the data which comprises personal profiles from the *meetmarket* site. He examines the ways in which members of the community place a higher value on some kinds of identities at the expense of others. This then leads to an examination of how such 'valorised' identities function to reproduce (or contest) dominant forms of social categorisation in their expressions of same-sex desire in the context in question.

Milani's study comprises a corpus analysis of online profiles and interviews with a sample of 15 white South African men about their engagement in *meetmarket*. In the corpus analysis, Milani finds that collocations of *guy*, when used to refer to objects of desire, are associated with a plethora of racial descriptors (*white, black, Indian*), physical attributes (*hot, slim, good-looking*) and general characteristics (*decent, nice, fun, next-door*). There is also evidence of sexual desire for the hyper-masculine (*a man's man*).

Again, another key finding from the corpus analysis is that *guy* frequently collocates with *straight-acting*. The term 'straight-acting' places a high value on hegemonic masculinity, just as it does in Baker's and Bogetic's studies. In Milani's study, 'straight-acting', again, involves an overt disavowal of femininity. Importantly, though, Milani reminds us of Gramsci's (1971) assertion that hegemony can only take place with the collusion of those being subordinated. Milani argues that this process of colluding in hegemonic masculinity is at play in the language used in the South African online profiles he examines. Milani's corpus analysis also indicates a negative prosody surrounding *feminine/fem/fems* – the term 'no fems' is an obvious example. Again, through such language use, femininity is subjugated in this context much as it is in Bogetic's Serbian study. Baker refers to 'hegemonic homosexuality' as a homosexual mirror image of 'heterosexual hegemonic masculinity', arguing that the very existence and maintenance of these two hegemonies of masculinity require femininity to be overtly rejected.

However, Milani points out that there are, on occasion, some ambivalent attitudes expressed towards hegemonic masculinity by the participants in the study. Interestingly, the writers of these examples also seem to be showing an explicit awareness of identity as 'performance'. Milani concludes, *meetmarket* 'seems to follow a well-known hegemonic system of gender 'normality' in which masculinity is the most valuable currency and femininity is rejected as worthless and undesirable' (p. 630).

So far, we have seen how methods such as CDA and corpus linguistics have been used to analyse media texts such as newspaper articles and print and online personal advertisements in terms of how gender and sexuality are discursively constructed. In the next section, we move to examining gender and sexuality in a different kind of media text – lifestyle magazines.

Lifestyle magazines

Another body of research within the field of language, gender and sexuality in the media has focused on how gender is represented in lifestyle magazines targeted at men or women. Whilst constructions of gender in lifestyle magazines have been subjected to scrutiny in media studies for several decades, systematic language-focused analysis has been more recent. In their MMDA-based study of women's lifestyle magazines (one of the first studies which used a systematic CDA to uncover gender ideologies), Eggins and Iedema (1997) observe a repeated orientation to appearance in their data sample. Throughout the magazines, the imagined reader is urged to work on her body and to buy into beauty-enhancing products in order to improve physical attractiveness. Eggins and Iedema also find an orientation towards what they term 'responsible heterosexuality' in the texts – this means that the women readers are encouraged to desire and pursue heterosexual relationships and to take interpersonal responsibility for the success or failure of such relationships. Another key finding is that the magazines are characterised largely by 'desocialisation', meaning that they tend to efface all issues of difference other than that of binary sex (which is also uncritically conflated with gender). Eggins and Iedema note that this is seen repeatedly in the text and images in the magazines which rarely, if ever, reflect any diversity in terms of class, age or ethnicity. Finally, the authors argue that the magazines are also characterised by 'personalisation' in that they use language and images to construct a confiding relationship, encouraging readers to identify with the community and encouraging them to believe they are an autonomous individual and a voluntary member of a classless community of beautiful and successful women.

This idea of 'personalisation' in lifestyle magazines has been developed by Talbot (1995) who proposed the idea of a 'synthetic sisterhood' operating in magazines aimed at teenage girls and young women. Within this concept, Talbot and others have argued that ideal subjects are often constructed through language and visual elements in lifestyle magazines as members of a unified shared 'community'. Talbot observes that magazines aimed at girls and young women often focus on personal problems and advice-giving, and it is this discursive practice which helps to create the idea of readers being in an imagined single community or 'sisterhood'. And this has the effect of occluding differences between readers. Talbot argues that the creation of a synthetic sisterhood makes people want to buy the magazines because buying them and reading them implies membership in the desirable imagined sisterhood. Because the creation of community has a commercial motivation, this process has, therefore, been referred to as constructing 'consumer femininities' (and, more recently, consumer masculinities).

McLoughlin (2000) further observes that many of the 'glossy' high-end lifestyle magazines targeted at women and men have become increasingly 'colonised' by advertising discourse which has led to a blurring of the distinction between magazine genres and advertisements. This further contributes to the idea that magazines function to construct consumerised femininities and masculinities and, ultimately, construct gender in particular ways to make money. In more recent work, McLoughlin (2017) has examined this and related concepts in a CDA of South Asian women's lifestyle magazines. This work involves using intersectionality to look at how there is a disconnection between the magazines' linguistic and multimodal representations of South Asian women and the lived realities of their target audiences. McLoughlin's analysis challenges the notion that discourses of freedom and choice employed by women's magazines are emancipatory and demonstrates that the version of feminism advocated in the magazines is actually a commodified form which functions to propound the commercial aims of the publications. In this way, the magazines have aims and forms of representation which are similar to those targeted at other groups of women.

Other research has examined lifestyle magazines targeted at men (e.g. *FHM*). In his analysis of constructions of masculinities in men's magazines, Gauntlett (2008) identifies the following 'core narratives' as repeatedly appearing in such texts:

- Men like (to look at) women;
- But men don't know too much about women (a frequent feature of the magazines is instructions on how to get along with women);
- Men like cars, gadgets and sports;
- Men need help (supportive of 'men's activities' but need help; grooming advice; how to avoid alcoholism, addictions to food, gambling, drugs; how to get over a hangover, dress, become more intelligent, succeed in job interview, choose clothes, be a good father; and skills such as those related to sports, cooking and sex);
- Men are fascinated by bravery and danger.

Although Gauntlett does not conduct a linguistic study, he notes that the general 'tone' of the magazines is one of not talking down to the reader and not being taken too seriously. They often address the reader as 'mate', thus constructing the reader as having the same status as the journalist. Humour and irony are often deployed as strategies for giving advice. According to Gauntlett, irony is important in the magazines because it 'provides a "protective layer", then, between lifestyle information and the readers, so that men don't have to feel patronised or inadequate' (Gauntlett, 2008: 177). Irony also functions to 'subvert political critique' in that anyone who criticises the magazines for being sexist can be said to be 'missing the joke', thus making their complaints redundant (Gauntlett, 2008: 177). Gauntlett further argues,

> This 'sexist jokiness' of *FHM* is based on thoroughly non-sexist assumptions – the *intended* laugh, more often than not, is about the silliness of being sexist, rather than actual sexism, because in the world of *FHM* men are aware, however quietly or embarrassedly, that it's only fair to treat women and men as equals in the modern world, and that sexism is idiotic.
>
> (Gauntlett, 2008: 178)

A competing argument is presented by Jackson et al. (2001), who argue that irony in men's magazines actually functions to protect sexist views. They posit that men who read the magazines are not actually conscious of how masculinity is being constructed and are not aware of the apparent ironic intentions of the writers. Furthermore, the magazines do much to re-assert an old-school masculinity and represent men and women as polar opposites.

Benwell (2003) examines stereotypical constructions of dominant forms of masculinity in a sample of men's lifestyle magazines using F/CDA. What is interesting about Benwell's study, though, is that she also finds examples of more 'ambiguous' masculinities where men are constructed/construct themselves as 'anti-heroes'. This suggests that constructions of masculinity in the magazines, although often problematic, can be complex and are not always as straightforward as might be assumed.

Beyond lifestyle magazines, Sunderland (2004) conducted a study which examines fatherhood discourse in parenting magazines. Using F/CDA, Sunderland analysed representations of motherhood and fatherhood in a sample of magazines. She analysed a number of formal linguistic features in parenting magazines (*Parenting* and *Baby Years*) and found that fathers are rarely interpellated, resulting in the emergence of what Sunderland terms a 'part-time father' discourse'. This discourse is realised through lexis such as *step in*, *help out*, and *give mum a break* when referring to the actions of fathers. Some other examples include the following:

- That's why I'd [father] often step in and say, 'I'll comfort the baby. You [mother] need a break'.
- Include your partner. After you've performed your regular nighttime ritual, for instance, he might give your child a massage or sing her a song.
- Monroe . . . credits her husband, who works at home, for participating in childcare and helping her in difficult situations. But what happens if a tandem nurser doesn't have an understanding spouse?

(Sunderland, 2004: 112)

Sunderland also notes a paucity of visual representations of fathers in the magazines. Another observation is that there are an array of female 'voices' represented in the articles (e.g. parenting 'experts') which contributes to what Sunderland terms a 'mother-friendly environment' in the magazines, and which indirectly interpellates *mothers* but not fathers. The mother-friendly environment of the magazines is also achieved through reiterated references to breastfeeding which clearly interpellate *mothers* and make clear that *you* does not have a plural referent. Examples include, 'Don't smoke or allow your children to spend time around smokers. And, just as importantly, breastfeed as long as possible' and 'Breastfeed, if you can' (Sunderland, 2004: 114).

Furthermore, Sunderland finds many traditional gender stereotypes in the magazines which recycle linguistic traces of familiar, traditionally gendered discourses:

- I sometimes wish *parents* would ask themselves, 'Would my *mother* have called the doctor about this?'

- At some point, if you're a mom to a toddler, you must face the inevitable tantrum in the supermarket, in the restaurant or wherever you'd least like it to happen.
- Dr. Humiston . . . suggests that Dad or Grandma take the baby to that first appointment [for an inoculation] if Mom doesn't feel like she can handle it.

In all of the earlier examples, the 'mother' is always discursively constructed as the 'default' carer. In sum, the 'dominant reading' of these texts, according to Sunderland, can be seen as one in which the main addressee is the mother and a 'part-time father' discourse is implied. I would add that the previous examples from Sunderland's work also interpellate a *heterosexual* mother and make assumptions about the presumed heterosexuality of both parents.

The studies discussed so far all focus on magazines aimed at a heterosexual audience. Sexuality diversity has, in fact, been noticeably absent from linguistic-based studies of gender in magazines. An exception is Turner's (2008) study, which uses CDA to examine how the sexual identity-based groups of 'us' and 'them' are constructed in six consecutive editions of *Diva* in 2002–2003 – Britain's only mainstream lesbian magazine. Unlike other F/CDA studies, Turner uses F/CDA to examine lesbian identities from within – by focusing on a minority discourse rather than a discourse *about minorities*. Turner's deployment of F/CDA focuses on identifying signifiers for women and their correlations between the use of particular nouns and topics (e.g. *dyke* and *activism*).

Turner found, firstly, that the texts suppressed differences between readers based on class, ethnicity, race, education and so on in order to create and emphasise a single, recognisable in-group identity based on sexual identity. This in-group is dependent on the discursive construction of ideological boundaries in order to maintain the category 'us', with the 'them' group engaging in behaviours which are designed to sustain a heterosexist social hierarchy. Thus, the 'us' and 'them' groups that are constructed through the language of the text often manifest with the positives being emphasised and the negatives suppressed about the 'us' group and the negatives emphasised and the positives suppressed about the 'them' group. In the following extracts taken from articles within the magazine, lesbians as a group are represented as having to struggle against heterosexist society and as having their identity institutionally unprotected and threatened by 'them':

> It is no easy thing to give up the safety and privilege of a heterosexual life [. . .] Of course, the road to the lesbian nation is not an easy one. Many women gave the most heartbreaking accounts of what they had to lose along the way. But, for all the pain and sheer hard work, leaving heterosexuality for the lesbian life was, for most of them, an extraordinary and liberating journey.

> It was an NHS clinic which had never before provided fertility services to lesbians. So Jan and Sarah were not unduly surprised when they were turned

> away. What did surprise them was the reason they were given – the clinic claimed it had no sperm. A tad suspicious, they wondered whether this was a novel excuse for discrimination.
>
> (Turner, 2008: 381–382)

Turner notes that heterosexual women feature very rarely as the primary subject of articles. When they are referenced as a group, 'they' are often 'alternately scorned as the willing victims of patriarchy and despised for their comfort within it' (2008: 383). Turner notes that gay men and bisexuals are also constructed as 'them' groups in the texts and are represented as posing threats to the permeable 'us' and 'them' boundaries. Turner concludes that, in the *Diva* articles analysed, 'the relationship between "us" and a heterosexual "them" continues to be manufactured in terms of a combative binary in which "we" are the victims of "their" heteropatriarchal oppression' (2008: 386).

Although we have only looked at a sample of the studies of language, gender and sexuality in magazines, we can see that many of the analyses show an orientation towards reinforcing heteronormativity and idealised gender identities. As Milani explains,

> Lifestyle magazines are deeply heteronormative in that they are built on and reproduce the belief that the world is exclusively and inevitably heterosexual.
>
> (Milani, 2013: 212)

However, work by researchers such as Turner suggest that, if we look in the right places, we can find magazine texts which contain different kinds of representations of gender and sexuality, and this is potentially liberating. The studies by Turner and McLoughlin briefly summarised earlier highlight the increased importance of incorporating intersectional analyses of language, gender and sexuality in media texts. We focus more explicitly on intersectionality in media texts in the next section.

Intersectional analyses of gender and sexuality in media texts

Whilst researchers such as McLoughlin have examined intersections of gender and ethnicity in their analyses of media texts, Caldas-Coulthard and Moon (2016) examine representations of the gender role of 'grandmother' across a range of media texts. They focus particularly on intersections of sexism and ageism in analysing such representations. The authors draw on image banks (e.g. Google Images; iStock Images), corpus data and other media texts (e.g. websites addressed to grandmothers; children's books containing grandmothers as characters) for their data. Their main findings are that grandmothers are visually and linguistically represented in two main ways: firstly, they are presented as sharing semiotic resources associated with childhood and domestic spheres; secondly, grandmothers are sometimes presented as transgressive by being shown to engage in behaviours which are inappropriate for their 'age'. Caldas-Coulthard and

Moon conclude that sexism and ageism, and the intersections between them, are pervasive in the media. Moreover, they argue that narratives of ageing as a kind of 'decline' for women are prevalent, and these narratives have overwhelmingly negative associations. For example, grandmothers rarely have their voices heard in public spaces and are often represented in derogatory ways (e.g. as sexually undesirable and unattractive).

The authors' multi-modal discourse analysis of image banks (using the search term *grandmother*) reveals grandmothers repeatedly being represented in generic settings or in domestic spaces and as engaging in activities such as cooking, knitting and playing with children, as in Figures 6.1 and 6.2.

However, Caldas-Coulthard and Moon do also find some transgressive representations in their image bank search. These representations reject the traditional, stereotypical grandmother role, but they also 'signal the inseparability of humour and denigration' (Caldas-Coulthard and Moon, 2016: 320).

In their analysis of *texts* about grandmothers, Caldas-Coulthard and Moon find the following recurrent themes:

- Empowerment, positive ageing, purposefulness (positive connotations)
- Frailty, decline, rejection, vulnerability, disempowerment, invisibility (negative connotations)
- Specific gendered practices associated with femininity and domesticity (negative connotations)
- Desexing (old women are considered physically beyond the age of sexual interest) (negative connotations)

(Adapted from Caldas-Coulthard and Moon, 2016: 323)

We can see from this list of themes that most of the representations are negative, derogatory and make implicit social judgements and prescribe behaviour based on gender and age simultaneously (what the authors term the 'double deviancy' of being old and being a woman). Such work is important because sexist and ageist stereotyping through language and images in children's literature is well documented as having a prejudicial effect on young people.

Finally, in the corpus data, Caldas-Coulthard and Moon find *grandmother/s* collocating most frequently with items referring to age, health or lifetime (e.g. *elderly*, *aged*, *frail*, *sick*, *died*, *late*, *maternal*, *paternal*), premodifying adjectives pointing to affection and the positive affective significance of the grandmother-grandchild relationship in families (e.g. *beloved*, *dear*, *doting*, *kindly*) and other female kinship terms and words referring to home and family (e.g. *aunt/s*, *daughter*, *parents*, *family*, *house*).

Other intersectionally focused studies of language, gender and sexuality in media texts have revealed how diversity itself can become a commodity in certain contexts. Milani and Levon (2016), for example, look at how diversity is incorporated into a nationalist discourse for a nation's economic gain – in this case, Israel. They observe that Israel does not just use linguistic diversity as a commodity but also commodifies its gender and sexual diversity in order to market itself

Figure 6.1 Grandma knitting

Source: Caldas-Coulthard and Moon, 2016: 319

[Image courtesy of iStock images, reproduced with their permission]

Figure 6.2 Grandma with child in kitchen

Source: Caldas-Coulthard and Moon, 2016: 318

[Image courtesy of iStock Images, reproduced with their permission]

as 'progressive'. This is more commonly known as 'pinkwashing' and the authors argue that it is a manifestation of homonationalism, which positions the equitable treatment of LGBT+ individuals as a key icon of civilisation and social progress. Other societies that do not meet this standard are conversely constructed as 'barbaric' and 'uncivilised'. The authors summarise the relationship between homonationalism and pinkwashing as follows:

> Homonationalism is the discursive process through which both state and non-state actors bring sexual diversity into the very definition of the nation-state so as to legitimise the exclusion and/or repression of others who are portrayed as lacking in this crucial criterion of 'tolerance of sexual diversity'. Pinkwashing is the public face of this homonationalist discourse.
>
> (Milani and Levon, 2016: 70)

In other words, to be a 'good Israeli' is, at least in part, about being tolerant of gender and sexual diversity.

Milani and Levon draw on a 'linguistic landscapes' (LL) approach (see Chapter 4) to look at how homonationalism operates *spatially* in discursive and bodily practices, and to explore how homonationalism works through public discourse. One of the LL 'artefacts' they analyse in the study is a T-shirt worn on a body at Tel Aviv Pride 2013 (Figure 6.3).

In their analysis, Milani and Levon argue that enemies of LGBT+ rights are singled out by way of a row of crossed out flags. The national flags on the upper side of the T-shirt conversely function to 'territorialise' civilisation by linking it to specific national contexts (Israel, USA, England). In this way, Israel is represented as being socially advanced along with the USA and England (and what might broadly be conceived of as the global 'West' or the 'North'). These flag images appear alongside text which reads 'Defend Civilization', whilst the crossed out flags appear alongside the words 'Defeat Jihad'. This further reinforces the idea that Israel represents civilisation, whilst those countries represented by the crossed out flags are constructed as war-mongering, barbaric and uncivilised.

