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Edited by Jo Angouri and Judith Baxter

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Edited by Jo Angouri and Judith Baxter

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2021
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Angouri, Jo, editor. | Baxter, Judith, 1955- editor.
Title: The Routledge handbook of language, gender, and sexuality /
edited by Jo Angouri and Judith Baxter.
Description: Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2021. |
Series: Routledge handbooks in applied linguistics | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2020047347 | ISBN 9781138200265 (hardback) |
ISBN 9781315514857 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Language and sex. | Language and languages–Sex differences.
Classification: LCC P120.S48 R68 2021 | DDC 306.44–dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2020047347

ISBN: 978-1-138-20026-5 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-0-367-74683-4 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-3155-1485-7 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Deanta Global Publishing Services, Chennai, India

To Judith

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Acknowledgements

Academic books are long, transformational journeys. They leave a mark on the author or the editor, and, hopefully, the reader, and always require the efforts and generosity of many. This Handbook has been made possible thanks to friends and colleagues who made a significant contribution on multiple levels.

Special thanks are due to the contributors to this volume for their support throughout the project and to me personally after Judith's passing. I am most grateful for your messages, warmth, and friendship and, of course, patience in the whole process. Handbooks are always collective efforts but typically involve little interaction on the way; our project has very much felt to me like the product of a closely knit community based on the principles of mutual respect and collegiality.

I am particularly grateful to Janet Holmes who has been particularly influential in my work on workplace sociolinguistics and my thinking on all aspects of language, gender, and sexuality. I vastly appreciate Janet's time and contribution in the early stages of the work and the framing of the Handbook, and in her generosity for reviewing the, admittedly unusually long, introduction. I am deeply indebted for the most insightful feedback and for all the support over the years.

The Handbook would not have been completed without the excellent work of my Research Assistant, Polina Mesinioti, our Editorial Assistant for the submission stage of the project. Polina joined the team two years ago and her commitment, loyalty, and perseverance has made an invaluable contribution to the level of the work. I cannot thank you enough, Polina, for meticulously cross-checking every aspect, reviewing with rare dedication, chasing elegantly and tactfully and your amazing ability to keep all the files and folders in order!

My thanks are also due to Jai Mackenzie, our first Editorial Assistant and Judith's former PhD student, for joining our adventure from the start and supporting the earlier stages of the project. Thank you, Jai, for keeping the project organised and us synchronised. I would also like to express my appreciation to all my undergraduate and PhD students for playing a role through their stimulating questions on methodologies and for their critical comments on established orthodoxies. It is a continuous pleasure to be learning with you all.

My appreciation goes to the British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL) for allowing me to reprint a passage from the BAAL newsletter (2018).

Foreword

The end of a major academic project comes with the energising effect of the submission, the fulfilling and gratifying effect of the completeness, the hindsight of what could have been done better or differently, and the impact of the physical effort. The strong emotions are difficult to describe but, I believe, are shared in the lived experience of our academic community. The completion of this Handbook is particularly bittersweet. It involves the work of over 55 colleagues and it is the outcome of our collective effort to reflect and provide a repository of experience on theory and method. This with a view to empower those coming new to the field to use our tools and bring news ideas and insights.

At the same time, it will always have a special place in our collective memory and remind us of the legacy of Judith Baxter, an influential scholar, wonderful educator, and close friend to many of us. Judith's career path is reflective of her continuous self-development, exploration, and substantial contribution to the study of gender and language and her deep commitment to education. Starting as an English and History graduate in the late 1970s, Judith turned to education immediately after and completed a PGCE and an MSc in Educational Studies. Her thesis in 1999 brought together a number of areas Judith continued unpacking in her career. Her thesis' short title 'Teaching girls to speak out' is indicative of her commitment to empowering women, her being a true applied linguist applying theory to practice through education, and her interest in leadership in institutional and public life. She continued publishing extensively in those areas and her 2014 and 2017 books (*Double-voicing: Power, Gender and Linguistic Expertise*; *Women Leaders and Gender Stereotyping in the UK Press: A Poststructuralist Approach*) will, without doubt, continue influencing future scholars.

Judith and I started discussing the Handbook in 2015; we shared an anti-orthodoxy stance which was solid common ground to design what, we hoped, will complement the rich scholarship already existing in the field. We also wanted to react to the feedback of the many students over the years asking why there is so little focus on methodology in academic writing. It is indeed true; despite putting so much emphasis on the training of students on research methods and heavily assessing dissertations and theses on methodology, our own writing is far less detailed and transparent. Judith and I also shared the belief that the existing divide between 'education' and 'research' is artificial and damaging for the future of academia in general and our field is not an exception. We therefore wanted to provide the tools to our students to design their own projects and find their voice from day one.

Judith passing in 2018 was a shock and left a hole. We had just completed the first cycle of reviews and the Handbook had started taking shape. Knowing how excited Judith was about the overall quality and breadth of the work, I am absolutely certain that our collective effort is the best tribute to her memory and a lasting memorial for new scholars in the field.

For me our Handbook has been one of the most difficult and fulfilling projects in my academic life so far. It is also a project I will always be most proud of and which will remind me of Judith's true commitment to a polyphonic approach to discourse analysis and the question she has been addressing throughout her work: 'how can we best represent the successes, contradictions and diversity of female experiences whilst still working to transform the appalling inequities that so many girls and women continue to face?' (2003: 198).

In closing, I am reproducing here a piece that has been published in *BAAL News* (Issue 113: 6) as a memorial to Judith. It is co-authored by myself and Helen Sauntson. It is included here with BAAL's permission.

Looking Back, Looking Forward: In Memory of Judith Baxter by Jo Angouri (University of Warwick) and Helen Sauntson (York St John University)

It was with great sadness that we lost our dear colleague and friend, Professor Judith Baxter, in February. Judith was Professor of Applied Linguistics and Head of English at Aston University and, although retired since 2015, remained an active author and key contributor to the field of language, gender and sexuality, and to applied linguistics more broadly, right up until her untimely death. She has been an inspiration to many students and colleagues, and her work leaves a valuable legacy for current and future scholars.

Judith was known internationally for her work in the field of language and gender and particularly for her research into the language of business and language and gender in different professional settings. She has addressed the issue of the lack of women in senior leadership and specifically the role of language in negotiating power at work. She is also known for developing the analytical framework of Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA). In this piece, we provide brief reflections on Judith's key contributions in these areas and evaluate their continued future relevance for applied linguistics.

Judith described FPDA as a 'supplementary' approach, following a Derridaean line of enquiry. FPDA values multiple perspectives and is conceived to be used in conjunction with other methods. In her own words, Judith defined FPDA as:

> 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.

FPDA looks into 'what is happening right now, on the ground, in this very conversation' and connects this with societal power structures particularly in relation to gender. However, rather than focusing upon issues around power alone and explicitly advocating an emancipatory agenda, FPDA does not presume that women as a social group category are necessarily going to emerge as powerless. Instead, it views female 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 can then take up or resist particular subject positions.

FPDA is influenced by the social constructionist agenda and it seeks to bring together the micro and macro levels of analysis. It shares with CDA a focus on power and the ways in which it is negotiated in different contexts. FPDA is eclectic in nature and it looks into syntax, lexis, prosody, metaphor, topic, framing, visual semiotics, and more, at micro level. This provides the basis for a wider perspective, looking into a group or a community of practice and how, for instance, male-dominated or female-friendly they are. FPDA aims to provide tools for analysing what is going on in core events, particularly in business contexts like for instance the well-studied 'meeting', and to address wider questions such as whether women have a steeper road than men to do leadership effectively. FPDA is interested in revealing power imbalances but also aims to challenge theoretical and methodological 'orthodoxies' associated with CA and CDA.

FPDA aims to 'release the words of marginalised or minority speakers' and entails giving space to marginalised or silenced voices in localised interactions. Judith's own analyses have focused, for example, upon certain girls who say little in classroom settings. Her work has also shown that women leaders are often perceived to use leadership language 'effectively' but this perception varies depending on whether and the extent to which a senior team is 'female-friendly'.

This ultimately allows for a greater richness and variety of debate, discussion and freedom to speak from all social groups, not just those who are heard more often. And this is important in the field of language, gender and sexuality. This means that FPDA is ultimately concerned with equality but this concern arises from an epistemological perspective rather than an ideological one. Judith's work has shown that female speakers cannot be categorised homogenously as "powerless, disadvantaged or as victims". To the contrary, female speakers (in positions of leadership or not) have agency to resist practices that position them as powerless and occasionally, though unfortunately not always, they succeed.

As well as Judith's applications of the framework, other studies which have made use of it include: Budach's (2005) study of language, gender and community in French Ontario; Castenada's (2007) insightful analysis of competing gender discourses in preschool EFL lessons in Brazil; Kamada's (2010) work on hybrid identities in teenage girls' conversations; Baker's (2013) investigations into media representations of gender; Sauntson's (2012; 2018) studies of the experiences of marginalised LGBT+ classroom participants.

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. Judith, for example, examined how competing gender discourses are sometimes produced in the context of public speaking in the classroom. Looking forward, FPDA will continue to be used to release the voices of the marginalised across a variety of settings – a key aim of critical applied linguistics.

FPDA and Judith's work more broadly played a pioneering role in making linguistic research relevant and applied for professionals outside the academy. Well before impact agendas became defined and part of the HE institutional discourse, Judith was concerned with crossing boundaries and contributing to the wellbeing of men and women particularly by addressing inequality and underrepresentation. This agenda is as timely and relevant as it has ever been; we are certain many of us will continue following Judith's path.

As well as being a key contributor to the field of language and gender, Judith was a founding member of the BAAL Language, Gender and Sexuality special interest group, and was the SIG's convenor until 2015.

Judith was a fantastic colleague and was always very generous with her time. She offered invaluable support and advice, provided feedback on drafts of work and was always available for chats. She was working tirelessly and until the last days she had that drive and enthusiasm that anybody who has worked with her would recognise. Judith was a good friend to us and her wonderful sense of humour meant laughing a lot and enjoying companionship and warmth apart from the stimulating conversations and exciting debates. These are times we treasure and will miss very much.

1

Introduction

Language, gender, and sexuality: sketching out the field

Jo Angouri

The LGS journey from essentialism to poststructuralism

A field's footprint and vitality are typically assessed through volume of scholarly activity, ongoing societal interest, and significant evolution of thought; language, gender, and sexuality (LGS) is a case in point. From the study of grammatical gender to the descriptive use of language by biologically defined wo/men, to critical analyses of ideologies and power asymmetries, linguists turned to gender from the very early days of the discipline as a whole and in all its branches, from general linguistics to psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics. Since the 1990s, sexuality has also become a core part of the field.

The aim of this introduction is to set the scene, providing a commentary on the scope of this volume, its organisation and contents. I start with a short overview of developments within the field since its inception in the mid-1970s to establish the rationale for the distinctiveness of this volume and our decision to take a research methodological focus. I will sketch a blueprint for the novice or experienced reader. The volume aims to help LGS researchers to theorise the whole research process from inception to impact with the emphasis on the design and affordances of theories and methods. These are not neutral products of academic labour; they are products of their time and hence need to be contextualised. The volume provides a permanent resource and complements other works in the field.

Gender is the central node in the LGS triad and undoubtedly a core social category for lay people and scholars alike. This simultaneous coexistence of first (lay people) and second-order (scholars) concerns has been central in LGS scholarship, although not always addressed in those terms (Ehrlich et al. 2014; Freed 2003). It is, however, a particularly relevant angle as lay people and scholars engage with the same phenomena but through different conceptual and analytical processes and for different purposes.[1] In 1953 Schutz raised the issue of a mismatch between the common-sense orientation of a group's first-order constructs and the second-order constructs of the expert (social scientist). Schutz writes: 'The thought objects constructed by the social scientists refer to and are founded upon the thought objects constructed by the common-sense thought of man [sic] living his [sic] everyday life among his fellowmen [sic]' (1953: 3).

The ideologies and hegemonies associated with ‘common sense’ have been deeply embedded in LGS since its inception. Since the pioneering work of Lakoff’s *Language and Woman’s Place* (1975), describing, analysing, and critiquing ‘common -sense’ positions, such positions of asymmetry and struggle have preoccupied linguists interested in gender, and, more recently, sexuality.

Lakoff’s work is particularly significant, for it firmly established the interconnection between language, gender, and power struggle; it is justifiably cited as a core milestone in the establishment of the field. The 1975 publication opens with the following statement: ‘language uses us as much as we use language’ (1975: 3). This, in my reading, foregrounds the dynamic balance between (sociopolitical) structure and (individual) agency. Lakoff’s work has been criticised for its methodological approach and essentialist stance (e.g. in response to the 1973 publication, Dubois and Crouch 1975). She drew on anecdotal data and a process of contrasting the categories of ‘women’ and ‘men’ as homogenous entities. Those criticisms reflect the evolution of thinking in our field given that Lakoff’s position was consistent with the training of linguists of the time and of the political context. Lakoff, who started as a syntactician, is writing in the 70’s in a political environment where the feminist movement (women’s liberation or rights movement) (for an overview see Schulz 2017) is raising awareness of the impact of patriarchy in everyday life and is calling on the oppressed to challenge the status quo by making the private public, and the personal collective. ‘The personal is political’, as the famous saying goes. Lakoff’s work provided the field with an agenda which is still relevant (see Lakoff 2004), addressing issues of epistemology, methodology, and application to real-world concerns.

Early LGS work is usually placed somewhere under the widely cited ‘deficit– difference–dominance’ axis (typically used to refer to work between the 1970s and the 1990s) and juxtaposed to ‘discourse’ approaches (the 1990s onwards and under the influence of the ‘discourse turn’ in social sciences – Angouri and Piekkari 2018 for an overview). This timeline and labelling are analytical artefacts which have been useful in illustrating the field’s move from essentialism to poststructuralism and the meta-language that continued emerging as the field developed. Labels, and terminology more generally, are useful artefacts for a retrospective reading of earlier scholarship; they do not neatly correspond to distinct phases of the field. They also imply a linearity, which is misleading as the ‘edges’ between, and within, those stages are fuzzy. They, however, provide a useful chronological order and ease of reference and help to position developments on a temporal axis.

The period of the field from the 1970s to the 1990s was concerned with explaining stylised linguistic behaviour associated with biologically defined women and men. Scholarship of the time took gender as a predetermined category on the basis of biological sex and looked into differences which were associated with the societal expectations projected onto wo/men. Gender, and sexual orientation to some extent, were framed as social categories defined on a set list of predetermined characteristics and typically represented as independent from other facets of peoples’ multiple identities. This conceptualisation of identity drawing on the enactment of binary realities (e.g. gender seen as either ‘male’ or ‘female’ biological sex) took a rather essentialised approach which became a point of debate with later studies in the field. While some studies looked at data from the prism of variation in socialisation (difference), others looked at it as an indication of the patriarchal social order (dominance). The difference/dominance debate is a product of social and political thinking of its time and it is well covered in the literature. Chapters of this Handbook will provide their readings of the relevance of the beginning of the field (see Litosseliti, this volume).

At the same time, this early scholarship set the foundation for doing much more than merely describing linguistic features associated with wo/men; it provided the tools for looking into the ways in which power is enacted in and through language and challenged the social 'consequences when grown women were "girls" and when the masculine pronoun was "normal" to refer to everybody' (Lakoff 2004: 18). The field's strong orientation towards making research relevant beyond academia is also noted with publications that bring the relationship between gender and language to the public eye. Tannen's *You Just Don't Understand: Men and Women in Conversation* (1990), is a significant landmark of its time. As the field grew, LGS turned to poststructuralism and embraced social constructionism. Scholars criticised approaches to identity in general and gender identity in particular. I turn to this next.

Identity to desire and beyond

Projecting generalised characteristics onto different groups, be they women, students, or squash players, is a common topos in categorisation processes. Categorisation is ubiquitous in daily life and, despite being demonised for stereotyping, it corresponds to dominant master narratives that circulate in different sociopolitical contexts, popular media, and domains of human activity. As such, it is a complex process and one that provides users with useful 'shorthands' to an otherwise complex picture. From a second-order viewpoint however, identity scholars quickly turned to critiquing a static and narrow view of identity on the basis of fixed and decontextualised characteristics. Instead, they put forward a view of identity as situated, fluid, and dynamic (Baxter 2003; Holmes 2006). This approach provided conceptual tools to look into the different layers of identity work, involving both the situated interactional order as well as the interrelationship with societal, political, and historical contexts (Angouri 2015). Seeing identity as a 'construct' brought individual agency to the fore which enabled the field to look into the micro-moment of interaction. This 'construction' metaphor however also brought to the fore perceptions of equality in (self/other) identity ascription – 'I (the speaker) am empowered to make an identity claim'.

Identity ascription, however, is very rarely down to the agency of the speaker, alone, to achieve. Depending on where we are, who we are with, the expected performances of our roles and so on, we negotiate identity claims and navigate differences. What is unmarked (seen as 'normal') in a particular community is associated with a set of behaviours visible to its member. Each context we find ourselves in comes with power asymmetries which predate the individual encounter. Systems of power circulate and are perpetuated in the media, work, education, family/caring, etc. Achieving unmarked identities, therefore, is subject to a delicate equilibrium between the social order and individual agency. Deviating from the social norms – and social imaginary – has immediate tangible and situated consequences for the individual. Consider women migrating to countries where gender equality is supposedly greater compared to in the country of origin; Piller (2016: 138) provides a compelling account of professional women who saw their positioning reverting to the traditional gender order after migrating to Australia, drawing on research with women from Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. These women are homogenously positioned and portrayed in the media as agentless, subordinate to their male family members, and devoid of other professional or personal identities. This strips away individual self, excludes women from the labour market and other symbolic capital (language resource and citizenship), and results in women being in a worse position compared to their pre-migration state.