In Israel, Tel Aviv Pride is argued by the authors to be the most successful manifestation of the country's nationalist/consumerist enterprise. Pride is primarily targeted at an audience of lesbian and gay tourists attracted to the country because of its reputation as a holiday destination but also because of its reputation for promoting gay rights. Milani and Levon define 'Pride' events as:

> typically involving a march or a parade, Pride functions as a spatial tactic for non-normative sexualities to momentarily re-claim parts of the cityscape and thus make themselves visible for audiences of (un)supportive onlookers.
>
> (Milani and Levon, 2016: 76)

Interestingly, Milani and Levon also look at representations of Israel/Tel Aviv at Stockholm Pride 2015. Tel Aviv was one of exhibitors at the Stockholm Pride event; therefore, the linguistic landscape was populated by related texts, such as the bag in Figure 6.4.

In this artefact, the use of English firstly carries connotations of modernity and globalisation, especially when used in this kind of public signage. But the bag is also 'deterritorialised' from the political space of Israel, as are other promotional

Figure 6.3 Ready-to-wear homonationalist politics – Tel Aviv Pride 2013
Source: Milani and Levon, 2016

materials for Tel Aviv which the authors found to be publicly visible at Stockholm Pride. Another example of promotional material is included in Figure 6.5.

In the poster in Figure 6.5, the positive gay rights agenda ideologically associated with Israel to form its homonationalism is represented visually through the rainbow colours of the pedestrian crossing and the accompanying 'Gay Vibe'

Figure 6.4 Bag at Stockholm Pride 2015

Source: Milani and Levon, 2016

text. Milani and Levon note that, in this text, as in others analysed in the same project, there are images of men who are young, slim, muscled or in drag. There are no women in the marketing materials promoting Tel Aviv and restrictive representations of men dominate the promotional landscape of the city. Hence, the LL analysis works to reveal restrictive discourses not only of gender and sexuality but also of nationalism in the context under scrutiny.

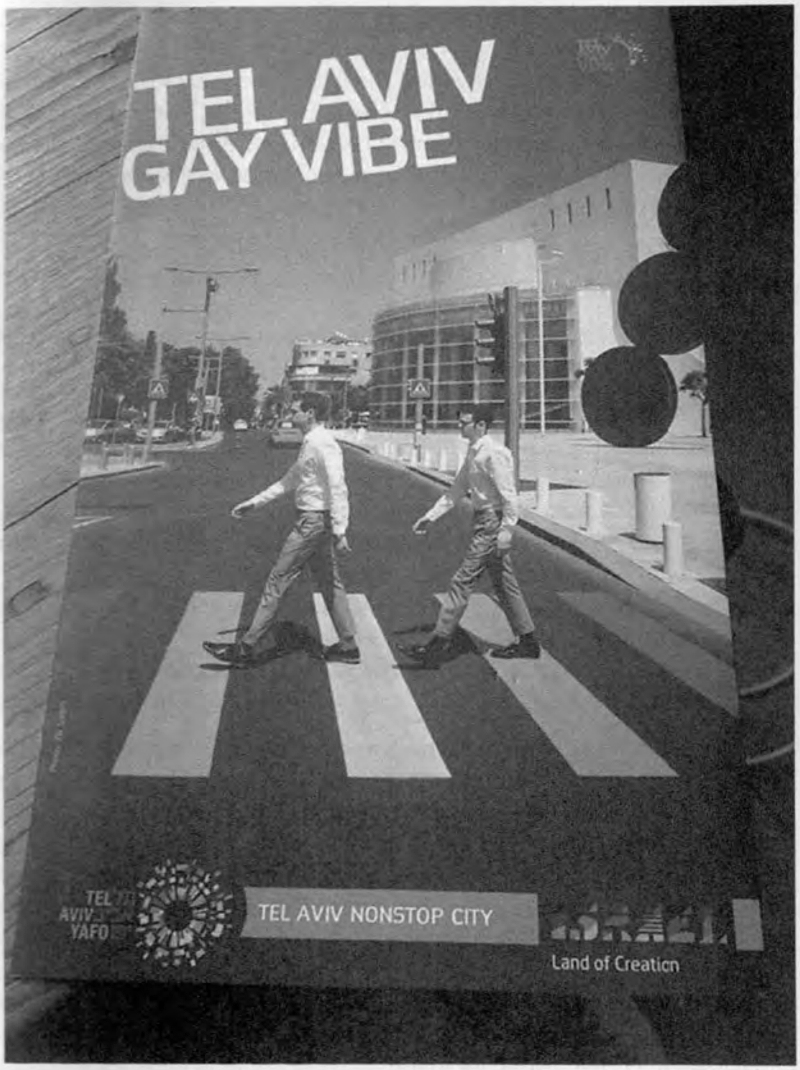

Figure 6.5 Tel Aviv Gay Vibe leaflet distributed at Stockholm Pride

Source: Milani and Levon, 2016

Summary

It is particularly difficult to cover in a single chapter the array of possibilities for doing research in 'media' which, as stated at the beginning, is a multiple and constantly evolving entity. Furthermore, even within a single 'media' context, there are multiple types of data that could be examined and numerous possibilities for how to analyse them using linguistic frameworks. This chapter, therefore, is not exhaustive but is simply intended to provide a flavour of the kind of recent research which has been conducted in the field of language, gender, sexuality and media and to provide you with some ideas for how to proceed with your own research. As with other chapters, use the reflection points and activities that follow for further inspiration and, for more information about any of the topics and studies covered in this chapter, the references are provided at the end of the book.

Study questions and activities

1 Select an issue of a lifestyle magazine targeted either at men or women and consider the following questions:

   - How are masculinities and/or femininities represented in your chosen magazine? (It may be that different 'versions' are represented or that one dominant version of masculinity or femininity prevails.)
   - Are there any contradictions in the representations of masculinity or femininity in your chosen lifestyle magazine? How might these contradictions or 'competing discourses' be explained?
   - Do the representations intersect with other dimensions of identity – e.g. are they classed, racialised, age-based and so on?
   - If you are focusing on a men's lifestyle magazine, consider how humour and irony are used (or not) to construct particular kinds of masculinity?

2. Conduct a linguistic landscape analysis of an environment with which you are familiar and in which you are routinely engaged. This might be your college or university environment, for example. How do 'signs' (e.g. posters, adverts, badges, signage, information on screens, bags or items of clothing containing text) in the environment function to represent gender and/or sexuality? Do other dimensions of identity intersect with gender and sexuality in the linguistic landscape? Are there any competing or contradictory discourses?
3. Consider how newspapers report on issues which draw explicit attention to gender and/or sexuality? Think about how the methods of CDA and corpus linguistics might be helpful for identifying discourses of gender and sexuality in newspaper texts.

   Here are some gender and sexuality-focused issues which, at the time of writing this book, were receiving a lot of attention in the British press:

   - Hate crimes committed against transgender people
   - LGBT inclusion in schools
   - Prevalence of gender-based violence
   - Prevalence of sexual offences committed against women

   When you are reading this book and doing your own research project, there may, of course, be different issues and stories relating to gender and/or sexuality being reported in the press.

Acknowledgement

The analysis of the 'Baby P' text in the 'British tabloid press' section of this chapter was conducted and written collaboratively with Dr Nathan Page. Citation details: Page, N. and Sauntson, H. (2019). *Researching Language, Gender and Sexuality: A Student Guide*. London: Routledge. 88–92.

Note

1 The full text can be found here – http://missingmadeleine.forumotion.net/t1905-baby-p-s-mum-at-monsters-ball-in-jail

7 Researching language, gender and sexuality in forensic contexts

The field of 'forensic linguistics' is concerned with applications of linguistic analysis to the law. This includes diverse topics, contexts and data types, such as: courtroom language and interaction; legal documents; police interviews with witnesses, victims and those who have been arrested; and forensic analyses of 'voice'. And this list is not exhaustive. Gaines (2018) points out that forensic linguistics contains critical elements in that aspects of forensic linguistics are concerned with social justice – this includes forensic-focused research on language, gender and sexuality. This chapter considers language, gender and sexuality research in legal and forensic contexts. This includes research on some potentially challenging and sensitive topics, such as gendered and sexual violence, harassment and consent and coercion. Because most of the data relating to these kinds of crimes is not public, linguistic research in this area has been quite limited (as you will see in the relatively small number of studies and available data sources referred to in this chapter). However, it is, nevertheless, an important chapter to include as its relevance to the broader field of language, gender and sexuality is increasing. An increase in media attention to linguistic issues such as consent is also highlighting the growing importance of this field of research not only within the academic study of language, gender and sexuality but also in the wider social world.[1]

Conley and O'Barr (2005) argue that language is the primary vehicle through which cultural and institutional ideologies are transmitted in legal settings, and this is why the study of language is important for understanding how gender and sexuality are treated in legal proceedings. Ehrlich (2001) also attests,

> The law does not only exert its power through the enactment of rules and the imposition of punishments; it also has the capacity to impose and affirm culturally powerful definitions of social reality . . . Laws, for example, that do not extend to gay and lesbian couples the same rights and privileges afforded to heterosexual couples express cultural assumptions about what constitutes 'normal' sexualities. That is, the law generates definitions and categories that discursively regulate and control social life in addition to imposing sanctions (e.g. fines, imprisonment, executions) to ensure compliance with certain social norms.
>
> (Ehrlich, 2001: 18–19)

The specific examples we will consider throughout this chapter focus on rape trials, legal definitions and people's understandings of 'rape' and 'consent'. More specifically, we explore issues surrounding the difficulty of showing 'proof' of a crime through linguistic evidence. In sexual offence cases, evidence is often required of the victim having stated 'no' clearly enough for the alleged perpetrator to unambiguously understand that consent was not given. Furthermore, Ehrlich points out that, in rape trial interaction, the victims of sexual crimes are often 're-victimised' through the trial process itself. In other words, they are positioned as 'guilty' through the way language is used, especially the language used by the cross-examination in the context of sexual crimes. Similar findings have been presented by Matoesian (1993) and Conley and O'Barr (2005).

Another issue involves examining the semantics of consent (what it means and how it is communicated and understood) – this continues to be a key aspect of forensic linguistics research which addresses gender and sexual violence. We will explore language-focused work on the semantics and pragmatics of consent in the next section. After this, we will explore in more detail key research on language in cases of rape and sexual assault, paying specific attention to analysis of trial interaction.

Consent

Tiersma (2007) argues that the issue of consent is one of the most difficult linguistic issues to deal with in rape law. Tiersma points out that consent is an essential element in rape charges – there must have been sexual intercourse and the victim (usually a woman) must not have consented to it. Because lack of consent is by definition an element of the crime, it is the prosecution that has the burden of proof on the issue of consent – lack of consent has to be 'proven beyond doubt' in UK law. This proof is very difficult to obtain and is seen by Tiersma and others as a key reason why so many rape cases end in a 'not guilty' verdict.

More broadly, Ehrlich (2001) notes that legal concepts such as 'consent' and 'sexual assault' often give rise to variable and contested meanings and interpretations. This is highly problematic as we will see when we look at the research discussed throughout this chapter. Work by Cameron (2007), Ehrlich (2001) and Kitzinger and Frith (1999) has drawn attention to problems associated with framing consent as being solely about communication. They all argue that a focus on consent as communication implies that sexual violence can be avoided by communicating differently, with an implication in many legal cases that it is the victim's responsibility to communicate consent effectively and unambiguously. This is problematic firstly because it places responsibility for consent on the victim (usually women) rather than the perpetrator, and, secondly, because it fails to recognise the role that coercion often plays in sexual violence cases.

An issue related to the prosecution's use of hostile and intimidatory questioning is that understandings of 'consent' can be manipulated. Studies on sexual violence and exploitation consistently demonstrate that it is *young* people, particularly young women, who are disproportionately likely to be victimised in this way. For example, defendants' understandings of consent sometimes rest in the (perceived) strength of expressions of resistance. And a frequently cited idea is that non-consensual sex is the result of 'miscommunication'. In the example that follows, from Ehrlich's data,[2] the defendant (MA) is claiming that the victim's expression of non-consent was not adequately strong or explicit.[3]

```
GK:   One last question, if Marg was asleep and
      there's testimony that says she was asleep and
      we have testimony that says it's debatable
      whether she was asleep =
MA:   = Mhmm =
GK:   = Uh why do you continue caressing her?
MA:   Well as I said last week what occurred was that
      we had gotten back into bed and we started
      kissing and she said that she was tired, you
      know, she never said like 'no', 'stop', 'don't',
      you know, 'don't do this' uhm 'get out of bed'
```

(Ehrlich, 2006: 201)

Moreover, Coy et al. (2013) highlight that a person accused of rape needs to prove not only that they believed in consent but also that this belief was *reasonable*. In other words, responsibility for consent is placed clearly on the victim, not on the alleged perpetrator. If they do not say 'no' clearly and unambiguously enough, then what they do and say does not 'count' as consent, and they are, therefore, *not* a victim of a crime. Ehrlich (2001, 2006) points out that the 'utmost resistance standard' is the primary ideological frame through which complainants' actions and the events in question are understood and evaluated in cases such as these. What this means is that, in many cases, complainants' lack of resistance is construed as tantamount to consent and the prosecution subsequently loses the case for this reason. Coulthard, Johnson and Wright elaborate on this point:

> Within a rape trial and within the cross-examination genre, the cleverly phrased and sequenced questions can organise a rape complainant narrative to be interpretable as implying consent rather than resistance, producing a narrative that undermines the prosecution story. Cross-examination's power lies in the lawyer's skill in assigning blame and responsibility to the victim and presenting this is 'natural'.
>
> (Coulthard et al., 2017: 99–100)

The fact that 'miscommunication' as a common phenomena arises during rape and sexual assault proceedings reinforces the stereotypical assumption that women are responsible for rape and that any misunderstandings between women and men are generally a result of the deficient communication of women. In such cases, complainants are held accountable for not communicating lack of consent clearly and unambiguously, as in the earlier example from Ehrlich's (2006) data.

Ehrlich further observes that in her rape trial data, the defendant (MA) attempts to redefine what constitutes 'consent'. An example is shown below:

```
MA:  Uhm she was just reciprocating and we were fooling
     we were fooling around. This wasn't . . . heh this
     wasn't something that she didn't want to do.
HL:  How did you know?
MA:  How did I know?
HL:  Yeah.
MA:  Because she never said 'no', she never said
     'stop' and when I was kissing her she was kissing
     me back . . . and when I touched her breasts she
     didn't say no.
```

(Ehrlich, 2006: 198)

In the previous extract, each reported sexual advance has to be met with explicit resistance according to the defendant. If it is not, the cross-examination can and does construe the complainants' lack of action or agency as giving consent. Ehrlich finds many such examples in her analysis of this sexual harassment tribunal and in related rape trial data that she examines.

Importantly, Ehrlich also argues that the sexual assault adjudication process needs to recognise the particularities of women's responses to threats of sexual violence. Sometimes, it is more dangerous for women to strongly express resistance because they fear the consequence may be greater physical violence from the perpetrator. Mooney (2007) and Tiersma (2007) also point this out, adding that force, intimidation or pressure may be involved in rape cases and should, therefore, be taken into account when considering whether consent is voluntary or involuntary. Involuntary consent should, arguably, be treated exactly the same as lack of consent.

This point is also picked up on in Shuy's (2012) accounts of his extensive experience as an expert witness in sexual misconduct cases. Shuy discusses problems with lawyers being focused too much on the 'smoking gun' features of a case and emphasises the importance of examining the wider language context in which smaller features may appear. Shuy notes that, rather paradoxically, other forensic sciences seem to be focusing on smaller and smaller evidence units to solve crimes and obtain convictions. He argues that forensic language evidence, on the other hand, should be moving towards starting analysis with the larger language units before dealing with the smaller ones, precisely because of the importance of context in understanding language features and their functions in sexual misconduct cases. This is an important point for considering the reported negotiation of consent in rape and sexual assault cases and for examining trial interaction as discussed in the next section.

Whilst the majority of forensic linguistics work on consent has focused on cases in which women are the victims of sexual crimes, a study by Candelas de la Ossa (2016) has drawn attention to the fact that issues of consent and violence also relate to men as potential victims, especially when men identify as non-heterosexual and/or transgender or non-binary. Candelas de la Ossa conducted a F/CDA-based case study of UK online consent guidance for gay, bisexual and transgender men and found that there were three main discourses in the texts which conflicted with each other.

The first of these discourses is termed the 'positive consent' discourse and presents consent as an action which is free, affirmative (saying 'yes') and able to be withdrawn at any point during a sexual encounter. The second discourse identified in the guidance by Candelas de la Ossa is termed a 'talk, listen, think' discourse and is based on a recommendation of clear and explicit communication between men about boundaries. This discourse appears to involve positively encouraging men to oppose sexual violence but, at the same time, it continues to present sexual violence as the result of miscommunication. As we have seen previously, this notion is highly problematic. In fact, both of these first two discourses rely on the same cultural narratives of sexual violence as a 'mistake' and of men as being poor communicators.

The third and final discourse identified in the guidance is what Candelas de la Ossa terms a 'moral-aesthetic discourse'. This discourse constructs consent and non-violence as key attributes of what the author calls 'moral masculinity'. In other words, it projects moral values onto masculinity and attempts to make masculinity itself about behaving in a morally acceptable manner (i.e. non-violent). The responsibility for behaving in a moral and sexually responsible manner is constructed as a shared community responsibility rather than an individual one. A problem that the author notes with this discourse, though, is that it constructs gay, bisexual and trans men as sexual predators who have to 'learn' to behave in a moral and non-violent way in the context of sexual encounters. In doing so, this discourse draws on a common 'rape myth' of men's sexual aggression being excusable because it is biologically driven by testosterone (see next section for a discussion of culturally prevalent rape myths). Candelas de las Ossa points out that this discourse conflicts sharply with the other discourses and describes the tensions as follows:

> The construction of men as effective moral agents is a positive face strategy that builds solidarity and may have strategic value in persuading men to change their behaviour. However, it also seems to be in tension with the discourse of sexual violence as unintentional [. . .] that presents men as deficient in their thinking and communication and driven to sexual violence by uncontrollable sexual urges.
>
> (Candelas de la Ossa, 2016: 376)

Candelas de la Ossa concludes that, because these discourses are conflicting and contradictory, this renders the consent guidance less effective than it could be. The author, therefore, suggests an alternative framing for the guidance whereby the discourse moves away from presenting sexual violence as caused by unintentional mistakes and miscommunication and, instead, focuses more on explicitly critiquing notions of sexual violence as caused by 'uncontrollable' sexual desires and communicative misunderstandings. More explicit discussion of coercion and normalised pressure would also strengthen the guidance according to the author. Candelas de la Ossa also advocates the inclusion of victims'/survivors' voices in the guidance as a means of raising men's awareness and understanding of the complexities of consent.