In the early part of the poststructuralist period of the field, the work of the theorist Judith Butler made a significant impact on gender studies and on LGS in particular. Butler draws on Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) theory of performative acts. To Butler, performativity is an authoritative power discourse created through stylised acts that are repeated; through the process, a relationship between the individual and the audience is constructed in reaffirming or challenging norms which are socially conditioned and in permanent flux. Butler's theory of performativity has been significant; it moved the field from focusing on gender identity through the study of difference to the complex ways in which interactants mobilise resources in context. This can challenge or perpetuate the social order and dominant norms; our practices are always read as 'gendered' (on the omnirelevance of gender, Butler 1990 and Holmes 1995). The concept of performativity has also been used widely in the field, sometimes erroneously interchangeably, with the Goffmanian performance. Despite their both sitting under the poststructuralist spectrum, their interchangeable use causes lack of conceptual clarity. Goffman's theory of performance (1959), according to which society is analogous to a theatre scene where people perform different public acts, is often used in theorising on gender roles in different domains of activity. Goffman's emphasis on stigma and the social cost of non-conforming to societal expectation also found fertile ground in LGS, and particularly as the field started becoming more inclusive and opening up issues around, and research on, sexuality.

Although language and gender scholarship had not turned its gaze beyond heteronormativity before that time, in the 1990s sexuality started becoming a core part of the research agenda (see Cameron 2005; Livia and Hall 1997). Research on language and sexuality continued to attract growing interest, first through engaging with lesbian and gay language (Kulick 2000), and subsequently critiquing binary oppositions and the concept of fixed sexual identities and turning to an identity-view vs. a desire-view of sexuality at the turn of the century (e.g. Bucholtz and Hall 2004; cf. Cameron and Kulick 2003). Desire, both as an abstract concept and as erotic desire, started preoccupying the field. Primarily associated with psychoanalysis, the turn to desire provided an opportunity to bring to the field new tools in the transition beyond the structural approach to the study of language, still dominant for linguists at that time. Psychoanalysis, and specific approaches such as the Lacanian line of thought, provided a theoretical toolkit and meta-language to move beyond the legacy of the Saussurian tradition, which is based on the linguistic sign, the relationship between a signified (concept) and the signifier (sound image or linguistic form). According to Saussure this relationship is arbitrary (a rose is called a rose by a convention) and social. Saussure's work made a significant impact on the development of linguistic thought in the twentieth century, which is well documented in the field (Sanders 2004). The approach to the linguistic sign, however, implies a linearity and isomorphism (similarity in form and structure) between the signifier and the signified and does not address the ideological nature of the sign. The Lacanian approach (Angermuller, Maingueneau, and Wodak 2014), with the combined interest in the complex relationship between the language and unconscious and the concept of desire at the forefront, is a good example of the ways in which the turn to desire enriched the LGS toolkit. Interestingly, psychoanalysis has influenced certain schools of discourse analysts (see, for example, the Essex School, Glynos et al. 2009) but not others within the LGS disciplinary spectrum and hence provides an opportunity for theoretical development.

Overall, although the identity vs. desire focus was read as a rather polemical debate between the two approaches, it actually marked another firm shift in the field from static categories – this time, gay/lesbian – with all the limitations associated with homogeneity, to a more dynamic engagement of identity and desire as macro-concepts looking into the affordances and limitations in separating sex from gender. Some of those issues were not new; for instance, Davies (1990: 501) made a case for using the term sex/gender to challenge the distinction between 'physical' and 'social' and writes on the aspiration to turn to 'an understanding of the person as in process, and of words coming not from an essential core of the person but from the discursive practices through which the person is constituting themselves and being constituted'. Some 30 years later Fausto-Sterling (2019) uses 'gender/sex identity as an autopoietic [self-reproducing] system' and a process emergent in and through the situated encounter. Nevertheless, zooming in on sexuality and engaging with queer linguistics enabled the field to achieve a deeper and fuller engagement with diversity and nuances of language practices in different contexts and the ways in which femininities and masculinities need to be decoupled from a one-to-one relationship with biologically define wo/men and from sexual desire. Ensuing research on transsexual communities and individuals (Tanupriya and Pannicot 2018 for a recent overview) has looked into the process by which hegemonic masculinities and femininities are reproduced as wo/men claim 'normality'; a condition for being recognised and accepted as belonging to the powerful majority; in Goffmanian terminology a condition for 'passing' in a hegemonic heteronormative world. Passing involves concealing–constructing an 'acceptable' persona to gain recognition and avoid stigma.

As individuals claim membership in communities, professional or social, behaviours need to be indexed and ratified as 'one of us' for membership to be granted. This is, not exclusively but largely, enacted linguistically. The axiomatic position of discourse as socially constitutive, socially conditioned, and socially consequential (Wodak and Meyer 2009) is well aligned with practice theories in general and with a framework that this line of work, and the whole of the LGS field, has fully embraced: namely communities of practice (CofP) (Lave and Wenger 1991). The framework provided scholars with a way to study language-use locally and to link the micro-context to the broader socio-cultural environment and the range of practices that warrants membership to a community. It usefully put the spotlight on the processes by which communities emerged through membership, instead of on the community as a whole.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992: 464) in an early influential definition refer to a CofP as:

> An aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor. As a social construct, a CofP is different from the traditional community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages.

The framework provided a useful vocabulary for describing the relationship between 'centre' and 'periphery' and the multi-layered relationship between social structures and human agency. These strengths largely account for its popularity (for a critique see Amin and Roberts 2008).

Overall, poststructuralist work highlighted further the importance of multiple identities which interest and continuously interact with one another, forming complex matrixes that take different meanings in different contexts. Intersectionality (e.g. Acker 2006; McCall 2005), has influenced feminist studies significantly (e.g. Brah and Phoenix 2004), as it convincingly showed that individuals are (self/other) positioned in more than one category simultaneously. So a professional may be placed in the category, as an example, 'woman' as well as 'young', 'old', 'Black', 'white', 'non-native speaker', 'with/without children', and so on. Individual lived reality cannot be understood without addressing the complexity of multiple identities and the corresponding social hierarchies and hegemonies. Post-structuralist scholarship emphasised the 'multitude of dynamic power relations and the historically and socially constituted mosaic of intersecting differences' (Metcalfe and Woodhams 2012: 134). Drawing on intersectionality enables researchers to show how risks of exclusion increase from the intersections of race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, body ableness, etc. rather than being an effect of one single mark or category of difference (Harcourt, Icaza, and Vargas 2016). This, evidently, does not mean that individuals are passive bearers of those identities; the same research has provided evidence that individual agency can succeed in challenging, and sometimes changing, the status quo. Further, how and under what conditions the status quo is perpetuated or subverted became relevant to studies looking into the relationship between language, gender, and sexuality in different domains of professional and economic activity. This was particularly the case in one disciplinary subfield, often labeled as 'workplace sociolinguistics', which emerged and grew, drawing on the work of researchers in different parts of the world from the 1970s to the 1990s (Holmes and Stubbe 2003 for the genealogy of language in the workplace).

Gender, sexuality, and the workplace

'Work' and the 'workplace' are at the very heart of social mobility, economic stability and growth, mental and physical well-being for the individual, and also a site of struggle where power hierarchies are negotiated, perpetuated, challenged, and resisted. Looking into different professional contexts has been significant for putting the magnifying glass to the lived experience of professionals who struggled with gender order in their daily lives.

Linguists turned to the workplace and looked systematically into the subtle ways in which exclusion from power centres has been enacted in daily life through gendered practices since the 1990s. Drawing on the ethnographic tradition and the analysis of interaction (see below), scholars focused on the situated micro-moment in exploring the ways in which abstract ideologies are made relevant. Using recordings of non-researcher–elicited authentic workplace interaction, sociolinguists produced detailed descriptive and interpretive accounts of the strategies employed to sanction and exclude from participating in meetings and decision-making (e.g, Baxter 2010).

Leading sociolinguists and critical scholars (Holmes 2006; Holmes and Marra 2004; Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Tannen 1994; Wodak 2005) provide robust evidence on gendered practice in professional settings ranging from corporate and blue-collar to institutional and public bodies in different sociopolitical contexts which lead to persistent patterns frequently reported in the media, e.g. the gender pay gap, absence of female (and LGBTQ+) professionals in leadership positions, persistence of sex-segregated occupations, and so on.

Even in the case where female professionals reach senior positions, studies on voice in the workplace (Baxter 2010) have shown that women are consistently undermined and 'often ignored, interrupted, mocked, criticised or not given a space to speak' (Baxter 2018: 405). Baxter refers to 'double-voicing' as a strategy women use in pre-empting criticism and attempting to interactionally achieve recognition. The lack of parity of esteem and parity of reward between the powerful majority and those who deviate from the norm is consistent. Occupations that are typically feminine are seen as having lower status than those regarded as typically masculine and those seen as 'different' are typically paid less for the same jobs.

More generally, workplace sociolinguists (Holmes 2006) and applied linguists (Hua 2014; Piller 2016) have shown that common ideals of the global workplace, such as efficiency, growth, and global value, also come with narratives that re-/emphasise gendered normative behaviours. Work on hegemonic masculinities (Connell 1987; cf. Elias 2008; Plester 2015; Wetherell and Edley 1999) has explored transnational normatively masculine business ideals (e.g. competitiveness based on narratives and metaphors of aggressive behaviour, gendered division of labour, etc).

Linguists write systematically for a general audience (Baxter 2014; Cameron 2008), raising awareness and challenging 'the straightjacket of stereotypes which have generated apprehension and suspicion of women who do not conform to the expected mould' (Holmes 2006: 220). All this work aimed to contribute to positive change – well before the highly valorised current 'impact' agenda (see Cameron, this volume).

These developments in the second order, however, did not correspond to major shifts in first-order conceptualisations of gender. Although empirical research has repeatedly shown that 'gender lines are anything but clear-cut' (Holmes 2006: 24) the ideology of 'difference' is still prevalent, especially in popular literature, and has been resilient to change (Freed 2003). In the workplace, for instance, despite years of empirical work and policy interventions little seems to have changed (for a recent account, Holmes 2020).

Regimes of difference, in their turn, continuously reaffirm the power status quo of those in majority and ratify the social order. Power imbalance is perpetuated on boundaries and binaries – such as majority/minority, male/female, young/old, and so on. Discourses of gender difference, sexism, ageism, or racism influence and affect meanings, actions, and points of reference through representations in media, literature, and everyday stories we tell and are told. Wodak in 1997 (p. 12) writes:

> in our societies biological sex is still used as a powerful categorization device […] in many occupations women are still paid less than men for the same achievements and positions. In these contexts, biological sex as a 'natural factor' is still salient and certainly not only a variable social construct.

In 2006, this is echoed by Holmes, who argues that 'many professional workplaces are still rife with examples of systemic gender discrimination in which language plays an important role' (Holmes 2006: 53). Fast forward to 2020, these statements remain true – although social media and the affordances of technology may be providing new spaces for resistance. I will revisit this at the very end of the chapter.

To summarise the discussion so far, although the fluidity of identity and significance of individual agency has generated rich scholarship in our field, the first-/second-order gap requires us to revisit our agenda. It also has theoretical implications for our engagement with the essentialism–constructionism binary. 'Strategic essentialism' has argued for some time now that accepting that women (or any oppressed group) exist as a category allows work on behalf of the rights of the group; if on the other hand, there is no group we can label 'women' (or any other), and no acceptance that members of the group share at least some characteristics, then the group level is abolished and the spotlight is on the individual. This allows discriminatory and sexist practices to continue. The anti–anti-essentialism movement has taken on some prominence, but not as much as one would expect, in recent LGS debates (Stone 2004). Challenging the status quo has certainly been on the agenda of many, if not all, contributors to this volume. Although there is evidence of change, a societal shift is yet to come. Whether and to what extent our field should act in an activist and political manner is a matter of debate. I discuss this further in the context of current topics and debates below.

Ongoing debates and re/visiting LGS's political agenda

Various 'turns' have kept appearing in social sciences since the turn of the century and LGS continues to grow and to diversify its agenda. I have been sceptical on labelling scholarly interest as a 'turn' which implies collective action and paradigm shift (Angouri 2018a); however certain areas undoubtedly grew in prominence. This includes materiality and embodiment, which I here touch upon briefly, as the reader will find these concepts under future directions in many chapters in the volume (e.g. Leppänen and Tapionkaski; Mackenzie; McLoughlin).

As the field's interest turned to understanding identity holistically, scholarly attention also started to emphasise materiality and the body. The influence of the Bourdieusian work on habitus – embodied dispositions that are learned and are stable (but not static) – draws attention to the 'somatization of the social relations of domination' (Bourdieu 2001 [1990]: 23), and Butler's critique of the biologically predetermined 'sexed body' emphasises body as a social product; these are examples of work that contributed to a shift from the body being divorced from or secondary to speech, to being, progressively, co-constitutive. This shift also drew on theoretical and methodological tools interaction analysts have developed over the years. Conversation analysts and interactional sociolinguists have been looking into interaction as embodied enactment from the start of the field (Goodwin 1981; Heath 1986). Influenced by ethnography and ethnomethodology, researchers have looked into how semiotic resources of meaning are sequentially organised in interaction and, through that, how the social order is re-/enacted. Early interest in conversation analysis (CA) on gestures and gaze are indicative of the significance attributed to multiple resources of meaning.

As Goodwin and Goodwin (2004: 240) note, 'multiple parties build action together while both attending to, and helping to construct, relevant action and context'. The importance of video analysis is well documented in the field (Mondada 2008; Rusk et al. 2015). Although most earlier studies draw on audio material this is often because of limitations of access and confidentiality rather than the researchers' disposition. Nevertheless, current writing (Mondada 2019; this volume, Evaldsson; Greco; Mortensen and Milani), re-emphasises interaction not as the product of disembodied actors but as a process of interacting bodies which co-construct meaning. The CA move from an interest in gestures (Goodwin 1986; Streeck and Hartge 1992) to gestures in interaction to embodiment, is a good example of a shift from looking into specific features, to a set of interactional practices, to positioning practices in the embodied material environment and approaching them from multiple angles. This simultaneous zooming in and out can be described as a shift from a 2D to a 3D perspective in the field, the latter being a metaphor for depth and complexity.

Overall, a renewed emphasis on the body is noted in the last ten years, responding to calls for more work on the relationship between language and embodiment in sociocultural linguistics (Bucholtz and Hall 2016), applied linguistics (Canagarajah 2018), variationist sociolinguistics (Zimman 2018), and metaphor and critical discursive analyses (El Refaie 2019). As brief illustrations, variationist studies turned to voice as a site of identity struggle (Levon/Zimman), moving the field from seeing 'sound' as separate from the socially contexted body. Current work on trans voices (e.g. Campbell-Kibler and miles-hercules, and Zimman, this volume; see also Zimman and Hall 2010 on the third sex) provide good examples of ways in which positions discussed earlier on identity and sexuality are being further elaborated. Studies have expanded work on ideology and body perception and representation – see, for instance, Mason (2012) on the difference in discrimination systems against obese wo/men; and applied linguists are calling for a general turn to the situated and material locus of the communicative encounter which is spatiotemporally conditioned and contextualised.

A firm focus on the body and the material environment within which speakers operate expands and extends the foci in the LGS project. Despite the growing interest, this is not dissonant with the approach of classic work influenced by ethnography and anthropology and particularly the Hymesian tradition to the communicative event. This pays attention to 'the various available channels, and their modes of use, speaking, writing, printing, drumming, blowing, whistling, singing, face and body motion as visually perceived, smelling, tasting, and tactile sensation' (Hymes 1964: 13). We know in our work that communication involves more than disembodied voices, gestures, or static texts; meaning-making is achieved in and through interacting bodies who engage in contextualised, situated encounters and are subjected to the systems of power that predate them – and which require more than individual agency to be challenged and changed.

The embodiment agenda is tightly aligned with the work of critical scholars and multimodal discourse analysis. Multimodality constitutes a field comprising different approaches and schools of thought, drawing on classic work from Barthes (1957) and Saussure (1974 [1916]) to Halliday and Hasan (1985), and has been strongly influenced by systemic functional linguistics (Halliday and Hasan 1985). Scholarly research led to the emergence of multimodal discourse analysis (O'Halloran 2011) as a concrete field, pushing from a focus on language to other resources, including embodied interaction and all other aspects of life, from architecture and music to fashion and advertising. And despite the various schools of thought, there is agreement that choices people make drawing on all semiotic resources is what makes meaning. Multimodal discourse analysis has been particularly influential for showing meaning-making practices that perpetuate the gender order (Lazar 2005; Leppänen and Tapionkaski, and McLoughlin, this volume) across media and domains of activity. Evidence over the years and to date shows how the relationship between language and semiotic representations of oppressed groups perpetuates the power hierarchies in societies. Caldas-Coulthard's recent collection (2020) provides ample evidence of how sexism is deeply embedded in all spheres of human activity and is reaffirmed in politics with a small 'p' and with a capital 'P' (Wodak 2015).

Overall current scholarship makes a strong case for multilayered, and accordingly multimethod, enquiry which translates to an agenda influenced by studies on materiality, embodiment, and multimodality. Beyond the areas discussed above, a turn to the senses and multisensoriality is also emerging in the field (e.g. Mondada 2019). This is in line with the move towards 'languaging' in applied linguistics. Languaging pushes away from a purist view of language and of a 'perfect' idealised speaker to the multiple ways in which individuals draw on resources of meaning to achieve their goals: a shift, in other words, from a structuralist view of language to one of agency. The current trend towards posthumanism is furthering the post-structuralist tradition in its quest to redefine the human and the nonhuman (Pennycook 2018). Work on the relationship between the entire body, other bodies, and object manipulation (Day and Wagner 2019), although from a different theoretical angle (primarily ethnomethodology), raises important questions on the agency of the individual and the in/external boundaries of the body and the material surroundings.

As evident from even this cursory glance at our field, the balance between structure and agency has, and will, undoubtedly continue to preoccupy our agendas; and although the latter is unquestionably significant, as linguists we are well aware that language, in first-order representations, corresponds to rather static national varieties and comes with the full set of problematic associations attributed to the (non)standard – mapping exactly onto the mismatch in first/second approaches to the gender order. This gap is again significant.

Piller (2016) provides useful case studies of migrant communities in Australia and the ways in which migrant women are linguistically excluded from and marginalised by majority language – and, by extension, capital, in a Bourdieusian sense. Critical discourse analytic research on migration (e.g. Wodak 2013) has produced similar results showing how migrant communities are excluded from the social web around them through limited or no resources in their home language and a systematic representation of the 'other' as deviant and different to 'us'. Particularly in countries where a 'banal national gender equality discourse' (Vuori 2009: 218), according to which, gender equality, represented as harmonious and already achieved, is part of the national myth, migrant women are systematically positioned as oppressed and marginalised. Gendered ideologies are reproduced in multilingual contexts and language becomes a convenient arena for differentiating between those who are to be allowed in from those who need to remain out. Studies drawing on the workplace (e.g. Duchêne et al. 2013; Franziskus 2017; Piller and Lising 2014; Piller and Takahashi 2010) provide, again, further evidence on the significance of language hierarchies and the ways in which migrant women are exploited, either for having, or lacking, language skills in majority languages. Research on skilled migration has provided consistent evidence. The deep paradox in all programmes designed to empower the 'powerless' is that their very existence reinforces the world's vertical and horizontal 'centres' and 'peripheries'.

To sum up, current work is pushing the boundaries beyond the field's traditional (and expected) interest in language as a distinct variety. At the same time, as linguists we need to keep first-order implications on the radar while also turning a critical eye on our own repertoires. Further, there is a need to look into the language practices that dominate our field and shift our gaze from mono- to multi-lingual analyses. In line with most areas in social sciences, the dominance and status of journals and studies published in English is unquestionable. Adding to that, studies from particular linguo-geographical environments draw on samples that cannot cover the diversity of the lived experience and the systems of power that are implicated when gender and sexuality are made relevant and negotiated in different sociopolitical contexts – and when language/s come/s into contact. There is a need for more studies looking into the implications, impacts, and ways in which speakers draw on the language varieties accessible to them. Our field has been committed to inclusion and to moving beyond the 'global North' (McElhinny 2007). Considerable effort is made by scholars (Atanga et al. 2012; Bassiouney 2015; McElhinny 2007), and by journal and series editors. However, there is a long way still to go to achieve plurality of voice. Research in general – and this does not exclude LGS research – is political; journals, publishers, and the academic community operates within set frames of reference that exclude those who are not familiar with our norms. The well-known 'language penalty' (Roberts and Campbell 2006), indicating the price for those who sound and behave linguistically different to the majority, also applies to the academy.

This takes me to the last point I wish to cover here, a call to revisit our field's commitment to action and the ways in which we can achieve change. Scholars over the years have made a case for LGS to 'never cease to engage actively with and challenge assumptions about gender norms and loudly draw attention to the way power, privilege and social authority interact with and are naturalised as properties of independent social categories' (Holmes and Meyerhoff 2003: 14), while others have argued that the shift to identity and 'post-feminism' (for a reflective discussion see Litosseliti et al. 2019) has also brought a shift from the clearly political 'what is to be done?' questions to 'who am I?' (Cameron 2005, 2009), moving the focus to the individual. Lazar (2009: 397) expresses the same concern about the shift from, in her terms, 'we-feminism' to 'I-feminism'.

Despite difference in views, all linguists agree that language is political and that language remains a powerful arena for ideologies to be ratified or resisted. In order, however, to bring the change we want to see, collective political action is necessary; and it is the case that, despite effort, volumes of studies, and evidence, our research has not reached, and is not known to, those who can most benefit from it.

Academic writing is a genre that serves our community but is not designed for public consumption; and equally, expecting that our books, as artefacts, are enough to bring change is clearly not supported by any evidence of uptake. We therefore need a voice for making our work known beyond our own bubble; without going back to essentialising in gender and sexuality, there is a need to revisit the 'difference' they (still) make – as Cameron (1992) argued a very long time ago. This also implies training for early career scholars and young academics to engage with media and government, which is very far from the primary tone of voice that we consider appropriate in our professional worlds. Cameron (this volume) nicely critiques the implications of that, and provides us with a challenge to consider what it really takes to make this transition.[2] I discuss this further below.

Finally, equipping those coming new to the field with the theoretical and methodological tools that we have developed, in order to enable them to move beyond traditions and orthodoxies, is necessary for studies to provide new models and perhaps really move us to a 'post-difference' era. This is directly related to the rationale and the motivation for this volume, which is the next and last section of this introduction.

LGS theories, methods, and the 'inter/multi/post-disciplinary' turn

LGS is characterised by a rich diversity of approaches which shape and even change the ways in which the field is conceptualised and approached in our subdisciplinary areas. Paradigm shifts have deeply impacted the way we frame and study the core notions and associated phenomena. There is a very rich scholarship, including handbooks (Ehrlich et al. 2014) which over the years have provided a landscape of the field and its core areas. This Handbook is taking a distinctively different approach from previously published editions by focusing on the methodologies and theoretical frameworks upon which LGS constructs itself as a field.

In presenting the structure and content of the volume, there is perhaps space to coin yet another turn which undoubtedly is noted across the whole of the LGS disciplinary spectrum; the 'inter/multi/post-disciplinary' turn.

Crossing disciplinary boundaries became a new 'ideal' of good research, with funders, journals, and research assessment encouraging researchers to transcend disciplinary borders. This is reflected not only in publications (e.g. Frodeman et al. 2017) but also the media (The Guardian, January 2018). Interdisciplinarity goes hand in hand with mixed and multi-method design, to which we will return; in fact the latter is a *sine qua non* of the former. Venturing beyond linguistics has been naturally compatible with the foci of LGS researchers and collaborations with media, political sciences, public health, migration studies, theatre studies (to name but a few) bringing useful crosspollination of ideas.

As post-structuralism put emphasis on the multifaceted relationship between language, identity, and the body, and approached language as the way in which realities are enacted, negotiated, and challenged, empirical studies also drew on and problematised the LGS theoretical and methodological toolkit. This includes significant methodological pairs such as researcher/user, quantitative/qualitative tools, self-reported data/ethnographically informed approaches. All these binaries corresponded to a movement from quantitative/variationist study of gender and sexuality as distinct variables towards qualitative and discourse-analytic, mixed-methods approaches in line with the theoretical developments discussed earlier.

While quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods continue to be used in parallel, there has been a shift from a purist to a multi-method approach (Angouri 2018b). In the context of inter/multi/post-disciplinarity, exploring interconnections between different methods which have different standings in their own disciplinary context was a necessary step for diversifying the LGS foci. Mixed methods, the current main 'modus operandi' for research in the field, comes with its own affordances and limitations (Angouri 2018b); the bottom line, however, is that multi-method designs are useful for allowing us to explore more angles of a social phenomenon, but they are not a panacea.

The position we took in this Handbook, from the outset, is that there is no one theory or method that can give answers to all questions. Theories and methodologies constitute tools employed by researchers in the process of accessing and studying multifaceted phenomena. Their 'value' is dependent on the context of their use. At the same time, not all methodologies are equal, and different journals, disciplinary fields, or departments and courses have preferences as to what 'good' research looks like. We are all well aware of the resilience of the quantitative/qualitative divide and the stereotypical representations of 'hard' evidence; and irrespective of how open-minded we want to be on research designs, we no doubt still teach our students on the basis of a quan/qual axis that matches our own, and our departments', dispositions. There is nothing wrong with a researcher's own preferences; to the contrary, they are important resources for research designs. In the spirit of collaborative learning and sharing good practice however, more work is needed in articulating the implications for LGS projects and opportunities for addressing old questions with new tools.

Accordingly, one of the aims of this volume is to challenge purist research ideology, draw on the experiences of multiple projects, and provide a collective reflexive resource for the affordances and limitations that come with all the established tools and approaches in our field. In line with the recent recognition of the importance of reflexivity which involves 'constant interpretation, positioning and realisation of the researcher's influence on the process' (Angouri 2018a: 85; see also Angouri, Marra, and Dawson, this volume), we intentionally provided the leaders and contributors of each part with the opportunity and the space to position themselves in the field and draw on their selected methodological approaches in a way they felt is best, and allowed their voices to be heard; we hope that the reader will benefit from the collective experience and debate between different methodologies and schools of thought.

In more detail, we have capitalised on the unusually wide repertoire of methodological approaches within LGS as the key conceptualising and structuring device for this Handbook. As the field has come of age and after years of healthy academic debate on 'which methodologies are best', we take an anti-orthodoxy stance here; different approaches provide access to different layers of meaning and the same data can be read in contrasting ways. What is 'right' or 'wrong' depends on the purpose of the enquiry, the researcher's decisions, and the audience – among other considerations. We focus here, then, upon what each approach allows for, can reveal, and makes possible within LGS research, as well as what it is less equipped to do.

The theme of this Handbook has been addressed in a publication (Harrington et al. 2008) charting 'gender and language research methodologies' that followed a British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL) special interest group event in 2005. The publication brought to light the plural and often competing versions of LGS that circulate in feminist linguistic scholarship. Our Handbook updates, extends, and develops this earlier work, aiming to represent and capture current thinking in our field and theorise the whole research process from inception to impact.

The Handbook comprises eight parts, each consisting of a set of chapters.

The core theme areas include well-established, highly utilised approaches from variationist LGS and critical discourse analysis to conversation analysis and corpus linguistics.

We attempt to provide different audiences with a highly flexible volume which complements all other publications in the field. Each part contains a chapter by leading scholars in that area, positioning, through their own work and chapters in their part, current state-of-the-art and future directions. The volume is designed as a series of mini edited collections, enabling the reader, and particularly the novice reader, to navigate, take a zig-zag approach, and discover new ways of approaching LGS.

Contributors have provided a concise and critical discussion of their preferred methodological approach in the context of their research topic and/or specific research interests. They provide a brief explanation of their methodological approach and why they deem it to be best suited to their research, model the approach by means of an empirical study, and discuss applications of their approach to the real world. As such, we hope the Handbook is a resource for all and will become a useful point of reference. I present, briefly, the eight parts of the Handbook below.

The Handbook is designed to be essential reading for undergraduates, postgraduate students, researchers, and scholars with an interest in gender and sexuality but also in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics more broadly. It will be useful for postgraduate students on programmes in related areas of linguistics (e.g. forensic linguistics, CDA) and it will also be of interest to postgraduate students and scholars in the social sciences more generally and in other fields with an interest in gender and sexual identity, such as gender studies, women's studies, cultural studies, communication studies, and social psychology.

The Handbook's parts in detail

Variationist approaches

Part I assesses the significance of variationist approaches to the LGS field, indicating how early research in the 1970s and 1980s originated in the broader field of sociolinguistics, which viewed gender as one social variable against which to measure language use in large populations. While much LGS research is now qualitative, this part represents recent variationist research, which has moved away from large-scale, quantitative, correlational methods towards more local, contextualised, and ethnographic approaches that explore gender as intersecting with other social identities such as class or sexuality within particular communities of practice. All the contributing chapters argue in favour of non-binary approaches to gender and sexuality and cover topics ranging from voice characteristics (creaky voice, Eckert and Podesva; gendered voice in transgender speech, Zimman) to pitch variation (Levon) and performances of hyper-masculine styles (Campbell-Kibler and miles-hercules).

Anthropological and ethnographic approaches

Continuing to another significant area of work for the field, Part II represents the range of ways in which ethnographic approaches are used in LGS research from 'full' ethnography, involving complete immersion and participation for a long period of time in a given community, to semi-ethnographic approaches involving partial immersion where standard qualitative methods are used, such as observation, field notes, and interviews. This part covers a broad range of contexts, from communities with non-normative gender identities in the US and India (Hall and Davis; Nagar), to the investigation of gender in UK political institutions (Shaw), women's hockey teams (Clark), Tongan courtrooms in Polynesia (Philips), and YouTube 'camgirls' (Varis); all chapters demonstrate ethnography as a multi-method research approach and 'enable us to see the workings of language, gender, and sexuality more clearly' (Hall and Davis, this volume). The part also reviews research that supplements ethnography with other qualitative methods: for example, that which incorporates the 'diachronic' use of ethnography with more 'synchronic' methods such as discourse or conversational analysis. The part makes clear that qualitative methods are not exclusively used in ethnographic designs but may be mixed with any of the methods presented in the Handbook.

Interactional sociolinguistic approaches

Turning our gaze to interaction, this set of chapters shows how the Gumperzian legacy has influenced thinking and provided a set of tools that are still widely used. Part III foregrounds professional discourse as a site of considerable interest to LGS researchers for 'indexing' gender and sexuality relations and identities. The introduction and three chapters draw mainly from workplace sociolinguistic research and institutional interaction, and provide an overview of the theories and methods that characterise work in this field (Tannen and Gordon), as well as the affordances and limitations of interactional sociolinguistics (IS) as a theoretical framework for investigating gendered talk at work (Angouri, Marra, and Dawson). Chapters in this part focus on institutional contexts (leadership enactment, Schnurr and Mohd Omar; normative femininities and masculinities, Angouri, Marra, and Dawson) and stand-up comedy performances for different audiences (Seals), illustrating the benefits and challenges associated with applying an IS approach in the study of language and sexuality.

Ethnomethodological and conversation analytic approaches

Staying in interaction analytic work, we explore the value of CA for LGS and feminist research, and more generally for any research concerned with the construction of gender identities and relations as they are reproduced in human interaction. Part IV touches on the debate between those scholars who consider that CA is ill-suited to this feminist agenda, and those who consider that its methodological principles and its technical tools can be deployed within a feminist framework, and, in fact, are better than other approaches. Chapters draw on telephone calls of female victims of violence (Tennent and Weatherall), performances in drag king workshops (Greco), families' conversations on gender and sexuality normativities (Ericsson), and girls' gossip disputes (Evaldsson); all chapters together illustrate 'the importance of the sequential organisation of talk for how gender is made locally relevant by the participants' (Mondada).

Sociocultural and critical approaches

Zooming out and turning towards the political agenda, Part V reviews a range of studies that conceptualise LGS through the lens of critical theory, the heritage of which lies in post-Marxist and cultural theory. This part discusses the emergence of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the predominant critical approach to LGS, and considers why it has adopted a 'feminist' (FCDA) version. It reviews why there has been so much debate between those LGS scholars taking a 'bottom-up', ethnomethodological stance through the medium of CA, and those taking a 'top-down', critical-contextual stance (for a discussion, see Litosseliti), and touches upon the relationship of language and gender research to the, now all-powerful, 'impact agenda' (Cameron). The part also includes other critical approaches such as textual trajectories (Ehrlich and Romaniuk) and queer theory (Sauntson), the latter viewed as a theoretical approach that utilises methods from other paradigms, as well as the combination of critical approaches with corpus linguistics which can enhance and support CDA (Murphy and Palma-Fahey).

Poststructuralist approaches

Continuing this line of argument, the following part (Part VI) explores the origins of positioning and poststructuralist approaches as well as their key principles and value in relation to LGS (Norton). It outlines how (feminist) poststructuralist approaches connect with, but fundamentally differ from, critical approaches and presents studies that model various methods of data collection and analysis. The chapters of this part draw mainly on online environments and news media to analyse motherhood (Mackenzie), the burkini ban (Weedon and Hallak), heterosexual desire (Mortensen and Milani), and the discursive constructions of women leaders (Appleby), while Al A'Ali investigates the language of Middle Eastern women leaders, drawing on meetings and interviews. In line with many of the parts above, there are chapters on research studies that combine positioning/poststructuralist approaches with 'supplementary' approaches such as IS in order to produce rich, multidimensional analyses of LGS data. We consider this indicative of the multi-method disposition of the field and the way forward under the interdisciplinarity principle.

Semiotic and multi-modal approaches

Going into more detail on the analysis of multiple sources of meaning, many of the above approaches are used by LGS scholars to analyse naturally occurring talk or spoken discourse, and others, such as CDA, are primarily used to analyse written texts. Part VII focuses on the range of methodological approaches used for multi-modal, digital, or 'computer-mediated communication' texts such as multi-modal analysis, semiotics, critical social semiotic analysis, and genre analysis (for a discussion, see Lazar). This part reflects on how fit for purpose the range of current methods are (often borrowed from the analysis of spoken or written discourse) in order to understand gender in multimodal and discursive contexts, and the possible need for more theorised methods. The chapters in this part look at semiotic representations on social media (Caldas-Coulthard; Leppänen and Tapionkaski) and multimodal advertisements (Kohrs and Gill; McLoughlin), and make a case for a systematic analysis of (a) visual resources in critical readings of (institutional) discourse, and (b) the intersection of gender and sexuality with other identities.