Given the difficulties in accessing primary forensic data such as rape trial transcripts, looking at texts such as consent guidance can provide the basis of useful forensic research on language, gender and sexuality if this is a topic you are interested in investigating for your own project.

Interactional studies of rape and other sexual offences cases

Ehrlich identifies three overlapping key issues relating to language, gender, sexuality and power when examining rape trial and sexual assault proceedings. These issues are as follows:

- Revictimisation of rape victims
- Legitimisation of normative views of female and male sexuality – and the way this is used to inform judicial reasoning
- Discriminatory qualities of rape trials

These issues, some of which have been introduced in the previous section, are all explored throughout this section with reference to analysis of forensic data. In her extensive study on verbal interaction in sexual harassment adjudication processes, Ehrlich explores these issues by analysing recordings of a disciplinary tribunal dealing with sexual harassment and from transcripts of a Canadian criminal trial in which same defendant was charged with two counts of sexual assault.

A key theme which runs throughout Ehrlich's and much other work to date on language and gender in sexual adjudication processes is that they are 'institutionally coercive'. Lees (1997) argues that rape trials themselves are a means of controlling women's sexualities. And Ponteretto importantly observes that, due to the rhetorical conventions of trial examination protocol, the victim is often obliged to:

- relive the violent experience of physical and psychological trauma;
- give an 'objective', 'neutral' and entirely physical description of an experience marked, on the other hand, by intense emotional and psychological stress;
- recall details of the event posed especially by the cross-examiner in a sometimes 'sordid' way: for example: 'Did you or did you not have your pantyhose on when speaking to Mr X?'

(Ponteretto, 2007: 105)

Ponteretto points out in her research that courtroom dialogue is assymetrical – the questioner is in control of the discourse and not everyone has the same conversational rights. This means that victims of rape and other crimes are often caught in a 'discursive trap'. Ponteretto argues that, ultimately, this means that rape trials are actually biased in favour of male offenders and function to reproduce patriarchal ideologies which are ultimately detrimental to justice.

Matoesian (1993, 1997) also explores in detail how women in sexual assault cases are disadvantaged and sometimes traumatised by the style of questioning which they can be subjected to in court. 'Powerful' language is often used in cross-examinations to pressure witnesses into accounts of events with which they are *not* in full agreement, as in the example that follows. In this example, note how CD tries to construct an alternative version of events and encourages W to agree with him.

```
[CD - Cross examining defence lawyer; W - Witness/
victim]

CD:    O.K. you went outside and you waited for at
       least ten minutes for one of these friends to
       emerge, is that correct?
       (1.2)
W:     Mmhmm
CD:    Who were you waiting for?
       (3.9)
W:     I don't remember who it was
CD:    Aren'tchu just trying tuh come up with an excuse
       for why you had to wait outside there?
       (0.6)
W:     No
[[
CD:    Weren't you in fact waiting outside for somebody
       to go pardying with (.) anybody
CP:    Objection yer honour
J:     Overruled
W:     No
```

(Matoesian, 1993: 161)

It has been suggested that the use of such language in sexual assault and rape trials may be a factor which explains the reluctance of victims to take cases to trial. A UK Home Office Report (Kelly et al., 2005) found that there had been an increased number of reports of rape over the preceding years but a 'relatively static number of convictions'. Rape is in fact the area of the law in which the judiciary has the lowest success rates – in England and Wales, less than 6 per cent of all cases brought to the police end with a conviction for rape (Stern, 2011). The intimidatory style of prosecution questioning in trials seen in the examples cited so far may pressure victims not to take their cases to trial.

In addition to this, Olsson and Luchjenbroers (2014) observe that the discourse of sexual crimes is permeated with a number of pervasive 'rape myths' which can be manipulated by defence lawyers to try to convince juries. One rape myth is that a 'true' rape victim is disinterested in sex and has done absolutely nothing to invite the assailant's attentions. A 'true' rapist can also only be a violent and possibly deranged stranger – known as 'stranger rape' (Ehrlich, 2001; Larcombe, 2002) – rather than someone who is known to the victim and is generally non-violent in other areas of their life (referred to as 'acquaintance rape'). Ehrlich (2001) points out that, paradoxically, the cases of rape that are the least frequent (stranger rape) are punished the most harshly in the legal system. Research repeatedly finds that rape cases are permeated with discourses about what constitutes a 'legitimate' victim and a 'legitimate' perpetrator. Significantly, women are less likely to report crimes committed by someone who is less likely to be deemed a 'legitimate' perpetrator (Ehrlich, 2001). So these discourses are 'socially controlling' and have material consequences. Ehrlich summarises the myths of the 'legitimate perpetrator' and 'legitimate victim' as follows:

> Legitimate or plausible perpetrators, for example, are strangers to their victims, carry a weapon and inflict physical injury upon their victims beyond the sexual violence; legitimate or believable victims are women that are raped by precisely these kinds of perpetrators. The discourses of rape that surround the criminal justice system's treatment of rape, then, construct stranger rape as 'real rape' and render the vast majority of rapes invisible.
>
> (Ehrlich, 2007: 128)

Luchjenbroers and Aldridge (2013) explain the 'autonomous testosterone' rape myth whereby women and girls (of whatever age) may be responsible for arousing a man to the point where he no longer has control over his urges. It is women's responsibility for knowing this and acting accordingly. This links to the 'legitimate victim' myth in that:

> women are legitimate victims of rape when they are subject to violent attacks from strangers [. . .]; otherwise, they are held responsible for men's sexual aggression.
>
> (Ehrlich, 2001: 28)

Tiersma (2007) also points out that victim credibility is a key issue in rape cases. Related to this is the admission of evidence of a woman victim's previous sexual conduct. Both of these issues continue to receive much scrutiny and criticism from forensic linguistics and elsewhere.

However, these common rape myths frequently contrast with extensive research findings on sexual crimes. Olsson and Luchjenbroers (2014: 275) document this contrasting evidence. Most notably, a key reality is that most rapes are premeditated (and cases in which there is more than one perpetrator are always planned). It is also well documented that rapists will generally rape again in the same locale and in the same way. Around 60 per cent of convicted rapists are married or had regular sexual partners at the time of assault. Despite these facts, it is the myths that carry ideological power – this means that, not only does the prosecution have to convince the jury of the 'facts' of the case but also effectively deconstruct the myths during the course of the legal proceedings. Because of this, Matoesian (1993) argues that cross-examination of rape victims in court amounts to 'reproducing rape', whereby rape victims are re-victimised by their courtroom experience. Similarly, Ehrlich argues that 'judicial rape' can actually be more damaging to victims than the rape itself. Ehrlich's work, as we will see next, focuses particularly on the capacity of cross-examining lawyers to dominate and revictimise rape victims.

Matoesian (1993) observes how the cross-examination frequently constrains the witness through the use of particular types of questions. Ehrlich (2001) similarly observes in her analysis of sexual assault trials in Canada and the US that a rape tribunal's questioning of a complainant functions to produce them as certain kinds of subjects whose passivity and lack of resistance is considered tantamount to consent. Ehrlich subsequently argues that legal discourse in cases of sexual crime is 'institutionally coercive'.

In her work, Ehrlich uses CA to focus in detail upon question-answer sequences in rape trials. Ehrlich looks at how such sequences can generate particular inferences in the context of rape trials. Furthermore, question-answer sequences can be manipulated by the cross-examination to give the impression of witness inconsistency which has the (intended) effect of undermining their credibility as a witness or victim. And they can also encode powerful social discourses about women's and men's sexualities and about violence against women. This is exemplified in the two extracts that follow from Levinson's (1992) data in which the cross-examination's questions function to construct the witness as a 'willing victim' drawing on the 'autonomous testosterone' myth. The questions do 'ideological work' in that they function to produce the complainant as a particular kind of gendered subject. Specifically, the questions function to discredit the victim and exonerate the alleged perpetrator. In many ways, this is a classic example of the 'she was asking for it' discourse with particular attention paid to how this manifests in the interactional details. In the first extract, it is the victim's dress and appearance that construct her as a 'willing victim', whilst in the second extract, it is her sexual history which is used to discredit her allegations.

[Q – Cross-examiner; A – victim]

```
Q:    Your aim that evening was to go to the
      discotheque?
A:    Yes.
Q:    Presumably you had dressed up for that, had you?
A:    Yes.
Q:    And you were wearing make-up?
A:    Yes.
Q:    Eye-shadow?
```

A: Yes.
Q: Lipstick?
A: No I was not wearing lipstick.
Q: You weren't wearing lipstick?
A: No.
Q: Just eye-shadow, eye make-up?
A: Yes.
Q: And powder presumably?
A: Foundation cream, yes.
Q: You had had bronchitis had you not?
A: Yes.
Q: You have mentioned in the course of your evidence about wearing a coat.
A: Yes.
Q: It was not really a coat at all, was it?
A: Well, it is a sort of a coat-dress and I bought it with trousers, as a trouser suit.
Q: That is it down there isn't it, the red one?
A: Yes.
Q: If we call that a dress, if we call that a dress you had no coat on at all had you?
A: No.
Q: And this is January. It was quite a cold night?
A: Yes it was cold actually.

(Levinson, 1992: 82–83)

[Q – Cross-examiner; A – victim]

Q: . . . you have had sexual intercourse on a previous occasion haven't you?
A: Yes.
Q: On many previous occasions?
A: Not many.
Q: Several?
A: Yes.
Q: With several men?
A: No.
Q: Just one.
A: Two.
Q: Two. And you are seventeen and a half?
A: Yes.

(Levinson, 1992: 83)

We will now take a look in more detail at the specific conversational strategies used particularly by the cross-examination in trial discourse which function to disempower and 'revictimise' the victim. To do so, we will look in more detail at Ehrlich's conversational analysis of her data. One of the features of language that Ehrlich analyses within this approach is grammar, particularly transitivity. This enables us to see who is attributed agency in interaction. What Ehrlich observes throughout the data is that Matt (the defendant) tends to mitigate his agency through use of adverbials (e.g. *perhaps*) and modal verbs (e.g. *might*). He also routinely uses agentless passives (which helps to depict a scene of consensual sex rather than him being the agent of sexual acts of aggression). Examples include (passive grammatical constructions are highlighted using *italics* in each case), 'Well, as we were talking *our pants were undone*' and 'she had like three pieces of clothing on her upper body or two and *one of them was taken off*' (Ehrlich, 2001: 47). Other agentless passives are used by Matt to obscure and conceal responsibility for his acts of sexual initiation and aggression, such as 'then *it was decided* [. . .] that it would be easier if we all just stayed there overnight' and 'we were massaging them and [. . .] *it was agreed* like after we massaged them that they were going to give us a massage' (Ehrlich, 2001: 48–49). In these kinds of examples, which were frequent in Ehrlich's data, the passive construction means that nobody is represented as being responsible for the series of events that follow. Moreover, it sounds like there was mutual consent amongst the parties involved, whereas the reality was that Matt himself was the one with the agency to make decisions and control the situation being described.

Ehrlich observes how a similar effect is achieved through Matt's use of grammatical nominalisations and subjects of unaccusative verbs in order to present the event in question without implying that there is a cause such as his own actions. This happens in examples such as the following:

- *The sexual activity started escalating event further.*
- Well, he knew that *something sexual was going on* in my bed – well, in Marg's bed. He knew there was *something sexual going on*.
- So when we got back from the washroom uh Connie was laying down on the bed . . . I laid down next to her and uhm *the intimacy began*.

(Ehrlich, 2001: 50)

Grammatical agency is also obscured not only through what Matt himself says during the trial but also through his defence lawyer's use of passive constructions. Ehrlich observes how Matt's legal representatives reformulate utterances to represent the violent acts reported in Connie's (the victim's) testimony as reciprocal and non-violent. In the following example, note how 'he pushed my face down between his leg' is reformulated by the defence lawyer (SC) as an 'exchange of fellatio' in which 'he' (i.e. Matt – the defendant) as the agent and subject of the clause is removed entirely.

- CD: At that point is when *he grabbed my hair and wrapped it around his hands and pushed my face down between his legs and gave me an ultimatum*. At that point that became the more pressing matter to get out of that situation more than to get him out of my room.

SC: So in fact was *the fellatio*, was that *the last act of sex* that was between the two of you before everything dies down and before Mr. A. went to sleep and you went into the chair?

- SC: All right, ma'am. Now, after *the exchange of the fellatio* . . . I am interested in knowing that at the conclusion of the situation does Mr. A. sort of calm down? (Ehrlich, 2001: 53)

In all the previous data examples, Ehrlich concludes that the sexual events seem to act of their own accord without clear and overt agents. And this constitutes a performance of hegemonic masculinity, as Ehrlich explains,

> By attributing the cause of Matt's sexual aggression to factors outside of Matt, the adjudicators licensed a view of male sexuality and masculinity that portrays violent men as not being the 'agents' of their own actions.
> (Ehrlich, 2001: 60)

In other words, the grammar encodes the reinforcement of the 'male sexual drive' rape myth, which allows the sexual violence to continue.

In addition to this detailed analysis of grammatical constructions in the trial discourse, Ehrlich also focuses on the pragmatic functions of questions, particularly those asked during cross-examination of the victim. Through her analysis, Ehrlich lists some of the key interactional mechanisms by which discursive control is achieved in data. These mechanisms are *strategic questioning* (in which the questioner is able to influence and evaluate evidence but the victim cannot do the same), *presupposition* (propositions whose truth is taken for granted in the utterance of a linguistic expression) and *selective (re)formulation*.

Furthermore, Ehrlich observes that the use of yes-no questions from the cross-examining lawyer ask for dis/agreement with the propositional content of questions, rather than asking the addressee to provide or specify a questioned item (e.g. 'you were attracted to Stephen?'). In this regard, they are more controlling as they heavily restrict the following utterance by the addressee.

At other times, we see the cross-examining (defence) questioner formulating and reformulating utterances as a means of strategically presenting a particular version of the events in question. As Ehrlich argues, 'Formulations can be selective in the sense that interviewers can summarise certain aspects of an interviewee's prior description, while discarding other' (Ehrlich, 2001: 74). These kinds of powerful discursive mechanisms are ultimately designed to cast doubt and suspicion on the opposition's (i.e. the victim's) version of events.

A further aspect of Ehrlich's analysis of the data focuses on how the cross-examination characterises complainants' acts of resistance as 'inaction' so that the events are generally reconstructed as consensual sex rather than rape/sexual violence. Ehrlich looks specifically at how the cross-examination in the sexual assault tribunal data suggest that the complainant 'had options' which consequently calls into question the lack of consent evidence needed to gain a conviction (the specific places in which these options are explicitly suggested by the cross-examination [GK] in the examples that follow are *italicised* – this is Ehrlich's original highlighting):

GK: And you and Melinda ((the other woman in the room)) were in your room alone. Uhm what might have been your option? I see an option. It may not have occurred to you but I simply want to explore that option with you. Uhm did it occur to you that you could lock the door so that they may not uh return to your room?

GK: But in spite of Marg telling you that he was trying things that she didn't want, were you . . . I mean I don't know how to phrase this uhm . . . did you feel you had some options to do something for Marg?

(Ehrlich, 2001: 76–77)

In the previous examples, Ehrlich notes that, through the repeated use of the word *option*, 'GK not only conveys her belief that the complainants had an alternative course of action but also that their failure to pursue other alternatives was a *choice*' (2007: 77). In fact, Ehrlich notes that many of the question-answer sequences involving complainants, cross-examiners and tribunal members focus on numerous unpursued 'options'. The other 'options' suggested by the cross-examination include verbal options, such as saying something differently or seeking help. Implying that the victim knew about these options but chose not to pursue them suggests, therefore, that she made an informed choice to continue with the course of action that led to the rape. And, in cases such as these, choice implies consent.

Ehrlich argues that all of these questioning strategies transform the complainants' responses to sexual aggression into ineffective acts of resistance. She notes how there is much attention paid to the complainants' inaction in the events under scrutiny by the cross-examination (Q), as in the following example from the rape trial and tribunal data:

Q: *So do I take it then – correct me if I am wrong – that the only effort that you would have made to try and jolly him out of this or have him leave was to say that, 'I have a class in the morning so you'll have to leave', or words to that effect?*

CD: No. That was not the only effort I made with regards to making him stop doing what he was doing. It may have been the only time that I outright said, 'Now you have to leave', but I certainly did make it clear beforehand.

(Ehrlich, 2001: 86–87)

But, as Ehrlich and others have pointed out, the very notions of 'choice' and 'options' ignores the material conditions under which choices can be meaningful. As we have seen earlier (and, in fact, in some of the data extracts presented earlier), complainants often act in ways that minimise risk of further sexual aggression and/or possibility of physical violence and injury. So their behaviour is not actually lacking in resistance; rather, they are considering possibilities for actions given the highly restricted possibilities available to them and actively negotiating relations with the accused in order to prevent further and more extreme instances of violence. Furthermore, as pointed out by Kitzinger and Frith (1999), directly declining an invitation of sexual activity conflicts with cultural pragmatic norms of politeness – 'just saying no' is 'not how refusals are normatively done' (1999: 302).