Corpus linguistic approaches

Finally, the last and eighth part of the Handbook explores the rise and significance of corpus linguistics as a field and its beneficial combination with CDA for LGS research. It demonstrates how corpus techniques (e.g. word lists and concordances, Baker and Brookes; collocations, Taylor; XML mark-up, Potts and Formato; and wild cards and lemmatisation, Hunt) can be fruitfully applied to a range of gendered data as well as specifying the limits of this approach. The chapters discuss whether corpus linguistics is primarily a data collection-and-analysis tool or a theoretically informed methodology, and show the affordances and limitations of their tools for new and experienced researchers.

Together the eight parts of the book benefit from the collective experience of all the 55 colleagues who have contributed. We aspire to providing the tools and the experience that will make our current students and future graduates, our colleagues from social sciences, and ourselves better equipped to provide more evidence and a louder voice for making a positive contribution to the society around us.

Concluding remarks

The time of writing of the final version of this introduction, summer 2020, coincides with the COVID-19 global pandemic and a global death toll of over 800,000 (as of 23rd August 2020). The COVID-19 impact has starkly revealed the deep inequalities in social structure with sharp differences in risk to life, poverty, mental health, career prospects disproportionally affecting all minority groups in our societies.

Going back to the hegemonic gender order and gender roles: despite years of scholarship and activism, reports that have been published from the start of the pandemic (February 2020) show a clear and steady increase in the gap between men and women in unemployment, work hours, domestic labour, and care demands (Collins et al. 2020; Power 2020). This is consistent with reports in the media (e.g. BBC, July 2020; The Economist, June 2020). Women are still the carriers of the bulk of caring work, and are societally expected to prioritise domestic labour. They are, in the majority of cases, the victims of domestic violence, receiving less support due to disrupted services. School closures have dire consequences for girls that are exposed to increased sexual and other forms of exploitation (UN Policy Brief 2020) and for boys that are expected to prioritise income generating activities over education in many countries, particularly beyond the dominant 'West'. Similarly, data on sexual minorities report disproportionate risk associated with access to health care, stigma, poverty and psycho-emotional wellbeing, and, for LGBTQ+ communities, the risks elderly individuals face are heightened in the pandemic due to lack of access to public health and to stigma.

Apart from the fatal consequences and worrying long-term impact, as LGS scholars we are presented with a need and impetus to revisit our societal impact, the ways in which we can and should react to the disruption we are witnessing, including the implications for the future LGS agenda. Although the chapters in the Handbook have been completed prior to the pandemic, we are providing the reader with an overview of key topics in the areas that constitute the main DNA of our field, illustrating how theory is connected to real-world problems, and we hope to provide the tools for innovative multi-method enquiry.

In order to achieve change we need to bring together the voices of academics, practitioners, and policymakers to discuss and challenge the current narratives and the still-high levels of apathy towards the concerning implications of the gender/sexuality order. This implies a different organisation of our academic institutions, a shift towards an open science agenda, possible outlets where the outputs of this work can be published, and senior leadership on the subject of the impact on assessment and career development for academics. As senior scholars we have an opportunity and responsibility to lead change, pushing harder within our own institutions. Recruitment and promotion criteria, the lack of diversity in leadership roles, and the pay gap are a few areas that have been on our radar, but change is slow and uneven.

Finally, this is an opportunity to revisit the deeply unhelpful divide between education and research. We have tried, with this volume, to provide all students, from first-year undergraduates to PhDs, with the tools to carry out their own research and make connections between theory and real-world problems. Despite the hundreds of LGS courses at UG/PG/PGT levels, many of our students do not see themselves as pro-feminists, question the deep-seatedness of the gender/sexuality order, and remain under the impression that this is a 'free-for-all' society, open to self-identification.

This, evidently, does not mean blindness or no societal change. Those currently in their twenties are more aware and talk more openly of the gender/sexuality order while affordances of technology provide platforms for, some, global activism. The power of social media enables users to amplify their voices and reach large audiences easily and directly. The microblogging service Twitter and its technological affordances, in particular, are playing a pivotal role in grassroots movements. It has become a point of reference and the hashtag (#) is now widely recognisable within and outside the community of its users. In this context, landmark movements such as #MeToo[3] have enabled sexual harassment survivors and activists to transcend regional, national, and language borders and to bring to the fore violence and abuse that is hidden in professional settings and concealed under loose policies.

Overall, exposing violation of women's and LGBTQ+ rights is more prominent, while taken-for-granted inequalities are more frequently challenged in professional and everyday activities. There is, therefore, some space for optimism. To close on this note, the current deep disruption we are experiencing will require the remodelling of ways the field engages with the rupture between second- and first-order concerns in the 'post-pandemic' society. Close to our everyday praxis, the changes in the academy and the blended delivery of curricula provide the opportunity to enable our students to bring together multiple experiences of language and gender and sexuality, transcend their local learning environment, and work with others in cognate programmes and with non-academic stakeholders. Global learning communities would undoubtedly enhance our field's reach and feed directly and indirectly into social change. Opening up our curricula and working across institutions and with different stakeholders is not straightforward; but it is within our power to achieve. I certainly hope this volume contributes to the collective effort.

Notes

1 Conceptualising and contrasting first- and second-order understandings of linguistic enactments of complex phenomena attracted traction in linguistic literature in relation to politeness (Locher and Watts 2005).

2 The Linguistics Society of America has a regular section in this area spotlighting linguists who take their work to the public – 'Linguistics in the news'.

3 Tarana Burke founded the 'Me Too' movement in 2006 to support women and girls, survivors of sexual violence. It grew to a viral awareness campaign in 2017 after several high-profile female actors brought to light multiple cases of sexual harassment in the film industry. This triggered an avalanche of cases across industries, exposing the magnitude of the issue.

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Part I
Variationist approaches

2

Non-binary approaches to gender and sexuality

Penelope Eckert and Robert J. Podesva (Part I leads)

Introduction

The study of variation is founded on replicable correlations with macrosocial categories, particularly with class, gender, age, and ethnicity. These correlations provide the larger general landscape of social variability – the distribution of variables across society, the social areas and kinds of distinctions that are at work in variation, and the nature of the networks that guide the spread of change. At the same time, we need to treat these correlations with caution, because categories are structural objects that abstract away from, and erase, the practice that produces them. They provide a global pattern, but no explanation. A purely structural perspective can all too easily lead to deterministic analyses – women talk the way they talk because they are women, working class people because they're working class, gay people because they are gay. This approach guides the focus to the categories themselves as objects of indexicality, or to some stereotype associated with membership in particular categories. It also leads us to think purely in terms of the analytic structure of the categories – as continua (class, age, attention paid to speech) or binary oppositions (gender, sexual orientation, race, and even 'above' or 'below' the level of consciousness).

This is illustrated in the path that gender and sexuality studies in variation has taken. Labov's (1966) analysis of variation and socioeconomic class was a radical move in the 1960s, opening the door to serious quantitative work in linguistics and introducing a solid basis for the social analysis of variability. But the robust finding that linguistic form correlates with class stratification established a class basis for subsequent interpretation of variation. The view of class as a continuum of global prestige was established as the source of meaning in variation, with variants viewed as carrying prestige or stigma, and patterns of style shifting as reflecting orientation to the prestige and stigma of class position. With class-based prestige and stigma as the fundamental terms of indexicality, correlations with gender were then taken to reflect binary orientations to prestige and to class position. Women's greater use than men of stable variables was attributed to status consciousness (e.g. Trudgill 1972) – an attribution that has not held up well in the face of the regular finding that women commonly (but not always[1]) lead in sound change. At the same time, the assumption that women are more status conscious than men has led class to bleed into qualities, with femininity associated with refinement and masculinity with toughness. And as attention has turned to sexuality, it has been all too easy to treat sexual orientation as a fractal (Irvine and Gal 2000) within the male/female binary, with the speech of gay women and men treated as masculine and feminine respectively. Just about any linguistic variable is likely to show a correlation with class and with binary gender because both are fundamental to the social order – in fact, they are so fundamental that correlations with them are often in themselves meaningless. People pursue their lives at the intersections of social categories, each intersection bringing forth its own conditions and situations, its own constraints and possibilities. It is in day-to-day practice at this juncture that variation becomes meaningful, and that correlations are produced.

Variation, style, and persona

We take as illustration the use of negative concord (e.g. 'I didn't do nothing') in the speech of students at Belten High School in the Detroit suburbs (Eckert 2000). Figure 2.1 shows a stark version of the typical gender pattern in the use of negative concord at Belten High – the boys use significantly more negative concord than the girls. But the picture shifts when we look beyond this binary, as participation in the class-based social categories that dominate the school social order yields yet another binary that interacts with gender. The 'Burnouts' and the 'Jocks' (Eckert 1989, 2000) are communities of practice (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992; Lave and Wenger 1991) constituting working-class and middle-class cultures respectively. Figure 2.2 shows that while the overall gender difference persists in each community of practice, it is far greater among the Jocks than among the Burnouts. It is important to note that the strong correlation is with the speaker's participation in their peer-based communities of practice, and not with their parents' socioeconomic class. This indicates that the use of negative concord is not passively acquired at home and in the neighbourhood, but is part of the stylistic construction of an adolescent self.

We note that the gender difference is far greater among the Jocks than the Burnouts, an interaction that clearly indicates that these categories are not simply additive, but

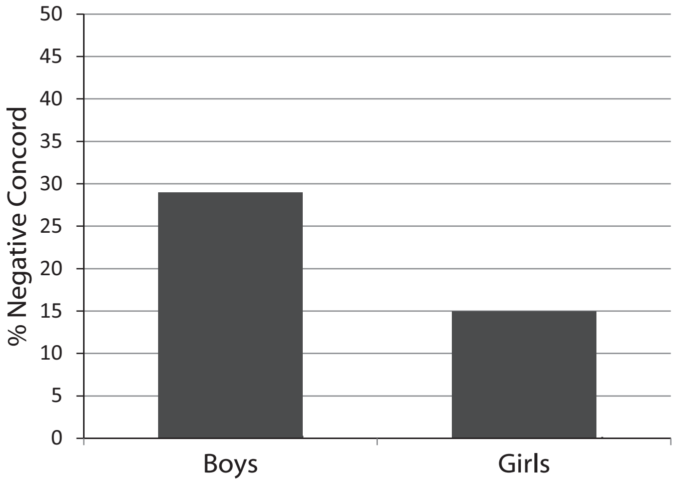

Figure 2.1 Percent negative concord by binary gender. (x^2 = 3124, p = .000).

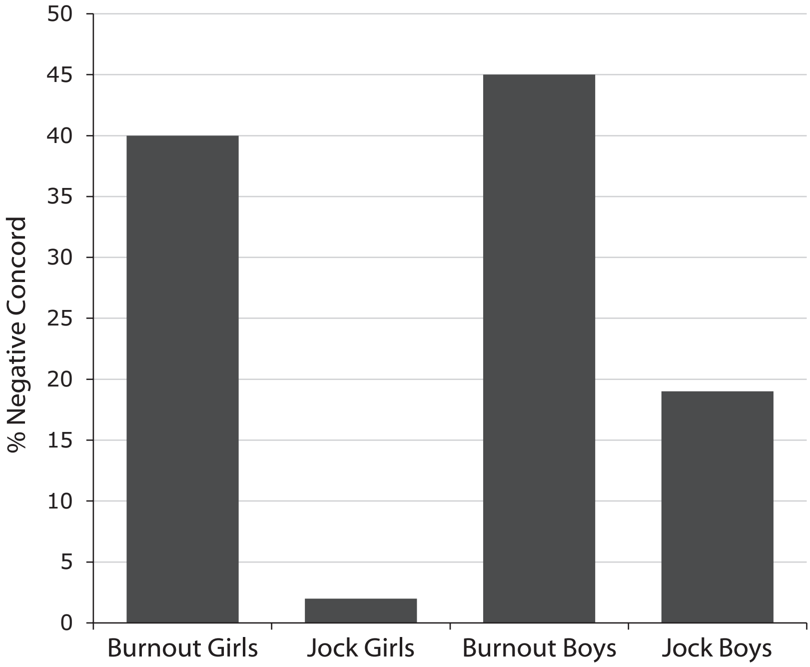

Figure 2.2 Percent negative concord by binary gender and social category.

intersectional. Most obviously, while Jock girls are considerably more constrained than boys to be conservative in their behaviour, Burnout girls are not (see Eckert 1989, 2000). There is considerable variety of behaviours among Burnout girls, ranging from fairly compliant with adult norms to quite rebellious. This range shows up in a friendship cluster of urban-oriented and rebellious Burnout girls who pride themselves on being the 'biggest Burnouts', commonly referred to by their classmates as the 'Burned-out Burnouts'. These girls are a quite distinct friendship group from the bulk of burnout girls who embrace more working-class norms and who are less alienated from school, and less rebellious – the 'Regular Burnouts'. Figure 2.3 compares several clusters of Burnouts and Jocks with the larger student body represented by not only Jocks and Burnouts but students who do not identify with either. As this figure shows, the Burned-out Burnout girls lead the entire student body in the use of negative concord. Meanwhile, those who use the least negative concord are the Jock boys who are engaged in student government (as opposed to those who are athletes only). In other words, we see that gender and class break down into the kinds of indexicalities that Trudgill raised, but not in the gender groups for which he raised them. Rather, the Burned-out Burnout girls are using negative concord to index an autonomous and anti-establishment stance, while the male student government Jocks are using standard variants in maintaining their corporate personae. When talking at the macrosocial level, it is reasonable to say that gender norms constrain women and men to engage in the world in such a way that it benefits them to use standard and nonstandard forms respectively. But these norms work not at the binary gender level but at the persona level as constrained, but not determined, by the gender binary. If negative concord indexes gender, it's only indirectly through the relation between what it indexes directly (anti-establishment stance) and what it 'means' to be male or female.

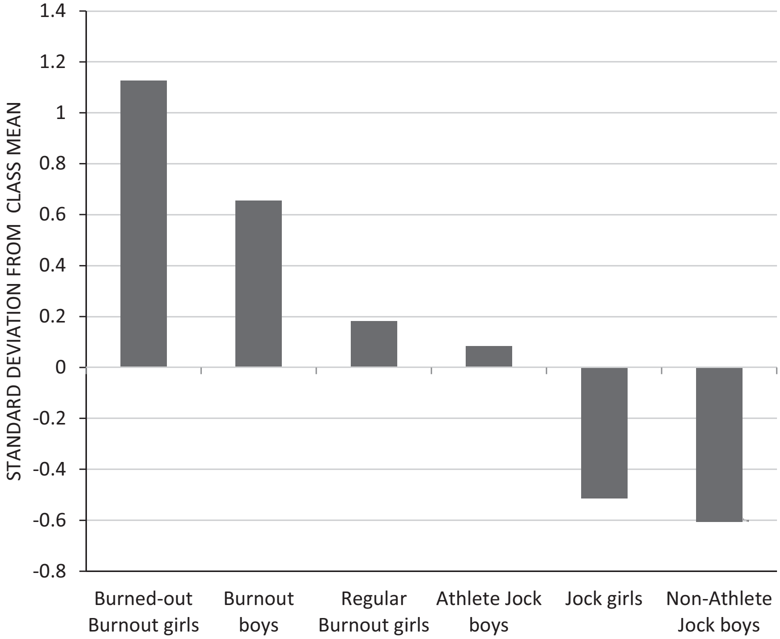

Figure 2.3 Negative concord by subcategory. Shown as standard deviation from class mean, including Jocks, Burnouts, and In-Betweens.

In other words, as Levon (this volume, Chapter 3) says, we need to always ask the 'other question'. In this case the question is: 'When I see gender difference, where are the class interests and when I see class difference, where are the gendered interests?'. When we do this, we move on to consider the dynamics that unfold at the intersection of class and gender. And we experience gender – and class – not in isolation, but in the practices and personae that emerge at their intersection.

The Burned-out Burnouts and the Corporate Jocks are not passively responding to their place in the social order – in fact, nobody is. Social practices emerge as people in similar structural locations mutually engage in similar responses – responses that commonly reproduce the structure that gave rise to them, but that also carry the potential for change. Butler's theory of performativity emphasises the dialectic between structure and agency in the production of the gendered individual. Category assignment places the individual in situations where they learn to engage in 'a stylised repetition of acts through time' (Butler 1988: 520), stylised acts that constitute gender as a central aspect of emergent identities. All aspects of identity are achieved performatively, as we engage with the affordances of our social world to construct a self with which we can take a place in that world. Central to Butler's account of performativity is that in these repeated acts lies the potential for change:

> If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style.
>
> *(Butler 1988: 520)*

Style is the key to performativity. It is the means by which we mark both pre-existing and emergent distinctions (Irvine 2001). Emergent distinctions might be particularly tentative, and a small stylistic move is sufficiently inexplicit to provide the possibility of denial, putting a verbal toe in the water. A young man who has been in the closet might want to make a tentative move towards sounding gay. Producing a slightly more fronted /s/ than usual would be both slightly perceptible and quite deniable, and depending on the reactions of others and his own embodied sensation in making that move, he might decide to move forward in or beyond that situation, or not. When we think of style we focus on the projection of persona to others, but style is also a bodily act and has a 'feel' that connects the speaker to the outward presentation. A stylistic move, in other words, is not just an external act, but a small – perhaps temporary – bit of personal transformation. And stylistic practice, the production of persona, is not a momentary event, but a continuous process that carries us through life. While there may be moments in which persona is foregrounded, and in which we make quite intentional moves, most of the time stylistic practice takes place quite unintentionally, even unconsciously. And it takes place not at the level of 'gender' or 'sexuality', but at the level of qualities, stances, momentary activities that are about the kind of person we want to be in the moment. While some of these qualities, stances, and activities may be overtly associated with gender or sexuality, most of them are quite indirectly (Ochs 1992) indexical of categories. And certainly, no single stylistic feature – no single variable – can work alone. Stylistic practice is a process of *bricolage* (Hebdige 1984; Levi Strauss 1962) in which meaningful elements are combined to constitute a higher meaning that is more than the sum of its parts.