Whilst most existing work has examined how gender and sexuality discourses are constructed in sexual crime trials, there is a limited amount of research which examines police interviews with (usually women) victims. Discourse analysis-based research in this area has examined how 'competing versions of criminal offences are negotiated and co-constructed in the police interview' (Benneworth, 2010: 139), much as they are in the courtroom. Benneworth observes that, during police interviews with victims, officers tend to make use of closed questions, narrowly defined conditions for answering and provide reformulations of the suspects' responses. Benneworth's research focuses on analysis of investigative interviews with suspected sex offenders (all men) in relation to sexual offences against children. She identifies two styles of interviewing which are used by the officers – 'closed' and 'open' styles. Each of these styles have implications for how the relationship between the suspect and the alleged victim is formulated, how police-suspect interactions progress and how the investigative interview is concluded. Benneworth (2010) defines the key linguistic characteristics of the 'closed' interviewing style as follows:

- Officers often assume the role of narrator and formulate an explicitly sexual and criminal narrative (including the use of a 'closing' question which limits the suspect to confirming the officers' version of events)
- Employment of discursive devices to hold the floor, such as restricting the suspect's turns
- By providing no opportunity for the suspect to generate a narrative, the interviewer permits the suspect to refute the allegation only with a simple denial

Benneworth observes that closed interviews are associated with greater likelihood of the suspect denying the allegation. The 'open' interviewing style, on the other hand, is associated with greater likelihood of the suspect admitting the allegation and is defined by Benneworth as having the following linguistic characteristics:

- Officer surrenders the floor to the suspect using an 'opening' question which encourages the suspect to tell a story

- Suspect permitted to recount a mitigating narrative (which may incorporate minimisation, normalisation and victim blame)
- Officer then asks a 'reformulating' question which confirms the sexual and criminal aspects of the events – this then elicits an incriminating disclosure from the suspect

Ainsworth (2018) examines different kinds of police interviews pertinent to issues of gender and sexuality – those conducted with rape victims – and considers the important and, as yet, under-researched issue of whether someone who is a victim of chronic domestic violence (intimate partner violence) is at greater risk of coercion during police interviews. Ainsworth points out that, in legal cases relating to sexual crime, rape victims and victims of spousal (or partner) abuse are often classified as 'intimidated' witnesses in a similar way to how Ehrlich and others have explored the intimidation and coercion of victims/witnesses in trial and tribunal interaction.

An issue with all of the above is that it relies heavily on remembered utterances on the part of both the victim and alleged perpetrator (an issue explored by Shuy, 2012, for example). The incident itself is not recorded; therefore, verbatim speech cannot be used as evidence. This is another reason, in addition to everything discussed so far in this section, for why so few rape and sexual assault cases in the US and UK actually end with a conviction.

Having considered empirical studies which explore two key linguistic issues relating to gender and sexuality in forensic contexts – the semantics of consent and issues in rape and sexual offence trial interaction – we will finally examine an emerging area of forensic linguistics that has relevance to language, gender and sexuality: that of forensic phonetics.

Gender, sexuality and forensic phonetics

This final section of the chapter is short because it introduces some very new research which uses the tools of phonetics to analyse how outcomes may be influenced in sexual assault trials amongst other things. Whilst forensic phonetics is an established area of forensic linguistics (with one of its key uses being the identification of speakers through phonetic analysis), its application to sexual offences cases has, to date, been fairly limited. One recent study, though, comes from Levon (2018) who examines how the use of the phonetic feature of 'uptalk' (rising final intonation on declarative utterances) impacts on the perceived credibility of women in legal contexts, including those characterised by strong ideologies of gender. Levon focuses specifically on Ehrlich's (2014) sexual assault trial data to explore how social ideologies about gender affect listeners' perceptions of uptalk. Importantly, Levon then links these perceptions to women's ability to be believed in a courtroom, particularly when the crime in question is of a sexual nature. Levon notes that uptalk in Britain has been accompanied by a set of negative linguistic stereotypes, associating it with the speech of young women and a style of speaking that is said to be lacking in confidence, authority or credibility.

However, the reality of how uptalk is used is very different: it is, for example, prevalent in the speech of young men in the London area, and it is used by speakers to positively and confidently assert control over how narratives are framed in interaction and to encourage alignment with the speaker's point of view. Thus, the reality of how the function is used contrasts with the stereotypes and perceptions of its use. In Levon's experiment, recordings both with and without uptalk were presented to a group of listeners. The recordings were taken from Ehrlich's sexual assault trial data in which a complainant (a woman) accused the defendant (a man) of having raped her. Levon's analysis of listener responses examined the extent to which uptalk, gender and the more ideologically loaded context of a sexual assault trial constrain how credible a witness sounds. Unsurprisingly, a key finding was that listeners often perceived the (woman) witness as being less credible partly because of her use of uptalk. The potential implications of Levon's findings are clearly problematic – if women are perceived as less credible, this can ultimately disadvantage them in the legal system and, again, function to obstruct justice rather than serve it. So raising awareness of such issues in the legal and judicial professions is important for challenging these potential obstructions to justice. Ponteretto provides a concise summary emphasising the importance of forensic linguistic analysis in working towards greater equitable treatment of women in the justice system:

> By unmasking the covert workings of social and institutional discourse on gender-related crime, forensic linguistics can foster judicial equity and thereby make a significant contribution to the elimination of violence against women.
>
> (Ponteretto, 2007: 123)

Summary

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, empirical studies of language, gender and sexuality in legal contexts are inevitably limited due to the difficulty in obtaining primary data. However, the case studies that have been examined in this chapter point to the importance of work in this area. If there are language-related problems in the legal system that obstruct justice, it is the job of linguists to identify these problems and raise awareness of them. Whilst it may not be possible for you to obtain primary interactional data (e.g. from sexual offence trials) for a project in this area, there may be other ways that you can research the area, such as investigating press reporting of sexual offences cases, analysing advice material on consent and related issues or even interviewing people about their understandings of consent. You could also analyse legal documents themselves which pertain to sexual offences, such as the UK Sexual Offences Act. This and other legislation are publicly available at www.legislation.gov.uk/. Whilst it may not be possible to access court transcripts, you can search the UK's Courts and Tribunals Judiciary (www.judiciary.uk/) for texts such as sentencing statements and judges' biographies relevant to particular cases with which you are familiar.

And if you are interested in historical cases relating to sexual offences, you can access materials on the Old Bailey proceedings website (www.oldbaileyonline.org/) which contains a data-base of proceedings from 1674–1913.

Study questions and activities

1. In the extract that follows from Ehrlich's (2001) data, how does the questioner (Q) restructure the propositional content of the alleged victim's (MB) responses so that the event sounds more like a case of miscommunication rather than sexual assault? As Ehrlich terms it, the content meaning shifts from 'I don't know' to 'I suppose it's [miscommunication] possible'. How is this semantic shift achieved by Q?

MB: And then we got back into bed and Matt immediately started again and then I said to Bob, "Bob where do you get these persistent friends?"
Q: Why did you even say that? You wanted to get Bob's attention?
MB: I assumed that Bob talked to Matt in the hallway and told him to knock it off.
Q: You assumed?
MB: He was talking to him and came back in and said everything was all right.
Q: Bob said that?
MB: Yes.
Q: But when you made that comment, you wanted someone to know, you wanted Bob to know that this was a signal that Matt was doing it again?
MB: Yes.
Q: A mixed signal, ma'am, I suggest?
MB: To whom?
Q: What would you have meant by, "Where do you get these persistent friends?"
MB: Meaning Bob he's doing it again, please help me.
Q: Why didn't you say, "Bob, he was doing it again, please help me?"
MB: Because I was afraid Matt would get mad.

(Ehrlich, 2001: 82)

2. How does the law define 'consent'? Look at some of the legal acts relating to sexual offences available at www.legislation.gov.uk/all?title=sexual%20 offences (UK) and analyse the language used in the documents in terms of how it functions to construct particular discourses of consent. Is the language used vague or ambiguous in any way? How has the law, and the language used to describe the law, changed over time in these acts?

3 Read the following 'understandings of consent' taken from Coy et al.'s interviews with young people. What are some of the key issues relating to language, gender and consent raised in the young people's responses? How do these understandings compare with the legal definitions of consent that you looked at in question 2?

If you respected the girl's decision and just said yeah, I'm not going to do anything, then . . . they would probably just give up and not give you lad [man] points (Young man, 14).

I think it's a given now that you are expected if you ever go out with a guy or whatever, it's expected that you are supposed to be having sex with him. Even when you are little [young] (Young woman, year 11).

I think if a girl didn't want to she would clearly state that . . . if they didn't want it, that they'd say no, there and then. But if they didn't I think most people would assume it would be alright to carry on (Young man, 17).

To know if someone wants to have sex with you, you have to have that conversation. You wouldn't know it without asking, otherwise you're just assuming. I wouldn't just know if a guy wanted to have sex with me, you would have to talk about it (Young woman, year 11).

If you're doing that to someone random, it's rape. But if you're doing that with your girlfriend that's not rape (Young woman, 16).

(Extracts from Coy et al., 2013: 10–11)

Notes

1 While this book was being written, for example, a number of high-profile rape and sexual assault cases were reported in the media, all of which involved a concern with meanings and understandings of 'consent' to varying degrees. These include cases relating to well-known public figures, including film producer Harvey Weinstein and cricketer Alex Hepburn.

2 Much of the data presented in this chapter is drawn from Ehrlich's work, as it is one of the very few available published bodies of empirical research which contain rape and sexual assault trial data.

3 See the appendix for the transcription key for all data presented in this chapter.

8 Breaking the binary

Investigating transgender, gender variance and language

As discussed in Chapter 1, since the early 1990s, the field of language, gender and sexuality has become increasingly concerned with challenging binary and static constructions of gender, sex and sexuality, and it is now accepted that gender is fluid, variable and contingent. Furthermore, much recent work has drawn attention to how ideological concepts such as 'masculinity' and 'femininity' can be 'detached from the bodies to which they are ideologically linked, with language playing a crucial role in this process' (Davis et al., 2014: 3). This is perhaps highlighted the most clearly when examining the practices (including language practices) of those who live as gender variant or transgender. It is these users of language who are the focus of this chapter, although it is important to point out that the intention is not to marginalise these groups by placing trans and variant issues in a discrete chapter. Rather, the intention is to highlight and make visible what has, until relatively recently, been an under-researched and marginalised area of language, gender and sexuality.

Existing work on language, transgender and gender variance falls into two broad areas: socio-phonetic studies of voice; and discourse analysis studies of how language practices work to construct identities for transgender and gender-variant speakers. In this chapter, I will briefly consider the first of these areas, but I will spend more time looking at the latter area, as students wishing to research this topic are likely to have more access to the skills and resources required for conducting discourse analysis-based research into transgender, gender variance and language.

As outlined in Chapter 1, 'transgender', 'cisgender' and various forms of 'gender variance' are all forms of gender identity. Kulick (2000) provide a useful summary of earlier work on transgender and language – so much that I do not intend to simply repeat Kulick's review here. Instead, I pick up where Kulick left off and focus on more recent work in the field in order to exemplify what current and future student research projects might usefully focus on.

Transgender and 'voice': socio-phonetic studies

There is a body of (mainly health/clinical-based) work on transgender voice. Whilst this has some potential relevance, clinical-based voice studies are sometimes seen as problematic by linguists because they can reproduce medicalised and sometimes even pathologising discourses of transgender identities. Clinical studies have also been criticised for having a tendency to ignore non-binary gender identities, including intersex identities. These are the main reasons why studies in linguistics that have looked at transgender voice quality have tended to focus on socio-phonetic analysis rather than clinical analysis. This body of work includes socio-phonetic analyses of speakers themselves (e.g. Zimman, 2013, 2015) as well as work which analyses perceptions of transgendered voices (e.g. Setter, forthcoming). Setter's work, for example, examines how a small sample of self-identified transgender speakers perceive their own voice qualities. Furthermore, this study explores the way the participants feel they are often 'misgendered' as a result of how their voices are perceived by others.

An interest in socio-phonetic studies of transgender speakers themselves comes from Zimman's (2015) observation that one of the crucial ways that masculinity and femininity are enacted semiotically is through the voice and linguistic practice more generally. Zimman states,

> The phonetic characteristics of the voice include some of the most salient sociolinguistic indexes of gender.
>
> (2015: 206)

What all studies to date reveal is that the strongest evidence for gendered variation in voice comes from *social* explanations rather than biological ones.

One of the more extensive and developed socio-phonetic studies of trans speakers comes from Zimman (2013, 2015). As part of this research, Zimman includes a helpful review of previous socio-phonetic research on gay-sounding voices. In reviewing the previous literature, Zimman notes a gradual shift over time from focusing on production of acoustic characteristics, to focusing more on investigations of perceptions of speaker identity.

Zimman's own work focuses on acoustic phonetic analyses of the voices of a group of trans men as they undergo testosterone therapy. In the two-year ethnographic study, interviews were conducted with 15 English-speaking self-identified trans men in the early stages of testosterone therapy. Zimman also obtained phonetic data from straight-identified cis men, gay cis men and trans men with a variety of sexual orientations (there were five men in each group). In interviews, Zimman tried to elicit casual speech from the men. Zimman also asked the participants to read aloud a passage of text. The analysis of both types of data then focused on analysis of a number of phonetic features (using Praat[1]), most notably the production of /s/ and its acoustic properties. Zimman then used an online survey to collect perceptions of the men's voice recordings. Zimman was interested in finding out if the trans men in the study were perceived as 'gay-sounding' based on their read speech, as well as investigating what acoustic properties corresponded with the perception of the men's voices as gay- or straight-sounding. A further research question focused on whether there were acoustic differences between the voices of the trans and cis men in the study, even if they were perceived differently in the online survey.

In the first (2013) published report of the study, Zimman's acoustic and perceptual analysis of trans and non-trans men's voices and reveals that, even as trans men may be perceived as gay-sounding, their sociolinguistic styles also differ from those of gay-sounding non-trans men. Thus, these findings support the notion that, if there is such a thing as 'gay-sounding speech', it does not constitute a single style but rather consists of a number of varied deviations from a hegemonic norm. Similar arguments are made by Setter based on her interviews with trans-identified people – transgender people may not want to simply sound like cisgender people if, indeed, there is such a thing as a 'cis-sounding' voice. Setter points out that some people actively want their transgender identities to be visible and celebrated, so it cannot be assumed that the main aim of a transgender person is simply to 'pass' successfully as someone from the cisgender population in relation to voice qualities.

Zimman's findings also show that the changes in the /s/ centre of gravity over time amongst the speakers do not constitute a linear, consistent or progressive shift. Again, these findings provide evidence for multiplicity of gay-sounding phonetic styles and highlight the importance of looking at variation between individual speakers and the possibility that gay-sounding voices may be adopted through different trajectories of acquisition and different sociocultural processes. Importantly, the findings debunk a common stereotype of 'gay-sounding' speech as simply imitating 'feminine-sounding' speech. In fact, this myth has long been exposed as erroneous by linguistic research. Gaudio (1994), for example, observed that gay-sounding speech is not simply an imitation of femininity but rather constitutes a claim on a distinctly gay male identity. Zimman's study similarly found that:

> rather than aiming to speak 'like women', gay-sounding men appear to draw on a selective combination of gendered phonetic variables that index gay identity rather than femininity.
>
> (Zimman, 2013: 30)

In the second published report based on this research, Zimman (2015) develops this work further by providing more detailed analyses of the role of voice in constituting masculine gender positionalities of trans men and others on the transmasculine identity spectrum. Zimman helpfully defines the term 'transmasculinity' as 'masculinity as enacted by people with transgender identities' (2015: 197). In this work, Zimman argues for a 'multi-layered' approach to gender, observing that many transmasculine people (including those in the study) make distinctions between *gender assignment*, *gender role*, *gender identity* and *gender presentation*. In other words, 'gender' is actually experienced as much more complex than a simple distinction between biological sex and social gender (as we saw in Chapter 1).

Zimman notes how, in the interviews, the speakers often talk about how, in their encounters with medical professionals, expressions of masculinity or femininity are amongst prime diagnostic cues of an 'authentic' trans identity. But the reality is that many trans people reject the idea that they should conform to the demands of hetero- and cis-normative gender expressions. Furthermore, Zimman notes that it cannot be assumed that all transmasculine speakers share the same stylistic target. In fact, the studies reveal substantial inter- and intra-speaker variation which supports this argument. As Zimman explains,

> We might expect people who want to masculinize their voices to shift towards masculine norms for articulatory behaviour as they lower their vocal pitch with testosterone, perhaps through self-conscious manipulation. But this expectation is complicated by the fact that transmasculine people begin their transitions with a wide range of gender identities and expressions, and by the fact that multiple patterns of change arise.
>
> (2015: 215)

In sum, these socio-phonetic studies reveal a degree of complexity and multiplicity in the phonetic features in the speech of trans-identified speakers. This complexity is also found in the interactional and discourse-based studies of transgender, intersex and gender-variant identities discussed in the next section.

Interactional and discourse-based studies

If we move away from the socio-phonetic studies of transgender speakers, we see that these ideas about gender as fluid, culturally contingent and multi-layered are also reflected in the discourse-based studies. In fact, some have argued that the very existence of transgender identities highlights the contingent and permeable nature of gender and of biological sex:

> One of the many things that transgenderism 'does' in social and cultural life is affirm the permeability of gendered boundaries. By doing so, it highlights the contrived, contingent, and contextualised nature of 'male' and 'female'.
>
> (Kulick, 2000: 605)

The point is developed by Zimman and Hall (2009) who argue,

> Biological sex is as much a product of everyday interaction as is social gender . . . language is implicated in creating the categories of 'male' and 'female' bodies.
>
> (Zimman and Hall, 2009: 167)

In developing and articulating this argument, Zimman and Hall draw on the work of Laqueur (1990) who observes that the dichotomy between male and female bodies is a relatively recent development. Moreover, binary constructions of gender are not necessarily shared by all communities and cultures. Following Laqueur, Zimman and Hall argue that it is linguistic practices that produce different conceptualisations of 'sex' and that biological sex is ultimately linguistically reconstructed to suit a community's needs. These arguments are particularly important when considering intersex bodies and identities and their relationship to language. Studies of intersex and language are even rarer than those on transgender and language, although there is some important emerging work in this area (e.g. King, 2015). The term 'intersex' is defined by the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA) as follows:

> 'Intersex' is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.
>
> (www.isna.org/faq/what_is_intersex)

The ISNA goes on to provide examples of intersex body manifestation on their website.

In a discourse analytical study focusing in detail upon the language of one openly intersex speaker (Mani), King (2015) examines how strategic storytelling practices can render intersex identities tellable where they may previously have been 'unintelligible' (Butler, 1990). King uses narrative analysis to explore how the speaker in his study uses storytelling as a means of constructing an intersex gender identity. Specifically, King looks at how the speaker manipulates cultural ideologies of femininity and masculinity in their ongoing discursive production of gender. King notes in the analysis how Mani's use of language reveals the limitations of the categories 'man' and 'male' as fixed locations for masculinities. However, interestingly, the analysis also reveals how masculinities cannot always be completely separated from a person's subjective body experience. The tension between these two positions of 'biological innateness' and 'social construction' forms much of the basis of the analysis in King's work.