Distinctions of voice quality, segmental phonetics, prosody all have meaning potential, but potential that is underspecified, and unrealised in isolation. /t/ release in flap position has been found in the speech of Orthodox Jews (Benor 2001), geek girls (Bucholtz 1996), and gay men (Podesva et al. 2002). And while this single feature can be said to index each category, it does so only in combination with the other elements that constitute the larger style in which it is embedded. Podesva (2004, 2007) documented the stylistic changes of a young gay doctor, Heath, as he moved from the clinic to a barbeque with his friends. In the clinic, his 'caring doctor' persona featured a good deal of /t/ release, indexing a formal and articulate style. In his 'gay diva' persona at a barbeque with his friends, he used fewer stop releases, but they had significantly longer and more intense bursts, giving them a parodic quality. And while he used falsetto in the clinic, but almost exclusively on discourse markers ('okay', 'alright'), his gay diva persona made copious use of falsetto with greater duration, greater f0 range and maximum. The /t/ release alone would not have contributed much to his gay diva persona – in fact, without other elements such as falsetto, the /t/ release might have just sounded weird. It is in this stylistic practice – the combination and recombination of resources – that variation takes on meaning. And that meaning is not fixed, but changes as our needs to make meaning change.

Indeed, a fundamental problem with the purely structural view is that it implies a kind of permanence. Class, gender, and sexuality are certainly here to stay as categorisation schemes, but the structure of the schemes themselves changes with time. And this change does not happen in the abstract, but is inseparable from each individual's trajectory through life, as each generation hopes to move beyond the previous one – to be more 'modern', more 'advanced', to move on from the past. New ideas emerge, new issues, and with them new ways of being in the world, and *bricolage* makes it possible to use old material to bring these new ways into the social landscape.

Meaning and use: creaky voice

In the remainder of this chapter, we illustrate the ideas above in an extended discussion of creaky voice, which has undergone massive indexical change. This single linguistic feature also illustrates some of the pitfalls of the binary thinking that underlies variationist sociolinguistic research. We will show that creaky voice is both ideologically associated with femininity, and more prevalent in the speech of speakers who identify as women. In our view, these facts are trivial, as they tell us nothing about why women exhibit a preference for creak, nor do they tell us anything about gender. We advocate for an alternative approach that is concerned less with the question of who creaks the most and more with the question of what creak means. An approach centred around social meaning, we argue, can better explain gendered distributions of sociolinguistic variables while also providing insight into the social construction of gender.

The other chapters in this section similarly illustrate the importance of taking a meaning-centric approach to the study of gender and sexuality. Zimman, for example, highlights the limits of conceptualising gender as having an atomic meaning. His study shows that gender identity generally predicted the realisation of /s/, but gender role ('socially and/or institutionally recognised gender categories within a given culture') – a dimension of gender distinct from gender identity – was necessary to account for outliers. Levon emphasises that sexuality is constructed by means of linguistic features whose meanings are variable depending on speakers' gender presentation. Generally, as the degree to which female speakers identify as 'lipstick' increases, so too do their mean pitch levels. But different speakers exploit higher pitch in distinct ways, with 'lipstick' speakers using higher pitch when discussing gay topics and 'butch' speakers using higher pitch for non-gay topics. Campbell-Kibler and miles-hercules also stress that meanings relating to gender and sexuality are not inherent to linguistic features, but rather vary as a function of contextual factors, such as who the listener is. Using perceptual methods, they show that in spite of a dominant ideology whereby gayness and masculinity are negatively correlated among men, this association does not hold across the listener sample. Together, these studies indicate that ideologies associating linguistic forms with gender and sexuality are at once too general (linguistic practice cannot be explained by unanalysed, monolithic notions of gender) and too specific (gender is seldom articulated independently of other dimensions of identity), and fail to capture the fact that gender and sexuality are emergent.

That creak has been ideologised as a (young) feminine speech feature is apparent in media discourse surrounding the feature, also referred to as vocal fry. Creaky voice has been described as 'the new way young women talk' (Weiss 2013) and a 'female fad' promulgated by celebrities like Britney Spears, Kim Kardashian, and Zooey Deschanel (Steinmetz 2011). In an opinion piece for *The Guardian*, author Naomi Wolf (2015) goes so far as to issue the plea: 'Young women, give up the vocal fry and reclaim your strong female voice'.

There is reason to think that the ideology of the young female creaker is based – at least in part – on patterns of use. A number of studies have documented the prevalence of creak in the speech of young women (e.g. Wolk, Abdelli-Beruh, and Slavin 2012) and shown that women produce more creaky voice than men (Podesva 2013; Yuasa 2010). These previous studies are limited in that they have employed auditory methods, considered limited samples of speakers, and, in some cases, been based on analyses of read speech, which may not satisfy the social conditions required for the extensive production of creak. To address this issue, Callier and Podesva (2015) carried out a larger-scale acoustic study of creaky voice among 93 white, cisgender speakers from inland California. About half of the speakers self-identified as women, and both women and men spanned the entire adult life course, from 18 to 93 years old. Data were approximately hour-long sociolinguistic interviews. Every vowel was labelled as either creaked or not (using Kane, Drugman, and Gobl's 2013 model, which classifies speech on the basis of acoustic properties) and measured for a variety of acoustic parameters that capture different dimensions of voice quality variation, including spectral tilt (e.g. H1*–H2*), or the relative power of higher frequencies compared to lower frequencies in speech, and periodicity (e.g. CPPS), or how regularly the vocal folds vibrate. The results are in many ways consistent with previous studies, as women produced significantly more creaky voice than men.

While we wouldn't question the robustness of this overall pattern, it is important to look beyond binary gender difference to identify two other robust patterns. Figure 2.4 plots H1*–H2* (an acoustic measure of spectral tilt that captures the degree of glottal constriction during phonation) as a function of age for both female and male speakers. Lower values of H1*–H2* indicate a great degree of glottal constriction, thus creakier phonation. The first pattern to note is that women exhibit a curvilinear pattern across the age span, that is, younger women creak the strongest, middle-aged women creak the weakest, and older women produce stronger creak than middle-aged women. This is a robust quantitative pattern, as a quadratic term for age emerged as significant for female speakers in a mixed-effects linear model, which tests for the effects of social factors while controlling for the influence of other social and linguistic factors, as well as random variation from one speaker to the next. So statements like 'women creak the most' erase intragender differences and falsely characterise women as exhibiting uniform patterns. To return to our earlier

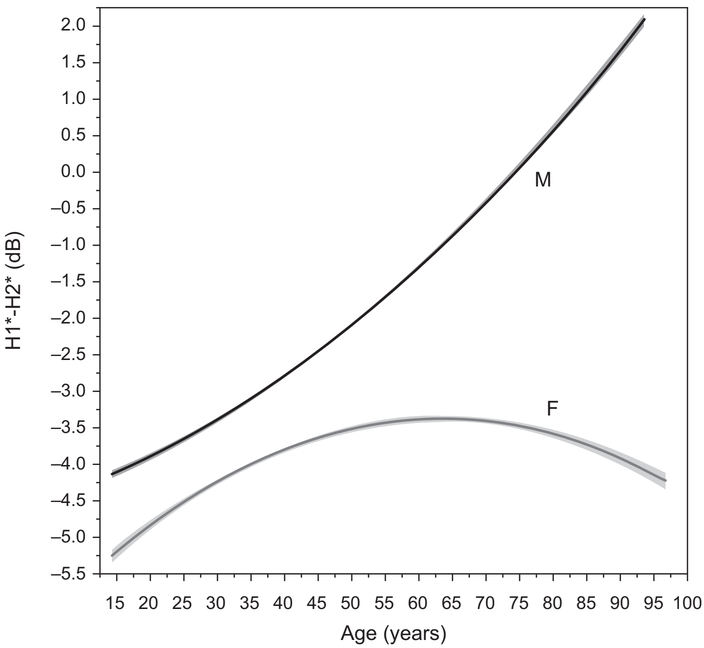

Figure 2.4 H1*–H2* (dB) as a function of speaker age for women (F) and men (M). Lower values indicate a greater degree of glottal constriction (creakier phonation).

discussion, we need to ask the other question, 'When I see gender difference, where is age?' We also note that even though women produce creakier phonation than men overall, young men in particular produce relatively strong creaky voice. Statements like 'women creak the most' incorrectly erase young men from the narrative of who creaks more and why. Callier and Podesva (2015) suggest that the noteworthy point about creak isn't so much that women are doing it more, but that young people – women and men alike – are doing it more, because the domain of creak has expanded from its canonical phrase-final position to earlier in the phrase. A focus on gender alone would have obscured this pattern, yielding misleading insights about gender and failing to accurately characterise its linguistic patterning.

At this point, we can say on the basis of apparent time data that creaky voice is on the rise, and that young women (and young men) are leading the change. The question here is why. To arrive at an answer, we argue, we need to consider its social meaning. Though creaky voice was once more prevalent in the speech of men (Esling 1978; Henton and Bladon 1988), it is unlikely that women are using it to borrow on men's authority. Apart from being easy and far-fetched binary thinking, it fails to consider that it has had a pragmatic use independent of gender for some time. Although media treatments of creak characterise it as functionally useless at best and physiologically harmful at worst (Garfield 2013; Steinmetz 2011), social evaluation studies have shown that creak is not always evaluated negatively. Eckert (2019), for example, has shown that younger listeners are more forgiving than older speakers in their assessments of very creaky speech samples from National Public Radio news personalities. Yuasa (2010) further reports that listeners judge speakers who produce relatively creaky speech as sounding professional. These studies hint at the possibility that creaky voice could serve a useful interactional or stylistic function.

Work in discourse analysis suggests that speakers can strategically use creaky voice to show disengagement or express negative affect. Lee (2015) shows that speakers commonly slip into creaky voice when they go off topic for a bit, suggesting that creak distances parenthetical speech from the main thread of a conversation. She goes on to argue that speakers can draw on this conventional function of creaky voice to distance themselves from the issue under discussion, even when speech is on topic. Grivičić and Nilep (2004) advance a similar claim in their analysis of the word 'yeah' in telephone conversations. They argue that creaky 'yeah' expresses either a disalignment between interlocutors or a dispreference to continue on the current topic. Zimman (2017) shows that a transmasculine speaker draws on creak to index 'a stance of disaffectation, an aloof persona, or a kind of emotional stoicism'. In all of these studies, creaky voice distances the speaker from either their addressee or the topic of discussion. The recurrence of this function of creak across studies suggests that it may carry a more stable, conventionalised meaning, just like pitch and the realisation of /s/, as discussed in all three of the other chapters in this section.

In contrast to most discourse analytic work, one of the goals of variationist sociolinguistics is to look beyond immediate interactions and draw generalisations across a community. Yet it is difficult to generalise about the ways that groups employ linguistic features (as opposed to simply the frequency with which they employ them) without attending to the interactional concerns at the heart of discourse analytic work, such as stance-taking. To repeat a phrase from earlier in this chapter, meaning lies in use. Of course, generalisation requires the analysis of relatively large amounts of data, which preclude line-by-line analyses of turns at talk. Is it possible to operationalise interactional analysis in a quantitative variationist paradigm?

Podesva (2018) advocates for an approach that quantifies affective stance on the basis of its expression across modalities. Such an approach makes it possible to test the hypothesis that creaky voice conveys negative, disengaged affect. Starting with the most direct expression of affect, we can consider speakers' own assessments of interactions. We should observe an inverse correlation between how much speakers enjoy interactions and how much they creak. Second, we can examine the sentiment conveyed through the lexical or semantic material of speech. Beginning with the lexicon, if creak conveys negative, disengaged affect, we should observe more creak on words that convey negative valence, low arousal, and low dominance. Finally, we can consider the least linguistically explicit, though arguably the most transparently readable, expression of affect – embodied affect. If creak indexes negative affect, we would expect to see higher rates when people are not smiling. And if creak conveys disengagement, we would expect to see higher rates when people are moving their bodies less.

These predictions were tested in a corpus of audio-visual recordings collected in the Interactional Phonetics Laboratory at Stanford University. The lab's 'Living Room' has the acoustical specifications of a sound booth (thus enabling the collection of high-quality audio recordings), but it is staged like a living room (to enable speakers to relax into the environment) and features inconspicuous video cameras (to enable the analysis of embodied practices). Approximately 150 speakers – mostly a diverse group of Stanford undergraduate and graduate students – were recorded in dyadic unscripted conversations. Of these speakers, 42, all from the Western United States, were chosen for analysis. Data were acoustically analysed using the methods described above for Callier and Podesva's (2015) study. The valence, arousal, and dominance for each word was coded using the lexicons published by Mohammad (2018). Finally, computer vision methods were used to identify when speakers were smiling, using the method in Podesva, Callier, Voigt, and Jurafsky (2015), and how much they were moving, using the method in Voigt, Jurafsky, and Podesva (2013).

Results largely confirm the hypotheses. Creaky voice is more prevalent in interactions that speakers rate as less enjoyable. It is also used more commonly on words that convey less dominance. Finally, creaky voice correlates with both forms of embodiment. For female speakers, creaky voice is more common in phrases where speakers are not smiling. And regardless of gender, speakers creak more at moments of time when they are moving less. This recalls a similar finding in Pratt's (2018) study based on a year-long ethnography of students at a high school for the performing arts. She found that students in the school drew a distinction between kids who were considered 'chill' and those who were considered higher-energy 'louds'. She found that 'chill' students not only shifted their sitting positions less over the course of sociolinguistic interviews with her, but they also used higher rates of creaky voice.

The data largely support the hypothesis that creaky voice conveys negative, disengaged affect, which enables us to finally return to the question of why young women (and young men) do it more often, why the feature is on the rise. In short, creaky voice enables speakers to disengage or take negatives stances without saying so overtly (cf. Besnier 1990). Eckert (2016) has argued that a design feature of language is being able to convey social meaning, including affect, without expressing it through lexical content. The social meanings conveyed by creaky voice, and all sociolinguistic variables for that matter, do not alter an utterance's referential meaning. As a result, it would be infelicitous to respond to someone who is creaking by asking, 'Why are you disengaging from me?' The disengagement is in the room, but it isn't on the table, so to speak. The plausible deniability of disengagement is useful, perhaps most useful to women in interactions replete with 'mansplaining' and 'manterruptions'.

Conclusion

Gender is the product more than the explanation for linguistic variation. Viewing gender through a performative lens encourages variationists to situate gender locally, in interaction, and in dialogue with other dimensions of identity. In spite of ideologies that cast gender as a rigid binary structure, gender is constructed in practice in non-binary ways. The remaining chapters in this section offer ways of conceptualising and analysing the non-binarity of gender and sexuality. Zimman deconstructs gender into four potentially distinct dimensions – gender assigned at birth, gender identification, gender role, and gender presentation – and argues that doing so is necessary not only for adequately characterising the linguistic practices of transgender individuals, but also for explaining intragroup diversity among members of any gender category. Levon surveys a body of work examining the diversity of linguistic practices among individuals that comprise half of the sexuality binary ('LGB' or 'queer') and another body of work that considers how sexuality is articulated in conjunction with other mutually constitutive identity categories. Campbell-Kibler and miles-hercules quantify how strongly listeners' masculinity ratings of hypermasculine speech performances correlate with their gayness ratings. They find not only that listeners vary significantly with respect to the strength of this correlation, but that the correlation is weaker among African American listeners. All three chapters emphasise the intersectionality of gender and sexuality. In the present chapter, we have argued for an approach to variation that focuses on personae, as speakers use linguistic features to perform gendered personae (e.g. Eckert 2006 [1996]; Podesva 2007), and listeners draw on and update representations of these personae when evaluating and perceiving speech (e.g. Campbell-Kibler 2007; D'Onofrio 2015, 2018). All of this is possible because variation is meaningful. So variationists must continue to drill down, past gender, to locate the meanings from which gender is constructed, meanings that represent how gender is experienced.

Note

1 We note, also, that it has become commonplace to take women's lead in the use of a variant as diagnostic of sound change – yet another example of reliance on a shaky binary.

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3

Sexuality as non-binary

A variationist perspective

Erez Levon

Introduction

The first question I am often asked by non-linguists about my work is whether it is true that gays and lesbians speak differently than heterosexuals. My answer to this question is inevitably that 'it's complicated'. It is complicated because sexuality is not a homogenous category, such that we can speak about what all 'gays and lesbians' do (in the same way that we cannot speak about what all of those who are not gay or lesbian do). It is also complicated because there is never a one-to-one correspondence between language and social identity. Just because someone identifies as a lesbian does not mean that she will necessarily speak in a particular way any, some, or all of the time. And just because someone speaks in a particular way any, some, or all of the time does not mean that she is a lesbian. This is not to say that there is no relationship between sexuality and language. There clearly exist ways of speaking that are stereotypically associated with different sexual identity categories, and research over the years has been able to demonstrate that, in some communities at least, certain linguistic features appear more (or less) frequently in the speech of gays or lesbians than among their heterosexual counterparts. But identifying surface-level correlations like these between linguistic features and identity categories can only ever tell us a partial, and often inaccurate, story. The reality of the connection between language and sexuality is a more complicated one.