King's narrative analysis of Mani's accounts highlights evidence of a desire to be taken as masculine as well as feminine, as in the extract that follows:[2]

Mani:

> I don't know what my diagnosis was and I certainly and I've never been able to work that out and these days I don't care
>
> um when I was doing my journey trying to work out who I was my dad wonderfully had taken photographs of all us kids and really that was my goldmine of trying to work myself out and I saw a child who was both comfortable doing female things dressing up umm doing those sorts of things but I was also in some ways more masculine than some of my brothers
>
> um I would help my dad on the farm
>
> I was really interested in how engines worked and things like that so as a forty-year-old trying to pull all this together I made the decision that people had tried to put me into a box but that's not who I am
>
> so I made the decision to be all of who I am which is where this came from (indicates facial hair) so it's an experimental thing one summer thinking cause I'd always cut my facial hair
>
> in our culture women are not supposed to have facial hair so I thought well if I'm not a woman I don't have to fit to that that um

convention and so I started to grow it and it was so exciting because this is one of the very few things that I had left that literally wasn't removed by surgery

I had genital surgery at age 8 to normalize and feminize my body so the difference was removed by a surgeon's knife

(King, 2015: 229)

In this data extract, King notes Mani's use of the term 'female' to refer to sex organs sets up a field of heteronormative binary sex. Mani sets up a discourse which seems to both comply with this dominant discourse and counters it. Mani actually draws on discourses of gender difference which tend to position men and women as different in terms of biology and behaviour, and this has the effect of reinforcing discourses of biological determinism and binary gender. King notes that it is interesting that Mani finds these discourses helpful in the process of reclaiming hir (Mani's preferred pronoun) masculinity and does not outrightly reject such discourses. Gender difference discourses are, therefore, drawn on by Mani in a socially salient way – to assert that both femininity and masculinity were present in the childhood self. But Mani goes on to evaluate how 'male' and 'female' binaries are inadequate ways to explain intersex experience, and this, consequently, constructs a different discourse – one which rejects gender binarism rather than reinforces it.

In the next extract from King's study, the wording of the question positions Mani in relation to heteronormative binary, and this then elicits an account of how this binary is inadequate for describing Mani's lived experience as intersex.

Mani:

(reading) um what do you consider yourself as more female or male

uhh that changes and I don't usually use the words male and female

but I realize in different situations it sorta moves around a little bit

um I was with my nephew two nights ago and he was talking about the exhibition that's currently at Te Papa the Formula One and he was saying and laughing most of the females there seemed bored and completely not interested

I I love cars and I'm fascinated about racing cars so I y'know what part of my brain is working y'know when I'm doing that so it changes it alters it's not a consistent thing

but I know for myself that I I hold both of those realities not only in my physical body it there's something in my brain

one of the things that I've noticed a lot thinking over the last few years that my brain works quite differently from a standard male or a standard female brain

it works a lot like my intersex friends in America

so there's obviously something there about the hormonal exposure or the way my brain is wired that is different

(King, 2015: 233)

In analysing this extract, King notes how Mani makes references to gender fluidity (e.g. 'it moves around a bit'). Mani's discussion of a masculine fascination with racing cars complies with heteronormative binary sex discourse which then permits an association with masculinity by Mani. However, Mani then transfers this discourse to the brain. Again, this makes use of a discourse of gender difference and biological determinism (i.e. there are 'male' and 'female' brains). However, King notes that Mani invokes this discourse of the gendered brain not only as a way of reinforcing ideologies of gender binarism but also as a way of using a gendered body part (the brain) to reclaim hir own masculinity (as well as embracing femininity). In the account, Mani then goes on to differentiate between intersex brains and those of males and females. So 'male' and 'female' brains are constructed as 'others' to Mani's intersex brain, and this effectively counters heteronormative binary sex discourse. From this analysis, King concludes,

> Although Mani strategically and agentively deploys stories about childhood performances of masculinity and femininity, these constructs interpenetrate with hir (inter)sex of birth. S(he) uses language and stories to subvert dominant (i.e. heteronormative) ideologies about masculinity and femininity as well as ideologies about intersex bodies.
>
> (King, 2015: 236)

Similar themes of tensions between discourses is also found in some narrative-focused studies of language used by transgender speakers. In an early narrative/language-focused study of LGB coming out stories, Plummer (1995) describes coming out stories as typically consisting of three generic elements. The first is *suffering*, which provides tension for the story's plot; the second is *epiphany*, where the narrator comes to a realisation that something has to be done, or a silence must be broken, to alleviate their suffering, and the final stage is *transformation* in which the narrator describes surviving or surpassing their suffering. Liang (1997) presents a different three-stage generic structure of coming out narratives: *coming out to self*, *coming out to others* and *membership in a series of ongoing acts of LGB self-definition* (coming out to a wider range of people). Amongst others, Zimman (2009) has noted that these studies, because they only focus on cisgender LGB narratives, have a tendency to conflate LGB and transgender coming out stories and experience. Zimman's coming out stories study draws on data comprising interviews with nine transgender volunteers. Zimman finds that there are similarities and differences between LGB and transgender coming out stories. One of the key similarities is that coming out stories are seen as constituting the LGBT self – LGB and T narrators not only describe a process of identity construction but also simultaneously enact that identity through the act of telling the story. Another similarity is that the transgender speakers in Zimman's study do often orient towards norms specific for the coming out narrative genre, just as LGB participants in other studies have been shown to do. However, a difference here is that the stories in Zimman's study tend to begin at a point when speakers had already decided to move from one gender role to another, rather than coming out to self, which has been identified by Liang as a common starting point in LGB coming out narratives.

Another difference that Zimman finds is that transgender coming out stories do not contain what Liang terms 'processuality' as one of their core elements. Zimman's stories indicate that coming out as transgender is not processual in the lifelong sense as is the case for the LGB coming out stories examined by others. Zimman also notes a key structural difference between LGB coming out stories and transgender coming out stories – that is, there are *two* distinct ways a person can come out as transgender: *before* and *after* a transition. Zimman, therefore, distinguishes between the terms *declaration* (the initial claiming of a transgender identity before transition) and *disclosure* (sharing one's transgender history after transition). Declaration and disclosure as discrete practices are reflected in the linguistic practices found amongst transgender speakers as they tell their stories. Whilst declaration (a feature which is entirely absent from cisgender LGB coming out narratives) frequently uses the same lexicon as LGB stories (e.g. *coming out*, *in the closet*, *closeted* etc), transgender people often use different terminology to talk about disclosure (e.g. use of the terms *disclose* instead of *come out*, *stealth* instead of *in the closet*).

Edelman (2014) also studies transgender men's discussions (using interview and online discussion data) about disclosing their transgender status to others. Like Zimman, Edelman is critical of the conflation of transgender coming out stories and experiences with those of LGB people, arguing that the idea of being 'in' or 'out' of the closet is particularly inefficient for capturing transgender experiences of identity. Edelman also draws specific attention to a transgender experience called the 'cissexual assumption' (drawing on previous work by Serano, 2007). According to Edelman, this assumption refers to the implicit belief that someone who does not 'look trans' must be cisgender (i.e. not transgender). It involves an unspoken expectation that all gender-normative appearing bodies are cisgender and that they will always conform to a socially understood gender binary. What the assumption does for trans people is to obscure the possibility of a gender-discordant history. Edelman states,

> Just as dominant ideological discourses about sexuality tell us that women have boyfriends and men have girlfriends, they also lead us to assume that a body with a bearded face, a deep voice, and a flat chest has been, and always will be, a man who was classified as male at birth.
>
> (Edelman, 2014: 154)

In addition to narrative analysis studies of transgender coming out stories, other discourse-based work on transgender, gender variance and language has focused on the use of names and pronouns amongst self-identified transgender and gender-variant speakers. For example, Saisuwan's (2016) study reports on *kathoey*[3] use of self-referring pronouns in Thailand and how they are used to construct gender identity. And in a study based on English language users, Webster (2018) uses tools of corpus linguistics to examine self-identified gender-variant Twitter users' ways of self-referring with a particular focus on the level of self-sexualisation.

While Webster and Saisuwan focus on lexical items, others have focused more on analysing speakers' deployment of grammatical resources to construct transgender and gender-variant identities in discourse. Borba and Ostermann (2007), for example, conducted a study which explores how transgender individuals cross gender boundaries through sociocultural symbolic practices, in this case, the manipulation of Portuguese grammatical gender. The authors focus specifically on how and why a particular community of transgender people (Southern Brazilian *travestis*) use masculine grammatical forms in the discursive construction of their identities. Travestis are people who are biologically male who use various techniques to present physical features culturally associated with women (e.g. hair dying, wearing make-up and women's clothes, taking female hormones). But, importantly, travestis do not want to undergo surgical medical transition. They generally make a living as sex workers. Borba and Ostermann explain that Brazilian Portuguese marks nouns, adjectives, pronouns and articles with a masculine or feminine grammatical gender. Traditionally, the word *travesti* is described as a masculine noun. The study is based on a corpus of approximately 50 hours of audio recordings of interactions between the researchers and self-identified travestis. The authors found that the travestis in the study adopt female names and commonly address each other using feminine grammatical forms (although this is not always consistent). But when the travestis speak generally about travestis as a group, they tend to use masculine forms. More specifically, when masculine forms are used to refer to themselves or other travestis, they fall into four different discursive contexts, described by Borba and Ostermann as follows:

- Narratives about the time the body transformations took place;
- Reports produced by others when talking about travestis;
- Description of themselves within their family relationships;
- Establishment of contrast between the travesti speaker and other travestis with whom the speaker does not identify.

(Borba and Ostermann, 2007: 137)

Drawing on data from Borba and Ostermann's study, we will briefly look at some examples of each of these discursive contexts. In each example, only the English translation is provided, with items marked by masculine gender highlighted in **bold**. (In Borba and Ostermann's study, they also presented the original Portuguese followed by an English translation).

The example that follows shows the speaker (Cynthya) using a masculine form in a narrative about the time when their body transformations took place:

> *Cynthya*: This is even in a book that I book that I read in in childhood. When I **failed (masc.)** my father would punish me and I stayed in a library reading books about childhood and adulthood.

(Borba and Ostermann, 2007: 137)

Here, we see Cynthya referring to the failing self in the masculine form when talking about her childhood before travestivity.

The next example shows the speaker (Fabiola) using masculine grammatical forms in the context of reported speech:

> *Fabiola*: Sometimes they say 'the fags (fem.) **the travestis (masc.)** they don't like women.' They say you don't like women. But how come I don't like women? I identify myself with THEM right? Women are my FRIENDS. I identify myself with them.
>
> (Borba and Ostermann, 2007: 138)

In the previous example, Fabiola reports what other people have said about travestis (that travestis do not like women) and, in doing so, reports their use of the masculine form to refer to travestis as a group (with an implied negative evaluation of this practice).

The next example shows the use of a grammatical masculine gender when the speaker (Thalia) describes herself in the context of her biological family relationship:

Thalia: A mother is a mother. She knows that we won't ever be women for them. We'll always be their **male child**. As she suffered to give birth to us right? He like me, as **I I was the (masc.) – I am the elder son**, she almost died to give birth to me. For I am this way. My family accepts the way I am.

(Borba and Ostermann, 2007: 139)

In this example, we see Thalia talking about her mother's conceptions of Thalia's gender identity – once a male, forever one. And this provides the basis for Thalia's use of masculine gender to refer to her identity in this context.

The final discursive context identified by Borba and Ostermann is that which establishes a perceived contrast between the travesti identity of the speaker and their non-identification with other travestis, mostly those whose behaviour and characteristics are perceived by the speaker as 'vulgar'. In cases such as these, the 'other' travestis are referred to using masculine grammatical forms, as in the examples that follow:

Cassiana: Yeah it was a very glamorous thing right? Not [nowadays].
Fabiola: [There was] there was- being a travesti used to be a luxurious thing. But nowadays ((travesti)) is very **vulgarized (masc.)**. Because **they (masc.) themselves (masc.)** spoil the image of the community.

(Borba and Ostermann, 2007: 142)

In these examples, Cassiana and Fabiola both use masculine forms to make a critique of other travestis. They specifically talk about those who 'vulgarise themselves' and refer to a community to which they belong. But at the same time, they draw attention to a particular travesti type with which they do not identify. The authors conclude that the travestis in their study deploy masculine grammatical forms as a linguistic device to create complex identities for themselves, and they summarise their findings as follows:

> Travestis' body transformations enable them to deploy feminine and masculine grammatical forms in the construction of a multitude of gendered meanings to their identity positions.
>
> (Borba and Ostermann, 2007: 133)

Kulick (1998) also discusses some of the complexities involved in the use of language among Brazilian travestis making similar observations to those of Borba and Ostermann. Interestingly, the findings of the study are similar to those found by Hall and O'Donovan (1996) in their study of *hijras*'[4] manipulation of the linguistic gender system in Hindi. Like travestis, hijras use a linguistic gender system to produce relations of power and/or solidarity in which local identities and gender understandings are negotiated.

Moving from how transgender speakers refer to themselves and other transgender and non-binary speakers, Zottola (2018) conducts a study which focuses on how the British press uses particular lexical items to refer to transgender people. Zottola notes that studies of how cisgender people represent trans people are less common than those looking at self-representation by trans people. However, both are still relatively rare in the broad field of language, gender and sexuality research. In fact, Zottola notes only one earlier study (Baker, 2014) which analyses stereotypes and patterns of representation with regard to trans people in British press data. Baker's corpus-based analysis of representations of transgender people in the British press found that such representations were overwhelmingly negative. Furthermore, Baker's analysis revealed a number of themes of representation which were repeated in the data: transgender people are represented in the press as receiving special treatment lest they be offended; transgender people are variously represented as either victims or villains; transgender people are often presented as being involved in transient relationships or sex scandals; transgender people are often represented as the object of jokes about their appearance or sexual organs; transgender people are often presented as attention-seeking, freakish objects. Occasionally, there were more positive representations of trans people, but these occurred only as isolated and relatively rare cases, rather than as occurring repeatedly as trends.

Like Baker, Zottola uses tools of corpus linguistics to analyse depictions of transgender people in a corpus of newspaper articles. Zottola's corpus (called TransCor) comprises 3,138 press articles about transgender issues and totals 2,201,225 words. Zottola divides TransCor into two sub-corpora – Quality Corpus[5] (QualCor) and Popular Corpus[6] (PopCor). Zottola explains that corpus linguistics is useful because it allows for large amounts of data to be examined from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective, and it enables the identification of patterns of language use which function to construct particular discourses (see Chapter 4 for more details about corpus linguistics):

> With the use of CL tools it was possible to identify recurring patterns and the use of unpredictable lexical items as well as to reveal the textual and discursive outcome of the use of this terminology.
>
> (Zottola, 2018: 239)

The corpus analysis focuses particularly on semantic prosody in order to analyse semantic patterns of representation of transgender people across the data. The corpora were analysed using AntConc Word List, Concordance and Collocates tools. Using these corpus tools, Zottola first looked at the frequency of the various naming strategies that were used in the two sub-corpora and in the corpus as a whole. Zottola's results are shown in Table 8.1.

Zottola's results in Table 8.1 show that *transgender** is the search term that occurs with the highest frequency, followed by *trans* and then *transsexual**. The results also reveal a higher presence of *trans* in the quality press as opposed to *transsexual** in the popular press. *Sex change** is also frequent in PopCor. The frequency of *transsexual** in PopCor appears despite some organisations' resistance to the term because of its emphasis on the physical, rather than identity, aspects of being a trans person. In fact, on the whole, the findings seem to reveal the popular press favouring terms related to physicality (such as *transsexual* and *sex change*) or to medical issues/medicalised discourse (such as *dysphoria* and *gender reassignment*).

As well as looking at words which do occur, the author also notes significant absences, such as *MTF* ('male to female') and *FTM* ('female to male'), which are strongly related to trans identity. Zottola suggests this may reflect a lack of awareness by the writers of the articles in the corpus, or it might be a strategic

Table 8.1 Frequency of naming strategies in the TransCor

	QualCor	*PopCor*	*Total*
	Raw frequency	*Raw frequency*	*Raw frequency*
*transgender**	2,612	930	3,542
trans	873	90	960
*transsexual**	325	369	694
*sex change**	170	440	610
*transvestite**	273	208	481
gender reassignment	168	162	330
dysphoria	73	65	138
*cross-dress**	44	60	104
*trann**	42	25	67
*shemale**	5	5	10

Source: Adapted from Zottola, 2018: 247

Table 8.2 Collocates of *transgender** that are related to LGBTQ+ group and labels

	QualCor	*Common collocates*	*PopCor*
*transgender**	intersex (52)	bisexual (456/100)	community (62)
	persons (16)	lesbian (499/115)	LGBT (15)
	binary (11)	bi (8/6)	gay (142)
	immigrant (8)	questioning (14/6)	groups (8)
	individuals (28)		group (16)
	lesbians (20)		people (102)
	LGBTI (14)		members (6)
	gays (18)		trans (6)
	hijras (7)		

Source: From Zottola, 2018: 253

absence which underlies the ideology of the newspapers and the non-inclusive representation they are trying to convey.

After examining word frequencies, Zottola then looks more closely at collocations of *transgender** (used as both a noun and an adjective). The collocation analysis was conducted on a span of +/−5 words and the first 50 collocates were considered in the analysis. The results of the *transgender** collocation analysis are shown in Table 8.2.

Zottola's results in Table 8.2 show that *transgender** in the QualCor tends to cluster with *lesbian*, *gay*, *bisexual*, *intersex* and *questioning*. So the collocational context of *transgender** in QualCor is representative of a collective representation pattern whereby transgender people are referred to collectively with LGB people, rather than as a discrete group. Zottola argues that this could be interpreted positively as indicative of a move towards inclusivity but is also partly problematic, because *transgender* usually appears at the end or towards the end of such lists which has the effect of further marginalising it within a 'hierarchy' of already marginalised identities. The clustering of transgender within a collective LGBT+ representation also erroneously suggests that all people in the LGBT+ community have homogenous needs and concerns – this is clearly not the case.

Zottola notes similar findings in PopCor but a key difference in PopCor is that the discourse surrounding the phrase 'LGBT' changes in comparison with QualCor. Specifically, parts of the discourse seem to be inclusive in that reports are aimed at raising awareness of LGBT+ issues. But other parts of discourse are more negative, as in the following example from Zottola (original highlighting):

> FIRST, we had all-woman shortlists for prospective MPs, Now Labour MP David Lammy calls for black and minority ethnic shortlists to boost their number in the Commons. At this rate, how long will it be, I wonder, before we have gay bisexual and **transgender** shortlists, too? You read it here first (*Daily Mail*, August 2, 2014).
>
> (Zottola, 2018: 255)

Zottola points out that the semantic prosody in the previous example (and other similar examples found in the corpus) is negative because it implies that LGBT+ representation in the Commons would be a bad thing. In sum, Zottola finds that the two sub-corpora differ in terms of the semantic prosodies that are discursively constructed around transgender identities. The QualCor shows a fairly inclusive and positive prosody, whilst the PopCor presents a more complex 'double standard' in its representations of transgender identities.

As legal and social changes relating to transgender identities continue to take place in the UK and elsewhere, it is likely that press reporting of trans-related issues will also change over time. There is, therefore, much scope for continuing to analyse the language of news reporting in relation to these issues.

Summary

What we have seen in this chapter is that research on language, transgender, gender variance and intersex, although rare, is increasing and diversifying. There is more work on language and transgender than on intersex and gender variance. Research can take the form of socio-phonetic analysis of speech, or it can be more discourse-focused – the latter can focus either on the language used by speakers themselves, or it can look instead at how cisgender people refer to trans and gender-variant individuals and communities. What all of the work does is to make transgender, gender-variant and intersex identities more visible. And, importantly, the work continues to destabilise and challenge restrictive discourses of gender binarism and biological determinism which have, in the past, been very limiting and, arguably, damaging to language, gender and sexuality research.

Study questions and activities

1. Read some of the transgender coming out stories which are publicly available online (see, for example, websites such as www.rucomingout.com/stories.html and https://lgbtrc.uci.edu/resources/coming-out-stories.php). Choose one or two stories and analyse them using Zimman's (2009) narrative framework.
2. Read any of the articles that follow, which focus on language and transgender or non-binary identities in different cultural contexts. What key language issues are discussed and analysed in the article/s? What does the linguistic analysis reveal about speaker identities and practices relating to gender? How do the language issues raised in these studies compare to those of King's study of an intersex speaker and Borba and Ostermann's study of Brazilian travestis?

Davis, J. (2014). 'More than just "gay Indians"': Intersecting articulations of two-spirit gender, sexuality and indigenousness. In L. Zimman, J. Davis and J. Raclaw (eds.) *Queer Excursions: Retheorizing Binaries in Language, Gender and Sexuality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 63–80.

Gaudio, R. (2014). Acting like women, acted upon: Gender and agency in Hausa sexual narratives. In L. Zimman, J. Davis and J. Raclaw (eds.) *Queer Excursions: Retheorizing Binaries in Language, Gender and Sexuality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 171–194.

Hall, K. (1997). 'Go suck your husband's sugarcane!' Hijras and the use of sexual insult. In A. Livia and K. Hall (eds.) *Queerly Phrased: Language, Gender, and Sexuality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 430–460.

Hall, K. (2013). Commentary 1: 'It's a hijra!': Queer linguistics revisited. *Discourse and Society*, 24 (5), 634–642.

Notes

1 Praat is a computer software package which enables the phonetic analysis of speech.
2 In King's original transcripts, CA features are indicated. However, for this chapter, these features are not relevant and have, therefore, been removed.
3 'Kathoey' is an identity term used in Thailand which is variably used to refer to transgender women or 'effeminate' gay men.
4 'Hijra' is term used in the Indian subcontinent to describe intersex, eunuchs and transgender people. In some countries, hijras are officially recognised as a 'third gender'. For more information, see Hall (1997) and Hall and O'Donovan (1996).
5 British 'quality' newspapers comprise the *Times*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Guardian*, the *Observer*, the *Financial Times*, the *Telegraph* and the *Sunday Telegraph*.
6 British popular or 'tabloid' press comprises the following major newspapers: *Daily Mail*, *Mail on Sunday*, *Daily Express*, *Sunday Express*, the *Sun*, the *Sun on Sunday*, *Daily Mirror*, *Sunday Mirror*, *Sunday People*, *Daily Star*, *Daily Star Sunday* and *Morning Star*.

9 Researching gender- and sexuality-based discriminatory language

Whilst the preceding chapters have explored language, gender and sexuality in particular domains, or in relation to specific aspects of gender and/or sexuality identity, this chapter addresses issues which span all contexts and identities. This chapter focuses on the area of language, gender and sexuality that addresses structural inequalities in language and language use and examines the way that these inequalities function to produce discriminatory effects in terms of gender and sexuality. In *Man-Made Language* (1985), Spender was one of the first scholars to argue that language itself is not gender-neutral and embodies and promotes the values and identities of the more powerful groups in society – in the case of gender, this is men. Spender describes language as 'man-made' and argues that, for this reason, it tends to ignore, marginalise and render invisible the identities, values and experiences of women. It is not possible for language to embody the experiences of women because, throughout time, women have never had an opportunity to play a significant role in its development. So language has come to represent and embody a partial (masculine) view of the world. This is the way that Spender comes to define language itself as sexist, and she discusses many instantiations of sexism in language throughout her book.

Through the work of Spender and others, 'sexist language' has come to be defined as language which is used in ways which *ignore*, *define* and *degrade* women. More recent developments of the term have expanded it to include language-based discrimination against men and other gender identities, including transgender and non-binary gender identities. A more contemporary definition of 'sexist language' from Mills (2012) is as follows:

> Sexist statements categorise you as belonging to a group which you do not associate yourself with, or they associate you with a set of values which you do not value and which you recognise as negatively evaluated.
>
> (Mills, 2012: 160)

Mills and others distinguish between forms of 'overt' sexism in language and 'covert' or 'indirect' sexism. (Lazar [2005] also uses the interchangeable term 'subtle sexism'.) We will look at some examples of different types of overt sexism in language, followed by an examination of the main types of indirect discrimination that have been researched. In the case of indirect discrimination, the examples include homophobia and transphobia, as well as sexism, as this area of research has considered sexuality-based discriminatory language practices as well as those centring on gender. There is, however, currently very little research on other forms of discrimination, such as biphobic and transphobic language. The focus on sexism and homophobia in the examples is not intended to render bisexual and transgender identities invisible; rather, it simply reflects the existing gap in current research. As researchers, this is something that you could perhaps focus on when developing your own research projects.

Examining discriminatory language is important because, as Sunderland (2004) notes, the effects of discriminatory language are potentially damaging (e.g. in terms of mental health and emotional well-being) to those groups and individuals who are being maligned. Sunderland refers to such language use as constituting 'damaging discourses'. Sunderland is careful to point out, however, that the effects of damaging discourses need to be carefully interpreted in context – what is damaging for one group or individual in terms of language use may not be for others, and vice versa. Butler (1997) uses the similar term 'injurious speech' to refer to the idea that language has the power to injure and cause harm. In this way, we can ascribe a kind of agency to language – words *do* things, including hurtful things.

Throughout this chapter, we will first look at what has been written about forms of 'direct' or 'overt' sexist language, drawing on some established literature which has focused just on discriminatory language based on gender (and primarily targeted at women). We will then examine more contemporary work which has focused more on 'indirect' or 'subtle' forms of discriminatory language. In this section, we will continue to draw on a body of literature which has focused on sexist language, but we will also start to explore other forms of gender- and sexuality-based discriminatory language, most notably homophobic language.

Forms of 'direct' sexist language

We have seen that Spender (1985) first defined 'sexist language' as that which is used in ways which *ignore*, *define* and *degrade* women. Spender's first category of direct sexist language – language which ignores women – refers to any use of language which makes an explicit or implicit assumption that the 'male' or 'masculine' is either the norm or is representative of all human beings. This kind of language ignores and excludes women from 'human' activity and experience. The most common realisation of this type of sexist language is the use of 'generic' masculine' forms, for example,

Pronouns: he, him, his
Nouns: man, fellow
Compound nouns: mankind, chairman
Verb: to man
Adjective: man-made
Any other linguistic forms which present 'man' as representative of 'humans/people'

Here are some examples of these linguistic features taken from 1980s press publications (under the UK's 2010 Equality Act, it is now illegal to use written language in this way in the press and in public institutions):

> People are more likely to be influenced by their wives than by opinion polls.
>
> (*The Guardian*)

> And so, from now onwards, the pressure is back on the GP. He is within his right to refuse smear tests unless a woman is over 35 or has had three pregnancies.
>
> (*The Daily Mirror*)

> Ms Carrie Pester, a spokesman for the [Greenham Common] women.
>
> (*The Guardian*)

It is now quite unusual to come across these uses of the generic masculine, especially in written forms of English, but some notable exceptions are in legal discourse (where generic 'he' is still an accepted convention of this kind of writing) or in writing produced by those who may have learnt English as a second language. However, you may still *hear* these forms of sexist language being used in the everyday casual speech of some users. And when these kinds of examples of ignoring sexist language are heard in speech, it indicates that some members of the population continue to hold sexist views.

Spender's second category of direct sexist language – language which defines and classifies women – is probably the most extensive of the categories of direct sexist language that has been documented and covers a range of language practices. Muriel Schultz wrote an important article in 1975 entitled 'The Semantic Derogation of Women'. In this piece, Schultz describes how certain words and phrases in the English language which have previously had a 'neutral' usage have, over time, come to acquire derogatory meanings towards women and girls. Equivalent terms for men and boys have not been subjected to the same processes of 'semantic derogation'. Schultz observes that, as such terms change over time, they often start off as slightly disparaging at first but then gradually acquire more and more negative meanings so that they end up becoming abusive and a sexual slur against women.

Some of the examples of semantic derogation that Schultz provides in her work include 'tart' and 'wench'. In Middle English, these words for 'women' did not have the same sexualised and negative connotations that they have in modern English today. They were simply neutral words, similar to the word 'woman' itself. Some other examples include words which have acquired negative connotations for women, whilst their masculine equivalents have retained a neutral (or even a positive) connotational meaning, such as the following:

madam	sir
mistress	master
spinster	bachelor

Another area of sexist language which defines and classifies women refers to words and phrases which restrict women's identities and activities to a predominantly domestic sphere. This is referred to as the 'linguistic domestication of women'. In other words, language itself literally writes women out of public and professional spheres. Such examples include naming practices, such as the invisibility of the female line of descent (think about the use of fathers' and husbands' surnames to signal 'ownership' of the female by the male in heteronormative marital and family relationships). Although such practices may be changing, they are still largely dominant in many Western societies. Jones et al. (2017) provide a more recent study of naming practices in British marriages and civil partnerships and find that these heteronormative practices still largely prevail.

Other examples of the linguistic domestication of women include asymmetries in usage, such as the use of the term 'maiden' name and the use of terms of address which indicate marital status for women but not for men. This creates a linguistic inequality which implies marriage is an important indicator of status for women but not for men. We also sometimes see this kind of sexist language being realised as the labelling of women as appendages – think, for example, about terms such as *first lady* and *man and wife* (the latter is reducing in use but is still an optional wording in heterosexual marriages ceremonies – *woman and husband*, however, is not an available option).

Another area of sexist language which defines and classifies both women and men is that of *occupational stereotyping*. This type of sexist language makes explicit or implicit assumptions about gender and occupation. Some occupations are stereotyped as being more suitable for men and women – e.g. nursing for women and firefighting for men. Language often reflects these occupational stereotypes. Some examples of these kinds of linguistic practice include the following:

- Marked and unmarked references to occupations in relation to gender – e.g. specifying '*lady/woman* doctor' or '*male* nurse', rather than simply using a neutral term 'nurse' and 'doctor' (regardless of the sex of the person in question). The same applies to references to specific occupations which make an assumption about gender by using a pronoun – e.g. automatically referring to a 'builder' as *he* or to a 'cleaner' as *she*
- Using 'man' as a generic, agentive form – e.g. salesman
- Use of diminutive forms to refer to women performing a particular occupation – e.g. actress, stewardess, usherette
- Presenting women's occupations as being tied to men's – e.g. *the farmer's wife*

In the UK, these uses of language that are related to occupation are technically illegal under the 2010 Equality Act, as they are classed as work-related forms of gender discrimination. Because of this, it is increasingly unlikely that you will come across these forms in writing (particularly in institutional contexts, such as workplaces), but they are still commonly heard in the speech of some people. Again, this suggests that sexist views are still deeply ingrained amongst some members of the population.

Table 9.1 Linguistic categories of misogyny in a sample of hip-hop lyrics

Category	Frequency in songs (%)
Derogatory naming and shaming	54
Sexual objectification	79
Distrust of women	23
Legitimation of violence against women	16
Celebration of prostitution and pimping	18

Source: Eggleston, 2015

This final category of direct sexist language – language which *degrades* – covers practices such as the following:

- Name-calling/overtly sexist and homophobic slurs
- Explicit terms of abuse relating to gender and sexuality
- Infantilisation of women – e.g. asymmetries in the use of 'man-woman' and 'boy-girl'. 'Girl' is commonly used to refer to women over the age of 16, whereas 'boy' is much more quickly replaced by 'man'. This has the effect of presenting women as infantilised and in need of looking after for a longer period of time
- (Hetero)sexualised representations of women
- Intentional trivialisation and ridicule

Many of these forms of sexist language remain commonplace practices in certain contexts. And, even though they are overt, they can still be difficult to challenge. A study by Eggleston (2015), for example, looks at how overt sexist language which functions to degrade women remains prevalent in the hip-hop music genre. Drawing on a previous study by Weitzer and Kubrin (2009), Eggleston identifies five key categories of sexist/misogynistic language use in the lyrics of hip-hop, number-one songs. The categories of sexist language are derogatory naming and shaming of women, sexual objectification of women, distrust of women, legitimation of violence against women and celebration of prostitution and pimping. Eggleston conducted a content analysis based on these categories and the findings are shown in Table 9.1.

The findings in Table 9.1 clearly show that, in this particular genre of music lyrics, the linguistic degradation of women is prolific.[1] Therefore, direct or overt sexist language, in some (public) contexts, remains extremely visible and problematic.

Indirect sexism and homophobia

The forms of direct sexism in language outlined in the previous section are often easy to identify and are now mostly deemed illegal if they are used in institutional settings, such as workplaces, under the UK's Equality Act (2010). However, it is more difficult to legislate against 'indirect' forms of discriminatory language. This is probably why these forms of language are even more prevalent than direct forms of sexist and homophobic language, not only in everyday speech but also in some forms of writing, as we will see in the examples throughout this section. Mills (2008) identifies and discusses at length five main types of indirect sexism, and these are outlined in the sections that follow. Although Mills only provides examples of indirect sexist language, the same principles can be applied to homophobic language, as shown in some of the examples that follow.

Humour

One category of indirect sexism identified by Mills is that of sexist humour. Humour, as a type of indirect sexist and homophobic language, often exaggerates certain features associated with a group or draws on and plays with stereotypical knowledge for comic effect. In the example that follows, Mills (2008) explains how the humour is created because, even though 'men' and 'women' are presented as complete opposites, both are presented as ridiculous through the comic exaggerating of well-known cultural stereotypes of gender. The example, that Mills discusses at length in her book, is taken from some emails which circulated in a workplace context. The intended effect of the emails was that of creating humour. The emails follow:

Women's language translated

Yes = No

No = Yes

Maybe = No

I'm sorry = You'll be sorry

We need = I want

It's your decision = The correct decision should be obvious by now

Do what you want = You'll pay for this later

We need to talk = I need to complain

Sure, go ahead = I don't want you to

I'm not upset = Of course I'm upset you moron

You're so manly = You need a shave and you sweat a lot

You're certainly attentive tonight = Is sex all you ever think about?

Be romantic, turn out the lights = I have flabby thighs

This kitchen is so inconvenient – I want a new house

I heard a noise = I noticed you were almost asleep

Do you love me? = I'm going to ask for something expensive

How much do you love me? = I've done something today you're not going to like

I'll be ready in a minute = Kick off your shoes and find a good game on TV

Is my butt fat? = Tell me I'm beautiful
Are you listening to me? = Too late, you're dead
You have to learn to communicate = Just agree with me

Men's language translated

I'm hungry = I'm hungry
I'm sleepy = I'm sleepy
I'm tired = I'm tired
Do you want to go to a movie? = I'd eventually like to have sex with you
Can I call you some time? = I'd eventually like to have sex with you
May I have this dance? = I'd eventually like to have sex with you
Nice dress = Nice cleavage
What's wrong? = I don't see why you're making such a big deal out of this
What's wrong? = What meaningless self-inflicted psychological trauma are you going through now?
I'm bored = Do you want to have sex?
I love you = Let's have sex now
Yes, I like the way you cut your hair = I liked it better before
Let's talk = I'm trying to impress you by showing you that I am a deep person and maybe then you'll have sex with me

Mills observes that the humour in these kinds of texts lies in the fact that, even though men and women are presented as polar opposites, both groups are presented as ridiculous. Because it is humorous, it can easily be argued that this text is not sexist. However, Mills argues that it is indirectly sexist because it is written from a masculine perspective. Women are presented as saying the opposite of what they mean, portrayed as manipulative, self-centred, materialistic and other negative characteristics. Men, on the other hand, may be presented as simple, but are also presented as honest, direct and plain-speaking. So although these kinds of texts are generally seen to be humorous, they still circulate unchallenged and largely negative stereotypes about both women and men.

Much research on humour does, in fact, show that women are often the butt of jokes by men (Crawford, 1995). It has also been found that irony is a common strategy for sexist men, making humorous remarks about women in a way that justifies the sexism. To claim that sexism is being used in an ironic way does not prevent the sexist language from being iterated in the first place, and, as Benwell (2003) explains, it forces the receiver to become complicit in 'sharing the joke', even if it may make the person feel uncomfortable:

> The operation of irony in the expression of sexism rarely works to subvert or oppose the object of irony, as we might assume the traditional function

> of irony to be, and indeed this kind of irony rarely has a clear object at all. Rather it operates as a pre-emptive disclaimer which places the burden upon the receiver to share the joke, regardless of their usual politics.
>
> (Benwell, 2003: 146)

Building on Benwell's work, Mills (2008) argues,

> It is possible to make overtly sexist statements in a very knowing, 'post-modern' way, drawing attention to the ludicrous nature of such attitudes, but at the same time keeping those sexist attitudes in play [. . .] Anyone who complains is thus seen as lacking in sophistication in that they are unable to distinguish between an assumed persona or character and a real person's beliefs [. . .] there is thus little possibility of contesting this type of usage without appearing puritanical, humourless and overly literal.
>
> (Mills, 2008: 145)

It is for these reasons that indirect sexism through humour is often very difficult to challenge. Furthermore, some psychological research has identified a link between sexist humour and sexist behaviour. Woodzicka and Ford (2010), for example, find that if sexist humour is deemed acceptable in certain contexts, this can cause an increase in the sexist behaviour and actions (including potentially violent actions against women) of some men who already hold sexist views. This emphasises why any form of sexist (or other discriminatory) language should never be treated as trivial – if left unchallenged, it can negatively affect some people's behaviour towards women and other gender and sexual minority groups.