In this chapter, I outline some of the ways in which we can approach this complexity in our research. Focusing on research within variationist sociolinguistics, I review certain key studies in the area of language and sexuality and describe the different methodological tools that have been developed for investigating how variable patterns in language use participate in the construction of sexuality. In order to do so, I also review some important theoretical concepts that variationist sociolinguists draw on to frame their analyses, including indexicality (e.g. Ochs 1992), intersectionality (e.g. Crenshaw 1989), and performativity (Butler 1990, 1993). Finally, I close with a brief illustration of some of these theories and methods 'in action' by discussing pitch variation within a community of lesbians in London (based on data collected and analysed by Lawrence 2014). By the end of the chapter, the reader will understand why it is problematic to treat sexuality as a binary characteristic (i.e. 'gay' versus 'not gay') in linguistic research. I will also introduce some of the theoretical tools that can be used to move away from this type of binary thinking, and will provide an illustration of variationist research on sexuality that places these tools at the centre of its analysis. Before getting to that, however, I first begin in the next section with a brief overview of the study of sexuality from a variationist perspective. This is important because it helps to contextualise the methodological discussion that follows.

Sexuality in variation: from correlation to emergence

We can divide variationist research on sexuality into three basic types based on the kind of theoretical approach the research takes (see Levon and Mendes 2016 for a more detailed discussion of this taxonomy). The first type is research using what we can describe as a correlational approach to the subject (Eckert 2012: 94). Correlational research assumes that the language practices we observe are directly determined by some element of the underlying social structure. In the case of sexuality, the assumption would be that there exists such a thing as the 'gay and lesbian community', and that membership in this community gives rise to a set of distinctive social and linguistic practices. This is the perspective that was adopted by the earliest variationist research on language and sexuality, where studies focused on identifying the specific phonological, lexical, or discursive features that were believed to define the unique experiences of lesbians and gays (see Jacobs 1996; Kulick 2000; Queen 2007 for full reviews). Moonwomon (1985), for example, examined pitch differences in the speech of lesbians and heterosexual women in the US, and found that lesbian speakers had lower mean pitch levels and lower overall pitch ranges than the heterosexual speakers she studied. Similarly, Leap (1993, 1996) identified certain conversational features that he argued were specific to interactions among American gay men. In both cases, the authors suggested that it was the speakers' identities as gays and lesbians that caused them to speak in distinctive ways.

Beginning in the 1990s, a number of developments challenged the assumptions underlying this correlational model of language and sexuality. From outside linguistics, Butler (1990, 1993) popularised the notion of performativity, or the belief that identity is not the cause of observed behaviour, but rather its result. In other words, we do not act in a certain way because we are lesbian; we are socially constituted as lesbians because of how we act. Within linguistics, this concept of performativity was refined by Ochs' (1992) definition of indexicality. Arguing that the link between a linguistic feature and a social category is rarely a direct one, Ochs claimed that features in language index particular stances, acts, and activities that are then ideologically linked to salient social categories. According to this account, tag-questions, for example, do not directly index the category 'woman'. Instead, they are taken to signal a stance of 'uncertainty', which is itself linked to stereotypes of womanhood. Together, performativity and indexicality gave rise to a new type of constructionist research on language and sexuality. Rather than attempting to catalogue a characteristic lesbian or gay way of speaking, research in this paradigm sought to identify how people use language to actively construct sexual personae. Barrett (1995, 1997), for example, described how African American drag queens in Texas juxtapose features that are stereotypically linked to both white women in the US South and African American men in order to variably construct themselves as gay men, as African Americans, and as drag queens. The crucial point is that research in this paradigm did not assume that individuals would speak in a particular way *because* they were lesbian or gay, but rather that speakers draw on the indexical power of language to construct their sexualities through linguistic practice (see Cameron and Kulick 2003; Livia and Hall 1997 for more detail).

In the same way that the constructionist approach challenged certain underlying tenets of the correlational perspective, theoretical developments in the mid-2000s began to critique the assumptions of constructionist work. The crux of this critique was the assertion that the meaning of variation in constructionist research was very often still reduced to the cultural formations it was used to construct. 'Gay language', for example, though not necessarily viewed as an inherent correlate of gay identity, was nevertheless understood as that set of linguistic features used to construct a gay 'self'. Scholars like Eckert (2008, 2012) argued that this was problematic because it fails to recognise the multiple possible meanings that a particular variable can have (and the multiple functions a speaker can use a variable to perform). Instead, Eckert developed an emergentist framework for analysing sexuality-linked variation, in which the focus is on understanding the more local actions speakers use variation to perform. Podesva (2007), for example, discusses how a man he calls Heath draws on the ability of falsetto voice to index 'expressiveness' to construct distinct personae in different settings. When at a barbecue with his friends, Heath uses falsetto to help adopt an expressive stance (i.e. as a person who explicitly expresses his thoughts and emotions) that, in conjunction with other relevant features, results in the creation of a 'diva' style. At the medical clinic where he works, in contrast, Heath's use of falsetto serves instead to index expressivity as part of the creation of a 'caring doctor' persona. Crucially, while the same linguistic feature is deployed in both contexts, the ultimate meaning of the feature, in terms of the persona it helps to construct, is context-dependent. Moreover, while he acknowledges that the perception of 'gay identity' may emerge from Heath's use of falsetto, Podesva argues that this is in a sense a potential by-product of Heath's use of the feature and that the primary motivation behind Heath's observed practice is the construction of situationally relevant personae. Research on sexuality within an emergentist paradigm thus does not ignore the fact that identities may result from variation. But it does not assume that 'doing identity' is a speaker's ultimate aim. Instead, emergentist research looks first at what immediate interactional goals speakers are trying to achieve and only then attempts to explain how the linguistic attainment of those goals may link to the emergence of salient social identities in interaction. In this respect, variationist research within the emergentist paradigm shares certain similarities with other sociolinguistic traditions for the study of gender (e.g. interactional sociolinguistics, discourse analytic perspectives), though as variationist research it remains committed to identifying systematic (i.e. quantitative) distributional patterns of language use.

Sexuality and lived experience

The review in the preceding section is by no means an exhaustive overview of variationist research on sexuality (for that, see Queen 2013, 2014). It does, however, give a sense of the kinds of theoretical developments that have taken place, going from seeing language as the result of identity (correlational), to seeing language as a tool with which to 'do' identity (constructionist), to finally seeing language as an instrument for accomplishing local interactional goals through which embodied identities also emerge (emergentist). These developments have allowed us to provide much more nuanced analyses of the relationship between language and sexuality than would otherwise have been possible. Yet despite these advances, and as I have argued elsewhere (Levon 2015), our analyses of sexuality have tended to remain framed in terms of unitary categories of experience (like ‘gay’ or ‘lesbian’). Thus, while we have developed sophisticated accounts of how particular linguistic forms take on sexualised meanings and of how those meanings are then recruited by speakers in interaction, we have been somewhat less attentive to the fact that those sexualised meanings are also simultaneously gendered, classed, raced, and age-, culture-, and region-specific. Intuitively, we know that individuals do not experience life through the prism of a single identity category. Each of us maintains multiple affiliations and identifications, and these different components all influence our own experiences of self. It is therefore both theoretically and empirically inaccurate to conceive of sexuality in terms of simple binary contrasts (e.g. homosexual versus heterosexual) since each half of that binary itself encompasses a huge range of diverse stances, orientations, and behaviours.

A useful way for dealing with the complexity of sexuality as a lived experience is through the prism of intersectionality theory. A term originally coined by legal theorist Crenshaw (1989), and itself drawing on a long history of early Black feminist theorising (e.g. Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1983; Davis 1981; hooks 1981; Hull, Scott and Smith 1982), intersectionality refers to the idea that lived experience cannot be defined in terms of membership in a single identity category (e.g. ‘woman’, ‘black’). Rather, both our own, inner understandings of self and the kinds of access, opportunity, and treatment we receive are the product of multiple and intersecting systems of social classification. Because of this, an intersectionality perspective argues that no one analytical category is sufficient if we are to provide a rigorous analysis of the social practices we observe. Instead, we must investigate how a multiplicity of categories come together in the formation of individual subjectivity.

Since its popularisation in the early 1990s, intersectionality has become the dominant construct for theorising identity across the humanities and social sciences, including in fields as diverse as gender studies, sociology, philosophy, and politics (Collins and Bilge 2016; Davis 2008; Lutz, Vivar and Supik 2011; McCall 2005). However, this does not mean that intersectionality is a unified social theory. There are numerous debates in the relevant literature about the framework’s key concepts and about how to methodologically implement an intersectional perspective (cf. for example, Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013; Choo and Ferree 2010; Weldon 2008). For the purposes of the current chapter, we can nevertheless identify two main assertions that all forms of intersectional analysis maintain. The first assertion is that if we assume that lived experience is ultimately intersectional, then we must place this intersectional complexity at the heart of our analyses. In practical terms, we can accomplish this by engaging in what Matsuda (1991: 1189) describes as ‘asking the other question’:

> When I see something that looks racist, I ask, ‘Where is the patriarchy in this?’ When I see something that looks sexist, I ask ‘Where is the heterosexism in this?’ When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask ‘Where are the class interests in this’.

A deceptively simple method on the surface (Davis 2008), ‘asking the other question’ forces us to go beyond analyses in terms of categories in isolation to consider how these categories intersect with equally important others.

The other main assertion of intersectional research is that categories do not only intersect but mutually constitute one another (Choo and Ferree 2010). This is a somewhat more contentious aspect of the theory (Crenshaw 2011) since it argues that intersections are not to be viewed as simple points of contact between two (or more) already existing categories (Shields 2008). Instead, the argument is that intersections are themselves formative of the categories in question. In other words, the idea of mutual constitution suggests that constructs such as class, race, and gender do not exist as entities unto themselves. Rather, they crucially depend for their meaning on their relationship to the other categories with which they intersect. Thus, there is no 'gender effect' to be discovered and analysed in a dataset; there is only the effect of gender in relation to class, race, etc. This is a strong claim, and there is debate in the literature as to whether such a strong position is necessary. Without getting in to the details of this discussion, it is nevertheless important for us to note how the concept of mutual constitution pushes the envelope of intersectional analysis further, encouraging us to move beyond seeing things in terms of compartmentalised categories to focus instead on the relationship between categories as formative of lived experience.

Approaching intersectionality in variationist research

These two assertions – that lived experience is intersectional in nature and that categories mutually constitute one another – correspond to two main avenues for intersectional research in sociolinguistics and related fields. In this section, I very briefly review the two approaches and cite some key examples of work in these areas. For fuller examples of this type of work, including both non-variationist studies and studies on topics other than sexuality, see Levon (2015) and Levon and Mendes (2016).

Diversity within: intra-categorical intersectionality

In her well-known discussion of methods for doing intersectionality research, McCall (2005) defined what she terms 'intra-categorical' intersectionality, or intersectionality research that focuses on the diversity of more specific articulations of identity that exist within a given category. For example, an intra-categorical approach would critique a category such as 'lesbian', arguing that we need to examine the different ways in which the label 'lesbian' can be experienced and lived (e.g. 'black lesbian', 'butch lesbian', 'middle-class lesbian', etc). This type of intra-categorical approach is central to what intersectionality is about, and it serves a crucial theoretical, empirical, and political role in bringing to light a variety of lived experiences that would otherwise be obscured (Crenshaw 1989, 1991; Morgan 2004). The intra-categorical approach is also the most common form of intersectionality research within the variationist paradigm (Levon 2015).

I explore intra-categorical intersectionality in some of my own prior research in Israel (e.g. Levon 2009, 2010, 2011). In that work, which was based on a year-long sociolinguistic ethnography of members of 12 gay and lesbian activist groups from across the Israeli political spectrum, I demonstrate how groups of Israeli gays and lesbians use pitch differently as a way of signalling their distinct political affiliations. Those speakers who align with more centrist political discourses about Israeli society and Israeli nationalism (and whom I refer to as members of the 'mainstream' group) adopt mean pitch levels that align with dominant Israeli gender norms. In contrast, those who reject normative Israeli conceptualisations of the nation (who I describe as members of the 'radical' group) engage in linguistic practices that flout Israeli sociolinguistic gender norms. In this way, I illustrate how language varies among lesbians and gays in Israel as a function of their broader political beliefs and alignments. Podesva and Van Hofwegen (2016) make a similar argument in their exploration of /s/ variation among lesbian and gay speakers in rural California. There, they demonstrate that rural gay male speakers, for example, produce backer articulations of /s/ than gay men in nearby San Francisco do. Podesva and Van Hofwegen argue that this difference is due to the social context in which these men live, and the strong pressure to conform to a more normative masculine style (which includes the use of backer articulations of /s/). The language used by gay men in rural California is thus not only related to their sexuality (their articulations of /s/ are significantly fronter than their heterosexual rural male counterparts). Crucially, it is also affected by their overall orientations to 'country' versus 'town' culture. In both of these studies (and others like them), the main goal of the analysis is to understand how other aspects of the social context affect the lived experience of (homo)sexuality, and thus demonstrate the impossibility of thinking in terms of a simple homosexual versus heterosexual binary.

Variationist research has also examined intra-categorical complexity from the perspective of perception research. Work on this topic attempts to identify the ways in which listeners' perceptions of sexuality may be affected by other socially salient aspects of a speaker's voice. Pharao, Maegaard, Møller, and Kristiansen (2014), for example, discuss how the identification of a voice as sounding 'gay' in Danish depends on its perceived ethnicity, such that non–white-sounding voices are never perceived as 'gay' even when they contain the same sexuality-linked linguistic features as white-sounding voices (see also Maegaard and Pharao 2016; Pharao and Maegaard 2017). Similarly, research by Mendes (2016) considers how the use of non-standard plural noun-phrase agreement in Brazilian Portuguese acts as a marker of femininity in certain voices, but not in others. Like the work by Pharao and colleagues, Mendes' results demonstrate that we cannot make broad claims about what 'sounds gay' (or 'lesbian') in speech. Instead, we need to look at the specific linguistic context in which relevant features occur. Finally, a growing body of work has made the same type of argument in relation not only to linguistic contexts, but also to social ones. Studies by Drager (2011) in Hawaii, Mack (2010) in Puerto Rico, and Rácz and Papp (2016) in Hungary, among others, have all shown that there are specific cultural differences in what features listeners pick up on when making judgements about a speaker's sexuality. As in the production studies described above, research on intra-categorical complexity in perception serves to highlight the diversity of ways in which one can be (or sound) lesbian or gay. In doing so, it pushes us to embrace – rather than ignore – this complexity in our own work.

Looking across categories: mutual constitution

The intra-categorical method outlined above succeeds in responding to the first claim of intersectionality theory, namely that lived experience is itself intersectional and so we must examine how multiple categories come together to influence observed social practice. It does not, however, force us to consider how these different categories constitute one another. For example, in my own work on Israel I was able to describe how the ways in which people embody identities like 'gay' or 'lesbian' are influenced by their other social identifications and affiliations (such as their political beliefs, and particularly how they saw the relationship between sexual politics and national politics more broadly). In doing so, I was able to identify a point of mutual influence between the categories 'sexuality' and 'political beliefs', but I stopped short of describing how these two categories may in fact define one another (such that sexual identity categories are politicised, and political beliefs are sexualised). To do this, we need to open up our analytical gaze to look across categories, and allow linguistic features that normally 'mean' one thing to be recruited in the service of another. In other words, one way to embed the idea of mutual constitution in our analyses is to examine how a feature that we normally think of as related to one identity category (gender, for example) is used by speakers to help construct a different identity category (e.g. region). I illustrate below what I mean with two brief examples.

Podesva (2011) describes how a speaker named Regan, a 31-year-old gay man in Northern California, varies his use of certain vocalic features that are all part of the California Vowel Shift (CVS). The CVS is a coordinated change in a number of different vowels that is currently underway in California. As its name implies, the CVS is most saliently associated with region, such that speakers with CVS-shifted vowels are heard as 'Californian'. In his study, Podesva examines Regan's use of CVS vowels in three contexts: out with friends at a gay bar, in a meeting with his supervisor at work, and at a casual dinner with a friend. Podesva demonstrates that Regan uses the most advanced realisations of CVS features when he is out at the bar, the most conservative with his supervisor at work, and an intermediate level with his friend at dinner. Podesva does not argue, however, that this finding means that the CVS features index a gay identity. Rather, drawing on the principles of mutual constitution, Podesva suggests that elements of the CVS system have become enregistered (Agha 2007) as markers of the 'fun', 'laidback', and 'carefree' lifestyle that is stereotypical of Californians. Podesva argues that when he is out at the bar, Regan draws on this *regional* meaning of the features to help him construct a fun, carefree, and laidback 'gay partier' persona. In other words, Regan recruits a regional meaning to help him construct a sexual one, thus demonstrating how, in Podesva's research at least, the categories 'Californian' and 'gay' mutually constitute one another. A similar example can be found in Ilbury's (2019) discussion of stylised uses of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) among young British gay men on Twitter. In that study, Ilbury describes how men who would normally not use AAVE in their everyday speech employ tokenistic elements of the variety in their tweets as a way of portraying a 'sassy queen' persona. Like Regan, the men in Ilbury's study recruit a feature that has come to be stereotypically associated with one social category (in this case, African Americans) and use it to help construct another ('sassy queen'). That they do so relies on various reductive and racist assumptions about the speech of African Americans and ignores the power imbalances inherent in the appropriation of AAVE by white speakers (cf., e.g. Hill 2008). Nevertheless, it also illustrates how for these individuals racialised conceptualisations of what it means to be 'sassy' partially constitute what it means to be 'gay'.