Presupposition

The second type of indirect sexism identified by Mills is presupposition. Mills claims that this is also a very difficult type of sexist language to challenge. It refers to statements which make implicit assumptions about gendered behaviour which draw on detrimental cultural stereotypes. Mills discusses a short but effective example from the work of Christie (2001):

> 'So, have you women finished gossiping?'

In this short example, there are a number of presuppositions about gendered talk. Firstly, by using the term 'gossip', it presupposes that 'women's talk' is usually trivial rather than serious or weighty. Secondly, it presupposes that women engage in gossip (trivial talk) more than men. Thirdly, it makes a presupposition that, when two or more women are seen to be talking together, they are likely to be gossiping, rather than discussing a 'serious' topic. The same principle may be made in sexist statements directed against men, such as presuppositions about men talking about sports.

Written texts can also contain sexist presuppositions. Mills observes that advertisements and other forms of media texts often work around presupposition and inference, which can produce indirect sexism. In the following newspaper headline, for example, there is a presupposition that mothers (not fathers) are primarily responsible for children's care – i.e. it is 'mums' who are responsible for taking their children to school and picking them up.

> Eight school rules every parent must obey: Never mind the children – starting at a new school is a minefield for their mums.
>
> (*Daily Mail*, 31 August 2015)

The absence of any reference to 'dads' presupposes that their responsibilities within families lies elsewhere. In fact, these kinds of presuppositions are damaging to both men and women, as they function to both domesticate women and exclude men from the domain of childcare. It also excludes families in which there may be no mother, such as one- or two-father families.

Conflicting messages

Another type of indirect sexism identified by Mills is that of 'conflicting messages' in which texts contain mixed messages about gender and sexuality. Mills illustrates this type of indirect sexism by analysing the language used in a (heterosexual) dating agency advertisement. In the study (1998), readers were asked to complete a questionnaire and describe their 'perfect partner' using apparently non-sexist terms (e.g. *Ms* is included as a preferred marital title for women and the term *partner* is used rather than *girlfriend/boyfriend/husband/wife*). Mills observes that 'housewife' is *not* included in the questionnaire as an occupation, which could be viewed positively given that it assumes that women are in paid employment rather than confined to the home. Despite this, women who are full-time carers are only given options to describe themselves as 'not working'. The only place in which women can describe their work with children is in the 'interests' section of the questionnaire. This arguably devalues such activity, as it relegates it to a 'hobby' rather than 'employment'. Mills argues that the effect of this is to create a conflicting message between an egalitarian discourse which informs the changes in marital titles available to women and a negative sexist discourse which underlies the way that women are presented and draws on stereotypical assumptions about gender.

Scripts

Mills describes 'scripts' as a type of indirect sexism in which particular types of narrative pathways or scripts are brought into play in texts such as news reports documenting the activities of women and men in the public sphere. For example, sexual or romantic scenarios or scripts are sometimes drawn on when referring to women in positions of institutional power (an example of 'institutional' indirect sexism). News reporting on women politicians sometimes makes reference to their appearance, clothing, personal life and so on, which is not paralleled in news reporting relating to politicians who are men.

Scripts, as a type of indirect discrimination, have also started to be applied to homophobic language. We will examine an extended example to illustrate this form of indirect discriminatory language in relation to homophobia. In Chapter 6, we looked at an example of the British tabloid press reporting of a particular high-profile case in the UK (the 'Baby P' case) in which a woman (Baby P's mother) was one of the perpetrators of a number of crimes committed against a child. (See Chapter 6 for details of the 'Baby P' case.) In the same study (Page and Sauntson, 2014), we examined another text taken from the *Sun* tabloid newspaper entitled 'Posing Boss in Mr Gay UK' (Clench, 2008). This article focuses on Clive Preece, a social worker who was involved in the Baby P case. At the time of the report, it was alleged that the social services department in which Preece worked had been aware of the scale of the neglect but had taken inadequate action. However, no evidence had been considered, and these were only allegations at the time that the report was written. The article that follows (published in the *Sun*) reports that, 11 years before the death of Baby P, Preece was reported to have taken part in a 'Mr Gay UK' contest.

Posing boss in Mr Gay UK

BARE-chested Clive Preece poses in striped shorts – in a bid to become Mr Gay UK.

Haringey's suspended social care supremo was 34 when he entered the contest – boasting his ambition was "to look as good as Joan Collins at 63".

Crowds at The Dome nightclub in Birmingham – where judges included drag queen Danny La Rue – squealed "Get 'em off" and "Show us your willy" at the pageant 11 years ago. The photo emerged as £40,000-a-year Preece was branded a mincing slacker in his council job.

A woman who worked in his department told how months after Baby P died, he pranced around the office giggling with staff.

She said: "Whenever I had any contact with him he was never doing anything related to work.

"He was incredibly camp, always dancing around and laughing – or lying back in his room with his feet on the desk.

"I was told that a personal assistant did all his work for him while he did nothing – despite him being on a ridiculous salary. Even during a big meeting about straightening things out in Haringey, he was laughing and joking with all the staff.

"Nothing was taken seriously. Now everything has come out about his role in the death of Baby P it seems even more shocking than it did at the time."

The article starts with a description of an accompanying photograph of Mr Preece in which he is described as 'bare-chested' and wearing 'striped shorts'. The second paragraph describes the Mr Gay UK contest which took place at a nightclub in Birmingham. It is specified that one of the judges was drag queen Danny La Rue, and the judges and crowds are reported as 'squealing' at Mr Preece to remove his clothes. At the end of this paragraph, Mr Preece's £40,000-a-year salary is mentioned. The remaining five paragraphs contain descriptions of how Mr Preece behaved in his council job according to one unnamed 'woman who worked in his department'. These descriptions focus on Mr Preece allegedly being lazy and not taking his job seriously and mainly take the form of direct quoted speech from the unnamed colleague.

In our analysis of the article, we observed that the first few lines work to negatively portray gay men in relation to the pageant in a way which echoes Baker's (2008a) observations of discourses of gay men being constructed as 'shameless'. The social actors here, Mr Preece, crowds at the Mr Gay UK contest and 'judges including drag queen Danny La Rue', are attributed with the following actions:

- *Posing* in striped shorts (Mr Preece)
- *Boasting* of an ambition to look as good as Joan Collins (Mr Preece)
- *Squealing* "get 'em off" and 'show us your willy' (Crowds and judges)

The description of the pageant operates as a 'script' for the second half of the report, the transition to which is fully realised by the sentence, 'The photo emerged as £40,000-a-year Preece was branded a mincing slacker in his council job'. Prior to this sentence, the pageant script is constructed as something trivial, over-sexualised and rather sordid. The crowds are reported as *squealing* (rather than shouting or cheering), which is somewhat suggestive of animals or children. Following the transition point in the previous sentence, the text is largely made up of direct reported speech (i.e. quoted speech) about Mr Preece by 'a woman who worked in his department'. She is reported as attributing the following processes to Mr Preece:

- *Prancing* around the office giggling with staff – months after Baby P had died
- *Never doing* anything related to work
- Being incredibly camp, always *dancing around* and *laughing*
- *Lying back* in his room with his feet on the desk
- *Doing nothing* – despite being on a ridiculous salary
- *Laughing* and *joking* with staff – during a big meeting on straightening things out in Haringey
- *Taking nothing seriously*

Particular verbs and adjectives are also used to portray Mr Preece as irresponsible, frivolous, lazy and effeminate such as *shameful*, *bare-chested*, *mincing* and *incredibly camp*. *Mincing* and *camp* have connotations of a particular kind of male (feminised) homosexuality. The naming practices (*posing boss*, *mincing slacker*) and verbs attributed to Mr Preece (*prancing*, *giggling*) are disparaging and homophobic. But the discursive, ideological work going on in the text is far more complex than that. As Leap (2011) states, it is the contextual inferencing and implications in discourse which are even more damaging in acts of homophobic discourse.

The author chooses to open the article by constructing a particular depiction of gay men as comically outrageous and effeminate. By providing this contextual 'script' for the reader, this constrains interpretation of the second half of the article. An artificial conflation is set up between homosexuality and non-performance at work, which by a series of inferences is portrayed as contributing to the death of Baby P. Through these connections, the writer constructs a script where an individual's sexual preference, with accompanying manner of behaviour, play a causal role in the death of a child. The script that is implied through the text thus goes something along the lines of the following:

Mr Preece is gay
Gay men are irreverent and immoral
Therefore, Mr Preece is irreverent and immoral
Irreverent and immoral people do not do their jobs properly
Not doing your job properly can lead to problematic consequences
Mr Preece did not do his job properly, and therefore Baby P died

In sum, there is nothing directly or explicitly homophobic in this article. The homophobic effects are achieved entirely indirectly through the use of the script outlined earlier and its related (negative) inferences about gay men's lifestyles, attitudes and so on and their inferred detrimental effect on the rest of society.

Collocation

Mills identifies the fifth category of indirect sexist language as collocation. As explained in Chapter 4, collocation is often referred to as 'the company a word keeps'. For example, in the context of debates about the environment, 'greenhouse' generally keeps company with 'gas'. In such contexts, when the word 'greenhouse' is heard, it sets up an expectation that the word 'gas' will follow – if that does not happen, the word which does appear takes on a marked quality. Other common English collocations are 'tabby' and 'cat', and 'torrential' and 'rain'. Mills (2008) argues that collocations can be used in ways which are indirectly sexist. In applying the principle of collocation to gender and sexuality, some words do not appear to be sexist and/or homophobic in themselves (in terms of their denotational meaning), but they collocate or are associated with a range of negative connotations and terms, and it is these routine collocations that produce the discriminatory effect. For example, in the British tabloid press, it is still common for 'mother' to collocate with 'single' and 'working'. Other fairly frequently gender-related collocations include *lone parent* and *career woman*. Such terms are not necessarily sexist in themselves, but sexism is produced when they collocate with words with negative connotations or are used in situations where problematic issues are discussed. Consider the following two newspaper headlines:

> Single mother on benefits spends £3,000 of taxpayers' cash on dream five-week round-the-world trip to Australia, Bali and Dubai.
>
> (*Daily Mail*, 22 February 2015)

Working mothers risk damaging their child's prospects.

(*Daily Mail*, 31 August 2015)

In the first headline, 'single' and 'mother' collocate with each other. The term 'single mother' is then referenced to reported behaviour which is negatively evaluated, thus the meaning of 'single mother' becomes imbued with negative meaning. The fact that 'father' does not routinely collocate with 'single' in this way suggests that 'single fathers' are not habitually subjected to the same kinds of negative meanings. In the second headline, the phrase 'working mothers' collocates with words which have negative meaning – 'risk' and 'damaging' – thus constructing 'working mothers' as irresponsible because they challenge the dominant discourse of women's primary role as caregiver. Again, 'working fathers' do not appear in the same collocation patterns and are therefore not ascribed the same kind of negative semantic value.

As well as examining gendered collocation patterns in written texts, we can also examine the gendered collocations of specific words in everyday English usage by looking them up in a corpus. Baker (2008b), for example, conducted an analysis of the collocations of the words *bachelor* and *spinster* as they appear in the British National Corpus. Unsurprisingly, Baker found that, although they appear to be semantically equivalent (*bachelor* refers to an unmarried man; *spinster* refers to an unmarried woman), they behave very differently and have different semantic environments which create different connotational meanings. Some examples from Baker's study of the concordance lines in which the words appear are shown below. Note how the collocations of *bachelor* are much more positive than those for *spinster*.

Bachelor:

a) Stefan Edberg, 26, formerly tennis' most eligible **bachelor**, married long time girlfriend Annette Olsen, 27
b) certainly in his **bachelor** days Johnnie Spencer was the catch of the county.
c) may he enjoy happy **bachelor** days, but not too many, before he realizes the error of his ways
d) Ludo was very popular as a **bachelor**.
e) Gerald Kaufman is a happy-go-lucky **bachelor** who's still waiting for the right girl to come along.
f) Agony Aunt Marje Proops, who confessed to an adulterous 30-year affair with a **bachelor** lawyer, may be in for more agony still.
g) pictures of the Duchess of York on holiday with Texan **bachelor** Steve Wyatt are found.
h) he was a steadfast **bachelor** and intended to remain so.
i) 'And ruin your **bachelor** peace with my tattle?'

j) Ackroyd enjoyed a quiet **bachelor** life and lived in a small house by the crossing.
k) he lived the life 'of a spotless **bachelor'**.
l) a **bachelor** who is quiet, modest and with a slight stammer,

Spinster:

a) I outlined an elderly atrocious **spinster** and established her in Lamb House.
b) an elderly **spinster** froze to death on Christmas Day, and
c) Miss Symes, a seemingly frustrated **spinster** if ever there was one, have it to
d) the good hearted and love-starved **spinster.** Peter's Friends (15) opens in
e) it was one of the rituals of this lonely **spinster's** life that every day she would take
f) wise elder, set against the dried-up **spinster**, the interfering granny, the miser
g) Miss Weeton was a waspish **spinster**, but the picture is not wholly unkind
h) in all my life', sighs the whey-faced **spinster**, and Williams is wryly sympathetic
i) cruel stereotype of the sex-starved **spinster** fantasising about

(Adapted from Baker, 2008b)

The underlying message that is created from these varying collocation patterns is that it is more socially acceptable for a man to be unmarried than it is for a woman. In other words, marriage should be desirable for women, but less so for men. This reinforces the sexist discourse that women are defined primarily through their romantic heterosexual relationships with men, rather than on their own merit.

Silence as a form of indirect discriminatory language

So far, we have considered types of overt and indirect sexism and homophobia which can be identified through the use of particular linguistic and discursive features in spoken and written texts. However, more recent research has started to examine ways in which sexism and homophobia may be discursively achieved not only through what *is* said/written but also through what is *not* said/written – in other words, discriminatory discourse can be produced through absences and silences, as well as what is present. As I have previously explained (2013) in reference to the production of homophobic discourses in schools,

> Homophobia and heterosexism are discursively realised as much through what is not iterated as through what is explicitly stated. Therefore, if sexual diversity issues are to fully be addressed in schools, it is important to understand the range of linguistic processes, including silence, through which heterosexist discourses emerge.
>
> (Sauntson, 2013: 6)

In such cases, homophobia is often discursively 'achieved' simply by not referring to particular things and excluding specific words or information. Leap (2011: 184) also puts forward the argument that 'any text can become a site of homophobic reference', even when the homophobia itself is not explicit. Leap elaborates that this is because homophobic messages are always in formation and because the meaning potential of any text is only realised in the interaction between the text, the reader and the context. In some of the interview extracts discussed in Chapter 5, we have already seen that teachers and LGBT+ young people, who were asked to reflect on their experiences of gender and sexual diversity in school, identified pervasive silences around sexual diversity which they reported as effecting an implicit assumption of heteronormativity (the unspoken assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is the unmarked norm). Some more extracts from these interviews are included next (from Sauntson, 2018). The participants in these examples all refer to the learning of particular literary texts in English lessons.

Pat: I was listening to Carol Ann Duffy on that programme on the other night reading some of her poems and of course we did Carol Ann Duffy but we don't have any that have anything to do with sexuality

Ann: it can be avoided too easily I suppose it's not openly addressed it's not something which people are forced to confront I suppose through the texts that they teach [. . .] I'm just thinking of some of the poetry that's on you know at key stage 4 it's not really I mean we do poetry from different cultures which is brings up lots of issues but it doesn't address sexuality directly there's nothing and it addresses race a lot but sexuality isn't in there

Similar issues of silence being experienced and felt as discrimination also related to the participants' school environment more broadly:

> *Ashford*: it is dealt with a lot more seriously than homophobia [. . .] it's like Black History month is celebrated in schools and anything to do with sexism and breaking down barriers and sexism is celebrated in schools all different religions celebrated in schools and then Pride month is completely ignored

John: when I was at school it was never spoke about
Jason: that's all just like shoved under the carpet and ignored
Todd: they were silent on it they didn't really talk about it

In these examples, even though the participants do not report the use of any direct or overt discriminatory language based on gender or sexuality, they still experience the absence of language relating to gender and sexual diversity as problematic and discriminatory.

Similarly, in another study of sexual and gender diversity in schools (this time with a specific focus on RSE curriculum and teaching), Vanita Sundaram and I (Sundaram and Sauntson, 2015) present an analysis of the RSE guidance produced by the Department for Education in England. This study focuses specifically on linguistic silences around notions of 'pleasure' especially in relation to girls and young women. Using the corpus tool of keyword analysis in conjunction with focus group interviews with young women, we found in this study that language which explicitly reinforces heteronormativity concurrently functions to silence and obscure other genders and sexualities. Therefore, explicitly homophobic language is simply not needed to produce the effects of homophobia – homophobic effects can be produced entirely through the *absence* of reference to any forms of sexuality other than heterosexuality. To use Butler's (1990) term, particular identities are rendered 'unintelligible' through their repeated silencing and absence. From both of these studies, we might argue the case, therefore, that silence and absence are a form of discriminatory discourse due to these negative effects.

Resistance, change and 'reclaiming' the language

What we have seen in this chapter so far is that there are a range of ways in which gender- and sexuality-based discrimination in language can be realised, both overtly and in more indirect ways – with the latter including silence and absence, as well as identifiable features in language. Despite the numerous sexist and homophobic language practices outlined earlier, it is important to remember that we do not have to use language in a discriminatory way. We do have agency to change our language practices and, in turn, change the way we see the world in terms of gender and sexuality. As Sunderland argues,

> If gendered discourses can and do damage, the feminist project entails attempting to redress this. Feminism recognises the possibility of change and strives for it, including through explicit contestation of the existing social order through language.
>
> (Sunderland, 2004: 199)

There are resources in language which can be drawn upon if people *want* to be overtly sexist and/or homophobic. But people can draw on these resources in different ways depending on their values and ideologies. One of the outcomes of the feminist politics and activities of the 1960s and 1970s was an increase in attempts to 'reclaim' language – i.e. to begin using language in ways which resisted gender stereotyping and other forms of sexist language practices. Since the 1970s and 1980s in particular, we have seen increasing attention paid to the use of 'politically correct' language in relation to gender and other forms of social identity. The use of politically correct language constitutes an attempt to reclaim language and, in the case of gender and sexuality, make it more inclusive. Some of these attempts have been successful whilst others have been less effective. The most significant changes have occurred within institutions, with most institutions now having established codes of practice on inclusive language. These institutions include universities, publishers, central and local governments, non-governmental organisations and trade unions. The adoption of politically correct language use has, itself, met with resistance, often in the form of trivialisation and ridicule. Within academia and various political arenas, this is viewed as part of a 'feminist backlash' – any movement which argues for social change will inevitably be met with resistance from some quarters, and feminism is no exception to this. Cameron provides a succinct response to these kinds of resistance to language change:

> There's nothing trivial about trying to institutionalise a public norm of respect [. . .] language is not just about representing private mental states, it is also a public affirmation of values.
>
> (Cameron, 1995: 26)

Similarly, Mills (2012) argues that anti-sexist and anti-homophobic interventions in language constitute forms of *political action*, rather than simply being a 'trivial tinkering with language' (Mills, 2012: 161). Language, therefore, serves an important public function of representing and affirming the values of a particular group or institution. If an institution advocates the use of inclusive language, that signals that it is committed to inclusion and celebrating and promoting diversity.

Summary

Despite the work that has been done (and is ongoing), there are still some under-researched areas within the topic of gender- and sexuality-based discrimination in language. As we have noted already, sexist and homophobic language practices have received more attention than other forms of discriminatory language, such as biphobia and transphobia. And even within existing work on sexist language, some of this often contains implicit assumptions about gender as binary and about gender as being conflated with biological sex. These, as we have seen throughout this book, are problematic positions. These issues are important to bear in mind when conducting your own research projects in this area.

Study questions and activities

1. Consider ways to challenge discriminatory language around gender and sexuality. How might you engage practitioners and activist groups with research in this area?
2. Look at the work of the *Everyday Sexism Project* (and/or any other high-profile activist projects which may be available when conducting your

research). How does this project seek to challenge sexist practices, including those based on language?

www.everydaysexism.com
@EverydaySexism

3 Find examples of newspaper headlines and articles which contain sexist or homophobic presuppositions (which could discriminate against any genders or sexualities). What are the presuppositions, and what are their effects?
4 In either the same or different newspaper articles, use the tools of CDA to consider how journalists use particular language features to construct 'scripts' which function to present social actors in a sexist or homophobic way (or in other ways which are discriminatory).

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Note

1 Although see Eberhardt (2016) for an analysis of a counter-discourse in the lyrics of black female hip-hop artists.

10 Writing up, drawing conclusions and sharing your research

Throughout this book, we have looked at how other people have conducted research in the field of language, gender and sexuality. In doing so, it is hoped that this has provided ideas and guidance about the kinds of topics that can be researched and how to go about designing and conducting a research project in this subject area. We have looked at research contributions in a range of areas (although, by necessity, this is selective). And we have seen how contemporary research in all of these topics is informed broadly by elements of feminist and/or queer theory, including a consideration of how queer theory-informed work provides helpful and up-to-date principles for analysing representations of diverse genders and sexualities as they are inscribed in the kinds of texts which circulate in everyday life. We have also examined a number of analytical frameworks which are routinely used in the field of language, gender and sexuality. The frameworks were outlined in Chapter 4 and then further explored and exemplified through the illustrative studies discussed throughout Chapter 5 to 9. Throughout this book, we have also considered some of the skills required in designing, executing and evaluating research projects in this field. In sum, it is hoped that you have acquired a knowledge of how to conduct research in the field of language, gender and sexuality and how to design and carry out a project. More importantly, I hope that you have been *inspired* to conduct some new and exciting research in the field! This final section provides some guidelines on writing up your project once you have completed all of the research elements.

How to write up research – a suggested structure

The suggested structure that follows is not unique to writing up research projects in the field of language, gender and sexuality. Similar structures are used for writing up language-focused research in many areas. So you may be able to use these ideas elsewhere in your academic work. The most commonly advised way of writing up a research project is to divide it into five main sections or 'chapters' (depending on the length of the project). These are as follows:

1 Introduction

Within this opening section, you should start by introducing your topic. In the first few sentences, give your reader a clear indication of what specific topic you have been researching. You should then provide a *rationale* for why you have chosen to research that topic and explain why your project is timely, relevant and important. As well as wanting to know what topic you are researching, your reader will need to be convinced about why you are doing the research and what new contribution it will make to what is already known about language, gender and sexuality. You should then present your *research question/s* (the questions you are trying to answer in conducting your research project) or describe the *problem* you are trying to address in your project. We have seen throughout this book that most research in language, gender and sexuality is very broadly motivated by wanting to challenge inequality. Think about what aspect/s of gender and/or sexuality you want to address in your research and formulate a research problem or question/s around this.

2 Discussion of literature

In this second section of your project write-up or report, you should aim to write a concise review of the literature within the field of language, gender and sexuality you are researching which relates to your research question/s or problem. As discussed in Chapter 3, the purpose of a literature review section is to contextualise your project and show that you have a good knowledge of the topic you are writing about. In reviewing existing literature, this will help to reveal and justify the existing gap in research that your project is addressing. When consulting literature in the early stages of conducting your research project, make sure you are reading both books and journal articles and aim for a balance in the final literature review. Books are useful to read because the authors can present a more developed and sustained argument and may be able to do other things, such as deploy multiple analytical frameworks and/or use multiple data sets. Articles, though, are useful to read because they are similar in length to the projects you are likely to be writing and, therefore, provide a good template for writing up your own research project.

Many people find it useful to sub-divide their literature review into sections that deal with the theoretical and/or analytical approach being used throughout the research and another section which focuses on the existing empirical studies which relate to the topic under scrutiny. In research projects on language, gender and sexuality, it is important to include a balance of these 'theoretical' and 'empirical' elements in the literature review. The literature review should be as up-to-date as possible. As stated in the introduction, the field of language, gender and sexuality is rapidly evolving, and some literature goes out of date quite quickly. You may need to include some older references if they are considered to be 'landmark' publications which have significantly contributed to the point where they still underpin many of the studies being conducted in the present – a typical example of a landmark publication would be Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990), as the theory proposed in this book underpins much of the queer theory and subsequent queer linguistic approaches still in use today. Other than these landmark publications, try to make the rest of the literature review based mainly on publications from the past 10–15 years if possible.

3 *Methodology*

This is the section where you explain to your reader how you designed the study and carried out the data collection. The first thing you should do in the methodology section is simply *describe* the linguistic data you have collected – tell your reader clearly and concisely what the data consists of (e.g. interviews, media texts, online documents, transcriptions of recorded interactions). You can then go on to explain how you collected this data – what methods did you use (e.g. observations and recordings, interviews, collation of written texts)? In addition to describing the data itself and the data collection method/s, you should then provide a *justification* for using the data collection methods. Why were these particular methods selected? What were the main advantages in using the methods you used, and how did they enable you to answer your research questions or address your research problem? In justifying your use of particular methods, it is useful to refer to some research methods literature as a means of supporting your justification (see, for example, the references at the end of this book which deal with research methods in linguistics and across other disciplines in the social sciences).

Particular consideration needs to be paid to whether any human participants were involved in your research in the methodology section. You may, for example, have recorded or interviewed people as part of your research or interacted with them online. Or you might have involved human participants through the use of a survey. In any case, you should specify how many participants were involved and explain the nature of their involvement in your project (i.e. what exactly were they required to do?). Related to this point, the methodology section should also contain information about any ethical issues that were involved in the collection of data and subsequent analysis of it (see Chapter 3 for more information about research ethics and issues in research methodologies more broadly).

Finally, the methodology section should contain an explanation of how you analysed your data and what particular framework/s you used for doing so (e.g. corpus linguistics, F/CDA, CA, MMDA). As with the explanation of the data collection methods and procedures, you should also include a justification for using a particular analytical framework/s – why was your chosen framework more effective for analysing the data than others? How did the specific framework used help you to answer your research questions or address the research problem? Refer back to Chapter 4 for more information about the most commonly used analytical frameworks in the field of language, gender and sexuality. Most of the research methods literature contains a very useful piece of advice for writing up methodology sections in research projects – the methodology section should be written in sufficient detail so that the reader can potentially replicate the study. This is good advice for writing up a methodology section in language, gender and sexuality research projects, just as it is in other areas.

4 *Data analysis, findings and discussion*

This is the section in which you present your actual analysis of the data. It should be the longest section because this is where you present the new information that you have found from conducting your research, and it is the section in which you will probably be citing the data you have collected. Because projects are so varied, there are many ways of presenting this section. Some researchers who use quantitative methods of analysis, such as numerical analyses of survey results or the tools of corpus linguistics, may present the actual findings first (sometimes using visual methods, such as tables, graphs or charts) and then follow the presentation of findings with a discussion of what they mean and why they are significant, interesting, important and so on. Others who conduct more qualitative analyses may not have separate sections for presenting their data analysis and discussion but may find it more appropriate to combine these elements together. Studies which use analytical frameworks such as F/CDA or FPDA, for example, tend to start with a summary of the main findings and then present selected data extracts (e.g. extracts from media texts or interviews) for more detailed analysis and discussion which illustrate and support those main findings and arguments. Ultimately, it's up to you. The best thing to do is to read other studies which have used similar data types and methods of analysis and look at how they have written up this section. You can then use that to guide your own structuring and writing of this section. In all cases, though, you should make it clear what your data analysis actually reveals. What is the new knowledge that your analysis is producing? And how do your analysis and findings relate to the initial research question or problem?

5 *Conclusion*

In the final section of your research project, you should clearly present the answers to your initial research question/s or research problem. This may overlap a little with what you have just included in the preceding section, but it is fine to reiterate the key findings of the research in the conclusion as well. But in the conclusion, you should also show more explicit consideration of what your project has added to the topic of language, gender and sexuality that you are researching. Try to clearly explain and emphasise the value of your work. Addressing these points will help you to emphasise the original contribution and usefulness of your research project.

The conclusion is also a useful section for describing the main limitations of the research. What was the research *not* able to investigate or reveal? These limitations may relate to the type of data you were working with or perhaps to the limitations of the particular analytical framework you were using. You don't need to write too much about the limitations but showing some awareness will demonstrate that you are critically engaged in thinking about your own research. The discussion of limitations can then lead into a more positive discussion of what further research is still needed and how your research might be developed further in the future (either by yourself or by other readers). Many writers on research methods argue that a good research project raises as many new questions as it answers, so it is worth thinking about what further research questions your study has raised in the conclusion. However, the final lines of the conclusion should come back to the study itself and what it has positively contributed to the field. As McKay states,

> The conclusion should end on a strong note with some general statement that leaves the reader with a positive sense of the article.
>
> (McKay, 2006: 164)

It might be that your study has potential professional or pedagogic implications (e.g. it might be something that can practically be used by certain groups or individuals working in particular contexts), and this is also something worth stating in the conclusion if it applies to your project. McKay argues that the closing lines of a conclusion should repeat the main theme or issue raised in the introduction and should contain a statement of the overall significance of the topic addressed in the study.

In addition to broadly following the suggested structure outlined above when you are writing up your research project, and the suggested content for each of the five sections, some general advice is to aim for publication standard and, therefore, for the style of writing used in journal articles and academic books. Many postgraduate researchers do go on to publish their research projects and, even at the undergraduate level, I know a number of people who have published their work (including some people cited in this book!). So, if you are an undergraduate researcher, there is no need to feel that aiming for publication is too much – it can and has been done!

When writing up your project, make sure to pay attention to your writing style – for example, ensure that there is coherence between points, sentences and paragraphs and that your readers can follow your line of argument as it develops throughout the report. When making claims about language use, make sure that every single claim is supported with evidence. This evidence might come from your own data, or it might come from existing literature. If you want to claim, for example, that transmasculine speakers use particular terms for referring to themselves, show evidence of this. Or if you want to claim that lesbian-identifying women have particular ways of talking about gender in specific contexts, then show this either with data extracts or through references to previous literature. A good premise to remember is that your reader won't trust or believe what you are writing unless you provide them convincing evidence.

Who might be interested in reading and using your research?

Throughout this chapter (and others), I have made frequent reference to 'your readers'. This relates to an important point which almost goes without saying but is worth reiterating – your research will be read and possibly put to use by others. Research in language, gender and sexuality is rarely conducted purely out of academic interest (although this, of course, will also be a motivating factor) – it is done in order to produce changes in the social world with particular reference to challenging existing inequalities relating to gender and sexuality. Many of the studies discussed throughout this book have been used by those working outside academia to challenge or change gender and/or sexuality inequalities in particular contexts. Baxter's work discussed in Chapter 5, for example, has been used to raise awareness around conduct during business meetings in particular workplace contexts (see, for example, www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/jun/19/women-language-boardroom-study). And some of my own work (discussed in Chapter 6) has been picked up by LGBT+ rights organisations to lobby the government about changing the language that is used in RSE documents to make it more inclusive in regard to diverse gender and sexuality identities. If you publicise (or even publish) your research findings, it may be that your research is used by certain professionals, activist groups, organisations and so on to help with equality initiatives that they are developing or working on. So, when conducting and writing up your research project, always think about it having real readers and real applications outside the educational context in which you are studying. And even if you don't publish your research, you can still tell people about your research findings using social media and other forums for dissemination and sharing.

Individually, the research we do in language, gender and sexuality will not change the world and will not get rid of gender- and sexuality-based inequalities. But, collectively, our language-focused work can make important contributions towards doing so. At the very least, our work can help to raise awareness that gender- and sexuality-based inequality issues are partly *language* issues. And raising awareness and understanding is a precursor to social change. As Swann (1992: 236) states,

> Language may be used to subvert routine practice, to challenge expectations, and to contribute towards educational and social change.

Whatever do you in your project, remember that your work matters and that you are making an important contribution, however small, to a fairer and safer world.

Study questions and activities

1 Read and evaluate some conclusions from published articles in the field of language, gender and sexuality (the *Gender and Language* journal and the *Journal of Language and Sexuality* are good sources for such articles). In evaluating your selected conclusion/s, think about the following questions:

   - Is there a clear and concise summary of the major findings of the study?
   - Does the conclusion call for further research on questions or issues raised by the study? Is there an indication of how the research might be developed further in the future?

- Are any limitations considered?
- (How) does the writer consider the implications of their research? Is there consideration of who might benefit from the research findings and how?
- Is there a statement of the overall significance of the topic addressed in the study? In other words, does the writer leave you with a 'strong message'?

2 Write a list of groups, organisations or individuals who might be able to make use of your research project findings. In what ways might people be able to implement your research findings so that they promote greater gender- and/or sexuality-based equality?

3 Once you have completed your research project, think about how you (or someone else) might develop that research in the future? What other research questions or ideas have emerged from conducting your research project?

Appendix – transcription conventions

Transcription conventions used by Coates (2007) in Chapter 2:

Each line of the transcript corresponds to one of the narrator's breath-groups or intonation units (based on Chafe, 1980).

((xx))	transcriber unable to hear words
<LAUGHTER>	sounds or other material hard to transcribe
underline	loud, relative to surrounding talk
[. . .]	break in the transcript

Transcription conventions used by Jones (2012) in Chapter 5:

Jones uses a 'stave' method of transcription. This operates on the same principle as a musical stave and enables utterances to be visually aligned to signal simultaneous talk within multi-party interactions more clearly. For more information about the stave transcription method see Jones (2012) and Pichler (2007).

[	beginning of first overlap
]	end of first overlap
-	self-interruption or false start
(.)	pause of less than one second
(2)	timed pause
.	end of intonation unit, falling intonation
?	end of intonation unit, rising intonation
<>	transcriber comment
::	lengthening of sound
@(10)	laughing, plus duration
underline	emphatic stress or increased amplitude

Transcription conventions used by Holmes (2006) in Chapter 5:

YES	Capitals indicate emphatic stress
[laughs] : :	Paralinguistic features in square brackets, colons indicate start/finish

+	Pause of up to one second
. . . /. . . . . . . \ . . . . . . /. . . . . . . \ . . .	Simultaneous speech
(hello)	Transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance
-	Incomplete or cut-off utterance
. . . . . .	Section of transcript omitted

Transcription conventions used by Baxter (2012) in Chapter 5 (adapted from Jefferson, 2005):

(.)	micro-pause
(1)	pause of specified number of seconds
[	overlapping speech or interruption
(laughs)	paralinguistic features
-	emphasis
::	drawn-out speech

Transcription conventions used by Angouri (2011), Stokoe (2008) and Sauntson and Morrish (2012) in Chapter 5 and by Ehrlich (2001, 2006) and Matoesian (1993) in Chapter 7 (based on Jeffersonian transcription conventions and taken from Kitzinger, 2008: 137–138):

[]	square brackets	overlapping talk
=	equals sign	no space between turns
(0.5)	time in round brackets	intervals within or between talk (measured in tenths of a second)
(.)	period in round brackets	discernible pause or gap, too short to measure
:::	colons	extension of preceding sound (the more colons, the greater the extension)
.	period	closing intonation (not necessarily the end of a sentence)
,	comma	continuing intonation (not necessarily between clauses or sentences)
?	question mark	rising intonation (not necessarily a question)
¿	inverted question mark	rising intonation weaker than indicated by a question mark
!	exclamation mark	animated tone (not necessarily an exclamation)
-	dash	abrupt cut-off sound
<u>here</u>	underlining	emphasis
HERE	capitals	loud, relative to surrounding talk
<u>HERE</u>	underlining and capitals	very loud and emphatic, relative to surrounding talk

(*Continued*)

°here°	degree signs	soft, relative to surrounding talk
°°here°°	double degree signs	very soft or whispered, relative to surrounding talk
>here<	'more than'/'less than' symbols	speeded up, relative to surrounding talk
<here>	'less than'/'more than' symbols	slowed down, relative to surrounding talk
<	'less than' symbol	rapid start to following talk
>	'greater than' symbol	slow ending to preceding talk
$	dollar sign	smile voice
hah		laughter
heh		laughter
hih		laughter
huh		laughter
(h)		laughter particle inserted into talk
hhh		audible outbreath (no. of 'h's' indicates length)
.hhh		audible inbreath (no. of 'h's' indicates length)
()	empty round brackets	transcriber unable to hear words
(bring)	word(s) in round brackets	transcriber uncertain of hearing
((sniff))	word(s) in double round brackets	sounds or other material hard to transcribe, other comments by transcriber

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Index