Both of these examples illustrate one way of exploring the mutual constitution of categories by using variationist methods. In both cases, a linguistic feature that we would normally think of as meaning one thing ('Californian', 'African American') is strategically deployed by speakers to mean something else ('diva', 'sassy'). The reason the features can be used in this way is because it is possible to ideologically elaborate a first-order indexical meaning to create a new one, such that a feature meaning Californian (first-order) comes to mean things that we associate with California (e.g. laid-back, carefree) (second-order). Once that ideological elaboration has taken place, the feature is then available to be used to express this new meaning (so that if I want to sound 'laid-back', I can use that California feature). What is important for the present discussion is that tracing how these ideological developments happen – what new meanings are created and how features are put to use in creative ways – provides us with a window into the internal composition of an identity: it allows us to see the gendered, regional, classed, racialised, and other dimensions that comprise it. This is why this type of method is helpful for intersectional analysis.

Adopting an intersectional perspective: lesbians in London

In the previous sections, I outlined some of the basic principles of intersectionality theory as it has been applied to variationist research and summarised a number of studies that have engaged with the principles of intersectionality in their analyses. To better enable the reader to anchor an intersectional perspective in their own work, in this section I provide a more detailed discussion of an examination of pitch variation in the speech of a group of young lesbians in London (Lawrence 2014). In my presentation of this work, I highlight the methodological steps the author took to investigate the relevance of intersectionality to her findings. This is not intended as a prescriptive rulebook for how to conduct a study of this kind. Instead, my aim is to provide a guide for thinking through questions of intersectionality in relation to a body of data and an illustration of how variationist techniques can be brought to bear on these issues.

Overall goals

Lawrence (2014) examined various aspects of language use within a lesbian friendship group in London. Her goal in doing so was to examine the extent to which a salient stereotypical divide between 'butch' versus 'lipstick' articulations of lesbian identity influenced the ways in which the women understood their sexualities and the kinds of social practices in which they engaged. Lawrence's study is thus a clear example of an intra-categorical approach to intersectionality. What she is interested in is the diversity of lesbian experiences across individuals, even among members of the same friendship group. In this sense, Lawrence's work helps us to move beyond simplistic binary assumptions about 'lesbian' versus 'non-lesbian' ways of speaking, and instead allows us to explore the various other factors that together with sexuality help constitute individual subjectivity.

The so-called butch–lipstick dichotomy (sometime also termed butch–femme) is a stereotypically very salient one within lesbian communities (and, arguably, within society at large). The labels themselves refer to two imagined archetypes of lesbian identity that occupy opposite positions on a spectrum of gendered and sexual presentation (Eves 2004; Munt and Smyth 1998). While popularly viewed as simple embodiments of more 'masculine' versus more 'feminine' styles, respectively, scholars have argued that butch and lipstick identities serve as powerful forms of resistance to heterosexual (and heterosexist) norms, allowing women to create a lesbian aesthetic within which to reimagine gender (e.g. Case 1988). Abstracting away from their political potential, the concepts 'butch' and 'lipstick' denote opposing positions within a complex economy of embodied practices (such as dress and demeanour), emotional styles, and sexual and romantic roles. In investigating the butch–lipstick dichotomy, Lawrence (2014) is not aiming to describe distinct and homogenous 'butch' versus 'lipstick' styles of speech. Rather, she attempts to understand how the women she observed orient to these concepts variably in their daily lives, and how they draw on language as a resource for materialising these orientations in interaction (see Jones 2011, 2012, 2014 for another discussion of butch–lipstick dynamics among lesbians in the UK).

Methods

To achieve these goals, Lawrence (2014) focuses on pitch variability among the women. She considers a number of different acoustic properties of spoken pitch, including mean pitch (the average pitch level in an utterance) and pitch range (the overall span of pitch across an intonation phrase). These are both features that have been extensively studied in the literature on language and sexuality, though the majority of that work has focused on (gay) men (e.g. Gaudio 1994; Levon 2006, 2007; Smyth, Jacobs and Rogers 2003). In the studies that have examined lesbian speech (e.g. Moonwomon 1985; Pierrehumbert, Bent, Munson, et al. 2004), results with respect to pitch have been either contradictory or inconclusive (see also Munson and Babel 2007). Nevertheless, there is a strong stereotype in the UK (and elsewhere) that butch women will have lower mean pitch levels and narrower pitch ranges, while lipstick women will have higher mean pitch levels and wider pitch ranges (Queen 1997; Van Borsel, Vandaele and Corthais 2013; Waksler 2001). These stereotypes in relation to the butch–lipstick dichotomy are analogous to the stereotypes that circulate with regard to the speech of men versus women (as well as the speech of more 'masculine' versus more 'feminine' men) (e.g. Henton 1989, 1995). For this reason, variation in pitch is a salient feature to examine among the women in question.

Data are drawn from the speech of 5 women between the ages of 20 and 27 (mean age: 23) living in the London area who were all members of a London university's LGBT society. Lawrence observed and recorded the women both in their casual interactions as a group (i.e. when out together at a local pub) and in individual sociolinguistic interviews she conducted with each of them. The analysis of pitch below is based on speech from these interviews. The interviews themselves were semi-structured, an approach which encourages natural speech and allows interviewees to have some control over the direction and content of their talk. This helps to encourage more relaxed, informal conversation, and enables interviewees to speak in more detail about topics they consider important while simultaneously ensuring comparability across the dataset (e.g. Schilling 2013). All interviews included talk about the interviewees' social backgrounds, schooling, current work/studies, leisure activities, media consumption habits, and opinions about lesbian life. Once recorded, interviews were segmented into intonational phrases (IPs) and the mean pitch level and pitch range of each IP was measured. In addition to these linguistic measurements, IPs were also coded for whether they were taken from talk on 'gay' or 'non-gay' topics. 'Gay' topics include the women's personal histories of 'coming out', their participation in a lesbian community or 'scene', and their opinions about current sexual politics. The division between 'gay' and 'non-gay' topics allows Lawrence to investigate whether there are patterns of topic-linked intraspeaker variation in the dataset (see, e.g. Levon 2009). Finally, each of the five speakers was also assigned a value on a butch–lipstick index, based on Lawrence's observations and ethnographic knowledge of the participants (for further details of this index, see Lawrence 2014).

Results

Initial results with respect to mean pitch levels are presented in Figure 3.1. Participants are ordered in terms of their scores on the butch–lipstick continuum, with those rated as more 'butch' on the left side of the plot and those rated more 'lipstick' on the right side. We see that the five speakers divide into roughly three groups: Bow with the lowest mean pitch level (average: 156.4 Hz), followed by Jane and R (average: 186.9 Hz and 184.2 Hz, respectively), and finally Meredith and Lizzie (average: 202.8 Hz and 200.1 Hz, respectively). What this pattern shows is that, in general, the more 'lipstick' a participant's embodied style (i.e. the more it conforms to traditional notions of femininity), the higher her average mean pitch levels. This is confirmed by quantitative regression analysis, which demonstrates that there is a positive correlation between placement on the butch–lipstick continuum and mean pitch ($p = 0.02$). This finding is important because it illustrates that even though all the women self-identify as 'lesbians', their different positionings in relation to the constructs

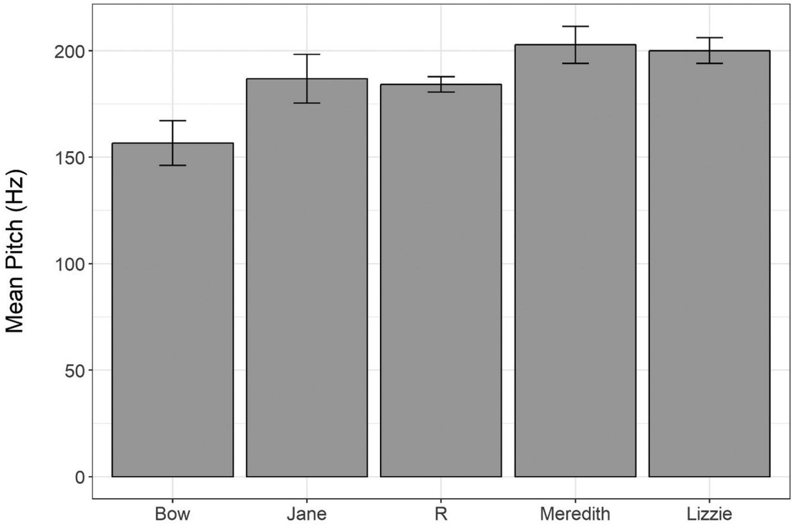

Figure 3.1 Average mean pitch level in Hz for speakers ordered from left to right by position on the 'butch'–'lipstick' continuum.

of 'butch' versus 'lipstick' have an impact on their linguistic practices. This is thus a clear example of intra-categorical complexity among the women under investigation.

Further investigation of the women's speech indicates that the pattern observed in Figure 3.1 is actually more complex than it appears. In Figure 3.2, mean pitch levels are again shown by speaker, but this time they are also divided by speech topic ('gay' versus 'non-gay'). There, we see that the correlation between orientations to 'butch'/'lipstick' and mean pitch varies depending on the topic of conversation. For gay topics (the dark bars in Figure 3.2), we again see the relationship evident in Figure 3.1, with the dividing into three groups (Bow, Jane, and R, Meredith and Lizzie) and a general increase in mean pitch levels the more a speaker orients to the 'lipstick' end of the continuum. However, on non-gay topics (lighter bars in Figure 3.2), no such relationship exists. Instead, all of the women are shown to have roughly similar mean pitch levels. This is interesting for a number of reasons. First, it demonstrates that the women vary how they speak in relation to the topic of their talk. For this reason, we cannot speak of a characteristic 'lesbian' way of speaking, or even of a characteristic 'butch' or 'lipstick' way of speaking, since how an individual speaks clearly depends on other elements on the speech context (like topic). It is also potentially meaningful that the pattern of interest with respect to mean pitch obtains when the women are speaking about 'gay' topics. This could indicate that the variability in mean pitch that we find is in some way related to women's constructions and presentations of particular sexual selves. Bow, for example, may strategically lower her pitch on gay topics to enact a more 'butch' persona, whereas Lizzie may strategically raise hers in order to enact a more 'lipstick' one. While we would want further evidence to support this kind of claim, the quantitative pattern in Figure 3.2 is consistent with an analysis in which mean pitch is a symbolic resource that the women can deploy to enact specific intersectional selves at particular interactional moments (for more on variation as a symbolic resource for enacting a particular interactional self, see, e.g. Bucholtz 2009; Eckert 2008; Levon 2011; Schilling-Estes 2004; Sharma and Rampton 2015).

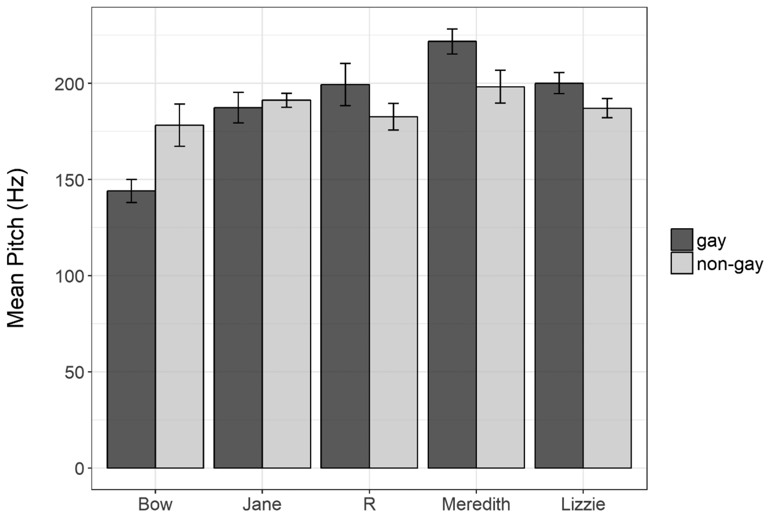

Figure 3.2 Average mean pitch level in Hz for speakers ordered from left to right by position on the 'butch'–'lipstick' continuum and divided by speech topic.

Conclusion

The foundational intersectional principle of moving beyond simple binaries was operationalised in Lawrence's study by first looking at diversity of language use *within* a group of lesbians (rather than assuming that there is a singular 'lesbian' way of speaking that can be contrasted with the speech practices of others). Detailed quantitative examinations of mean pitch among women in the group revealed a correlation between higher average mean pitch and more 'lipstick' embodiments of lesbian identity. This correlation allowed Lawrence (2014) to detail the kind of intra-categorical complexity that exists within the group. Further analyses also revealed this complexity was itself dynamic in nature, only emerging in certain interactional contexts (i.e. when speaking on 'gay' topics in interviews). This more detailed result points to an understanding of mean pitch as a strategic indexical resource that is recruited by the women as a way of enacting the different types of lesbian genders with which they identify, and so enriching the intersectional understanding of the women under investigation.

It is worthwhile noting that Lawrence's (2014) analysis does not venture into an exploration of how sexuality or 'butch'/'lesbian' personae are mutually constituted by their intersection with other categories. If we wanted to explore this avenue of enquiry, we could, for example, ask why it is that mean pitch is the tool that women use to enact differently gendered selves. In addition to research on pitch and gender/sexuality, prior research has also shown that mean pitch levels are also associated with perceived clarity, intelligence, sophistication, and even height. It could therefore be the case that part of what it means to be a 'lipstick' lesbian is to speak in a 'clearer' and more 'sophisticated' fashion and that one way of doing so is to use an elevated mean pitch. This type of exploration would be one way of considering how categories like 'butch' and 'lipstick' are mutually constituted by relevant others.

Future directions

The preceding discussion of a selection of findings from Lawrence (2014) provides a brief, but nevertheless useful illustration of how we can approach one of the foundational principles of intersectionality – intra-categorical complexity – in variationist research on sexuality. Yet it is the other foundational principle of intersectionality – the mutual constitution of categories – that I believe is the next frontier in research on language, gender, and sexuality research. To date, most research within variationist sociolinguistics that has attempted to move beyond binary ways of thinking has tended to do so by adding new subdivisions to the categories of identity we consider (e.g. woman > lesbian woman > 'butch' lesbian woman) – a process that Eckert (2014: 530) describes as 'nesting the terms of the [gender] binary within each side of the binary'. While this work is crucial in highlighting under-researched aspects of lived experience, I argue that its theoretical and methodological potential for overcoming binary modes of thinking is ultimately limited. What is needed is research that examines how binaries are themselves sustained, what social forces conspire to scaffold and reproduce binaries in other domains, and, most crucially, how individuals negotiate, resist, and transform these binaries in situated sociolinguistic practice (see Davis, Zimman, and Raclaw 2014). Only once we have done so do I believe that we will be able to provide a fuller analysis of the complex subjectivities of the individuals we analyse, and of the crucial role of linguistic variation in bringing that complexity to light.

Further reading

Collins, P. and Bilge, S. (2016) *Intersectionality*. Cambridge: Polity.

This book provides an up-to-date introduction to the concept of intersectionality and how it has been used in a variety of different disciplines.

Levon, E. (2015) 'Integrating intersectionality in language, gender, and sexuality research', *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 9(7), pp. 295–308.

This paper provides an overview of the concept of intersectionality, how it has been treated in research on language, gender, and sexuality in the past, and suggestions for how to anchor it more firmly in research in this area.

Levon, E. and Mendes, R. (eds) *Language, sexuality and power: studies in intersectional sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The edited collection showcases research on sexuality as it intersects with other social formations, including religion, culture, and nation, focusing on both language use and perception.

Zimman, L., Davis, J., and Raclaw, J. (eds) *Queer excursions: retheorizing binaries in language, gender and sexuality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This edited collection highlights research in sociolinguistics that has attempted to move beyond binary ways of thinking of gender and sexuality, and features studies utilising both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Related topics

Non-binary approaches to gender and sexuality; gender diversity and the voice; perception of gender and sexuality; gender and sexuality normativities; an ethnographic approach to compulsory heterosexuality.

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4

Perception of gender and sexuality

Kathryn Campbell-Kibler and deandre miles-hercules

Introduction/definitions

Recent work in the third wave of sociolinguistic variation (Eckert 2012) has focused on how speakers use variation to build social constructs, including gender and sexual identity. Speakers can use language features like phonetic cues, lexical choices, or syntactic constructions to invoke contextually constrained concepts like feminine, professional, or friendly (Ochs 1992; Silverstein 1976, 2003). While production studies examine how and when features are used by specific speakers in specific contexts, perception studies examine how language features shape the reactions of observers. This chapter sketches the current literature on sociolinguistic perceptions of gender and sexuality. The field has focused heavily on linking acoustic characteristics to masculinity and sexual orientation in perceptions of the voices of English-speaking cisgender men. Some work has extended from this core, exploring other languages, other speakers, or asking more complex questions about the perceptual landscape of gender and sexuality. Despite these attempts, by and large, the perceptual literature has not kept pace with the production literature in developing a deeper and more nuanced approach to the multi-dimensional landscape of gendered and sexual identities. In particular, perception work has for the most part retained a basically binary view of gender and has neglected the turn towards intersectional approaches to gender and race found elsewhere in the literature.

We present a small study of the perception of performative super-masculine types which explores new methods for examining the landscape of gendered percepts. The results underline the role of listener gender ideology in the construction of any percept of a given voice by a given listener. We suggest that focusing on the listener is one way for perceptual work to move towards a more complex view of gender and sexuality. Two key concerns in this respect are disrupting the hegemonic positioning of the gender binary in the analytical approaches to perception and developing a greater emphasis on speakers of colour and the intersection of race with gender and sexuality.

Core work in perception: the search for gay speech

The literature on the sociolinguistic perception of gender and sexuality (Munson and Babel 2007) has had a narrower focus than the larger field of language, gender, and sexuality (Gray

2016; Jacobs 1996; Kulick 2000; Podesva and Kajino 2014). A majority of this work has revolved around the question of 'gay speech' or 'sounding gay'.

Early work in the area used a pathologising lens to examine what features were found in presumed-to-be-problematic 'effeminate' speech (Terango 1966; Travis 1981) or which features vocal coaching of trans women should concentrate on (Wolfe et al. 1990) to be perceived by primarily cis audiences as feminine. In the 1990s, research turned to the social percept called 'gay speech', 'the gay accent', or 'the gay lisp'. This work focused first on the accuracy with which listeners were able to identify men's sexual orientation, suggesting that they are able to perform above chance in at least some cases (Carahaly 2000; Gaudio 1994; Munson 2007). Other work suggested that this perception was not always a reliable reflection of a speaker's sexual identity (Jacobs et al. 2000; Lerman and Damsté 1969), but that it possibly reflected a robust percept that was shared across listeners (Jacobs et al. 2000).

Based on these results, attention shifted to seeking specific acoustic correlates for 'gay speech', asking what specific phonetic qualities prompted gay and/or feminine percepts of men's speech (Avery and Liss 1996; Linville 1998; Smyth et al. 2003). This work gathered a number of potential acoustic cues, including characteristics of /s/ (Avery and Liss 1996; Campbell-Kibler 2011; Crist 1997; Levon 2007; Linville 1998; Munson et al. 2005), /l/ (Crist 1997), vowels (Avery and Liss 1996; Mack 2010b; Munson 2007, Munson et al. 2005), and fundamental frequency, the primary acoustic correlate of pitch (Avery and Liss 1996; Levon 2007; Munson 2007). This literature has failed to find links between perceptions of sexuality and some characteristics of /s/ (Levon 2007; Munson 2007), fundamental frequency (Avery and Liss 1996; Levon 2007; Munson 2007; Smyth et al. 2003), vowels (Munson 2007), and speech rate (Avery and Liss 1996). A handful of work has explored perceptions within specialised subpopulations, including Mormon missionaries (Borders 2015) or military and ex-military personnel (Kirtley 2011).

Women's voices have gotten significantly less attention. During the heyday of the second wave of feminism, there was a brief interest in the perception of women's voices, particularly with respect to their status as feminist/women's liberation supporters or not (Giles et al. 1980; Kramarae 1982; Kramer 1977, 1978). As with men's voices, listeners showed mixed success at identifying women's sexual orientation by voices, with Moonwomon-Baird (1997) showing listeners at chance while Munson et al. (2005) and Munson (2007) documented some ability to distinguish straight women's voices from those of lesbian and bisexual women. Carahaly (2000) found that lesbian and gay listeners were better at identifying gay women's voices than straight listeners, an effect not seen in responses to men's voices. As with men, perceptions of women's voices were influenced by some characteristics of vowels, fundamental frequency, and /s/, but not all (Munson 2007; Munson et al. 2005).

Trans and non-binary speakers have been examined in the production literature (e.g. Becker et al. 2015; Gratton 2016; Hall and O'Donovan 1996; Nagar 2008) but not yet in the perceptual literature, with the exception of Zimman (2013), discussed below.

The mixed results regarding acoustic cues has led to some doubt about the stability of acoustic markers of masculinities. Zwicky (1997) suggested that men 'sounding gay' may be less about them producing specific cues than not producing other cues heard as masculine. In other words, there may be a relatively narrow window of 'masculine' speech, from which speakers may diverge in a variety of ways, a point echoed by Rieger, Linsenmeier, Gygax, Garcia, and Bailey (2010), who suggested that perception of men's sexual orientation more broadly may function largely on the basis of perceived 'sex (a)typicality'.

Some empirical results directly support this argument. Brown (2015), using a cue integration model, found what she referred to as an 'androcentric template' whereby the phonetic cues are perceptually understood in terms of male-centred norms. Similarly, Mack and Munson (2012) suggest that a gay percept can be prompted by multiple types of divergence from a neutral or normative /s/ articulation. Munson et al. (2005) found that male talkers heard as more gay-sounding were also heard as shorter and having clearer speech, with the opposite pattern found for straight vs. lesbian and bisexual women. This finding offers support for a style-based analysis along the lines of Ochs (1992), who argues that most semiotic resources used in gendered styles are indirectly, not directly, linked to gender. Rather, linguistic resources (for example, expanded vowel space) may be linked to social qualities (for example, precision). Gendered styles are then mutually constituted by/with these qualities and activities, through cultural conventions which mark precision as a feminine trait in particular contexts and for particular reasons. Support for this style-based model (Coupland 2007; Sharma 2018) may be seen also in the finding by Carahaly (2000) that 'gaydar' was improved when the stimuli used (for all speakers of any sexual orientation) were taken from a conversation with an unfamiliar same-sex gay/lesbian interlocutor. Carahaly's talkers self-reported code-switching based on the sexual orientation of their interlocutors, echoing Podesva's (2007) argument that individual personae combine personal identity with situational goals and constraints. Carahaly's perceptual results suggest that these situational speech patterns draw on broader patterns of meanings which naive listeners can perceive.

Taken overall, the perceptual literature has documented a stable and cross-linguistically widespread percept of 'gay speech', in which men's voices are perceived as gay-sounding or effeminate. Women's speech, while comparatively understudied, has shown less of a stable percept, suggesting a stronger influence of linguistic stereotyping in the perception of gender in men's speech.

Expanding beyond English 'gay speech'

The focus on how English-speaking men's voices are perceived has overwhelmingly dominated the literature on the sociolinguistic perception of sex and gender. Some work, however, explored other languages, other social evaluations, listener variability, and intersections between multiple variables.

Gendered variation has been studied perceptually in Danish (Pharao et al. 2014, discussed more below), Afrikaans, and South African English (Bekker and Levon 2017), Hungarian (Rácz and Papp 2015), Spanish (Chappell 2016; Mack 2010b, 2010a, 2015; Walker et al. 2014), and Brazilian Portuguese (Mendes 2014; 2015b, 2015a, 2016). Expanding beyond native listeners, Hardeman (2013) and Hardeman Guthrie (2017) examined L1 and L2 Mandarin listeners' perceptions of L1 and L2 talkers' use of *sajiao*, a marked 'cute' feminine style. Boyd (2018) examined reactions of English-, French-, and German-speaking listeners to talkers speaking English, French, German, and Estonian. While the details of linguistic cues vary, by and large cross-linguistic work has found similar themes, with perceptions of gay identities in men's speech linked to cues associated with femininity, with a particular emphasis on the acoustics of /s/.

Some work has examined how a listener's own variety influences their perception of that of others. Hardeman (2013) and Hardeman Guthrie (2017) found that L1 Mandarin speakers were more sensitive to the 'cuteness' of *sajiao* than L2 speakers. Walker et al. (2014) found that despite having less /s/ aspiration themselves, male Mexican listeners joined Puerto Rican counterparts in rating aspirated tokens more masculine and less gay-sounding, while female Mexican listeners gave the opposite assessment. Bekker and Levon (2017) showed that perception of /s/ fronting in South Africa is mediated by talker language and gender, with men showing a shared effect of /s/-fronting whether speaking Afrikaans or South African English while women's evaluation effects differ across the two varieties.

Finally, some work exploring the interaction of multiple variables on each other has examined gendered cues (Campbell-Kibler 2011; Levon 2007), illuminating the complex interplay between features to build styles. Pharao et al. (2014) manipulated /s/ in 'modern Copenhagen speech' vs. 'street language', styles embedded with ideas of ethnicity, citizenship status, place of residence, among other things. The gendered meanings of fronted /s/ in the 'modern' guise were radically reduced when juxtaposed with the 'street' guise (Pharao et al. 2014; Pharao and Maegaard 2017).

These developments represent exciting new pathways for perception studies. More fundamentally, however, perceptual research on variation and gender has struggled with articulating a clear and motivated understanding of gender itself. Two crucial theoretical turns have been largely neglected in the field, namely the challenging of the gender binary and the recognition of how the intersections of identity categories impact the experiences of those in them, particularly in terms of how race shapes gender.

Challenging a binary view of gender

Recent studies of language, gender, and sexuality have begun to consider the role and flaws of the gender binary in sociolinguistic research, but the binary remains a central and often unquestioned construct in much perception work. Eckert (2014) considered the socially constructed nature of identifying individuals as men or women, exclusively, while noting 'gender correlates with variation on a large scale'. Zimman, Davis, and Raclaw (2014) problematised the extent to which binaries of gender and sexuality have misarticulated the positions of individuals that do not map onto normative gender and sexual identities. However, most perception studies continue to assume that categories like man and woman (or male and female) are universal and legible without explanation or exploration, despite longstanding literature to the contrary (e.g. Butler 1990). Individuals that do not exist within this binary are implicitly marginalised by this structure of research. Sociocultural anthropology has marked the significance of gender identities such as hijra, berdache, and trans resisting two-gender system classifications (Herdt 1994). Sociolinguistic perception research has struggled to keep up with complexities introduced elsewhere, with only a handful of exceptions.

Zimman (2013), one such exception, hypothesised that trans men might be predicted to be particularly gay sounding, since childhood socialisation into feminine speech patterns could contribute to being 'gay-sounding' as an adult. He noted, however, that the trans men he has worked with have a range of stances towards the potential for being perceived as a gay man, including those who are gay men, those for whom the percept is congruent with a different queer identity, and those for whom it is a misidentification they would prefer to avoid.

Relatedly, Zimman (2017) has shown that the deployment of individual features may not only support the performance of a categorical identity such as 'male', but may be deployed to mitigate or disrupt such a performance. He discusses the complex interplay of pitch and /s/ production among transmasculine speakers, some of whom use /s/ tokens with comparatively higher-frequency centres of gravity to construct a queer, fem, or non-normative masculinity, mitigating the masculinising effects of a lowered f0.

Working along similar lines, Steele (2019) interviewed 20 non-binary gendered speakers and linked their discussions of their gendered style to sociophonetic patterns. Steele found that Black speakers showed distinct patterns of /s/ production, linked to their differing responses on a self-assessment of masculinity visual analogue scale. Interviews with the speakers revealed a heightened awareness of the threat perceived by others of perceptually masculine Black people. This work points to the value of non-binary speakers for helping illuminate gendered sociolinguistic patterning, but also underlines the crucial role of race in gendered sociolinguistic presentation, which we address in the next section.

Intersections of race and gender

The framework of intersectionality is key for the perception of gender and sexuality. Crenshaw (1991) pointed out that where oppressive structures intersect, their combined effects on lived experience may differ profoundly from the effects of only one of those structures, for example the differences in how Black women and white women experience sexism and gendered violence. This focus forms a cornerstone of Black feminist theory's epistemological resistance to monolithic analyses of gender or race in isolation. From the erasure (and resignification) of gender difference in the objectification of captive Black women during the Middle Passage (Spillers 1987) to gendered and racialised public criticism of Serena Williams contemporarily (Douglas 2002), hegemonic enactments of social identity consistently depict racialised subjects as deviant vis-à-vis gender and sexuality, if not irrelevant to the question altogether; studies of language and gender have generally followed suit.

Scholars of African American Women's Language (AAWL) have led the broaching of linguistics' silences in that regard. Responding to Robin Lakoff's (1973) influential text, Marsha Houston Stanback (1985) penned 'Language and Black woman's place', explicating language researchers' failure to attend to Black women's particular subjectivities as they depart from white women's and Black men's. Morgan (1996) analysed the gendered function of indirectness in conversational signifying amongst African American women, and Jacobs-Huey (2006), focusing on the sociocultural integration of language, embodiment, and identity, documented how the politics of race, gender, and hair care are woven into quotidian interactions across contexts. Lanehart (2009a) comprises the to-date definitive account of AAWL, including studies of its discourse markers, intonation, regionality, and media representation.

Only a handful of variationists have drawn multiple axes of identity together explicitly. Levon (2015) provided a programmatic discussion of how variationist approaches to language, gender, and sexuality might effectively incorporate intersectionality. In addition to applying Black feminist theory's insights in a broader theoretical light, however, we also hear its call as an impetus to see and account for race and its associated power structures in our work. The first and most obvious need for the field in terms of race is simply the need to engage with it, and to work to disrupt the treatment of whiteness as default that pervades the majority of scholarship across all fields.

De (2017) is one of the few perceptual studies of gender and sexuality to explore race and its intersections. De found that while fronted /u/ was rated both as more feminine and more white-sounding across all talkers, it made white talkers sound more competent, but not Black talkers, particularly men.

Outside of sociolinguistics, in Remedios, Chasteen, Rule, and Plaks (2011), predominantly white perceivers gave higher likeability ratings for faces of straight white men than gay white men. However, these responses were reversed for perceptions of the faces of Black men, with gay men's faces drawing higher ratings that straight men's. This result shows the intricate ways that hegemonic constructions of gender and sexuality are tied to race and the racialised history of our current understandings of gender. Our understanding of how language forms contribute to the construction of gendered styles is necessarily incomplete without a discussion of how the construct of race has shaped those styles.

A profound consequence of centring whiteness in sociolinguistics has been to shape the questions asked, so that even when the speech of people of colour is explored in the literature, it has primarily been in counterpoint to discussions of whiteness. As Lanehart (2009b) attests: '… though whiteness is seen as the norm in society and subsequently the standard for all judgements, comparisons, epistemologies, ontologies, etc., whiteness is not the absence of bias—it is the presence of particular biases'. Broader inclusion of and support for scholars of colour is one necessary precursor to studies of gender and sexuality which emerge from organic questions about the sociolinguistic behaviour and experiences of people of colour.

Current study

To conceptualise gendered sociolinguistic behaviour without relying on a binary structure and without neglecting intersectional effects, we turn to two key third-wave theoretical tools, namely styles and personae. Styles are clusters of linguistic and non-linguistic semiotic resources, such as phonetic cues, lexical items, clothing, and make-up practices, or body hexis, which are be tied to each other and particular places and times and which signify sets of social meanings such as group identities (Coupland 2007; Sharma 2018). They also include personae, which are similarly clustered sets of resources through which individuals create situationally appropriate selves, so that a single person might present their 'professional doctor' in one context and 'prissy diva' in another (Podesva 2007). Personae are necessarily developed in communication with broadly circulating characterological figures of personhood, such as the Valley Girl, football star, or distinguished professor (Agha 2007: 177). These figures provide marker points in multi-dimensional social space which speakers can use to orient themselves for their own identities and for understanding those of others.

The current study explores perceptions of intentional performances of hyper-masculine styles. Talkers, all native speakers of American English, were asked to read a list of sentences in a manner 'as masculine as possible, whatever that mean[t] to [them]'. While we conduct an acoustic analysis of the performances and examine the perceptual contributions of those cues, our primary goal is to better understand the terrain of highly masculine archetypes that the speakers and listeners (all students at the same university) work with. In so doing, we explore alternative methods of sociolinguistic perception research, to help address the constraints noted above.

Methods

The stimuli for this study were taken from the OhioSpeaks corpus (Wanjema et al. 2013), from a task designed for students in language and gender courses. Students were given a word list, sentences, and passages to read in three successive guises: in their own voice, 'as feminine as possible', and 'as masculine as possible'. The latter two guises were described additionally with the phrase 'whatever that means to you'. These recordings were subsequently used as part of a class presentation and discussion. Wanjema et al. (2013) describes the system and tasks in more detail.

For the current study, sentence performances of self-identified men performing the masculine guise were selected. Because the speakers recorded themselves in a variety of situations and with a variety of equipment, the performances were judged for clarity of recording and those with significant problems were excluded. This resulted in 68 recordings, each consisting of the same set of short sentences such as 'Cute shoes!', 'That's my mom, hold on', and 'I thought so'. Fifty talkers self-identified as white, seven as Asian, four as Black, four as multiracial, two as another racial or ethnic category, and one declined to describe their race/ethnicity. An acoustic analysis was conducted on both the masculine performances used as stimuli and the corresponding 'regular voice' sentence recordings from the same speakers. These values were not ultimately predictive of responses, however, and our discussion focuses on the patterns within the evaluations across the full set of stimuli.

Perceptual responses to the stimuli were collected in and around the Columbus main campus of the Ohio State University. Potential participants visually identified as young adults were approached in public places and asked if they had ten minutes available to participate in a research study. Those that agreed were taken through a verbal consent process, then asked for their age, regional history, and their racial and/or ethnic identification. They were then asked to listen to recordings through noise-cancelling headphones.

Participants were told that the voices they heard would be of speakers auditioning for an acting role. They were asked to listen and form a picture of the character the speaker was attempting to portray. Each participant was asked to listen and respond to three stimuli, presented in a consistent order, with stimuli balanced across listeners. In the open-ended study, each listener was asked to offer three words or phrases that describe the character being portrayed. In the second, they were asked to provide ratings on a scale of 1 to 10 of the intended character with respect to the pairs: not educated/educated, kind/mean, thoughtless/thoughtful, outgoing/shy, lazy/energetic, straight/gay, and feminine/masculine. Participants reported their ratings verbally, but were shown a piece of paper listing the scales throughout the task. After offering these character ratings, listeners were asked to rate the skill of the speaker's performance, also on a 1 to 10 scale. All verbal responses were entered into a spreadsheet on the same tablet used to play the stimuli.

Open-ended responses

Open-ended responses were used to understand the range of types and traits prompted for listeners by the stimuli. They were also used as the basis for creating the ratings for the next task. Responses were examined for common themes, shown in Table 4.1.

The most common response from listeners was to note the low affect of the speakers (e.g. boring; chill; disinterested; easy-going; indifferent; mellow; no emotion; not enthusiastic), a result either of the portrayal of super-masculine speech as noticeably reserved, or a result of the speakers themselves bringing decreased energy to their online homework recording task. It is also possible that the low-affect recordings leave less to say, creating a larger consistent block of comments, while the more energetic performances prompt a wider range of comments. Other common observations include noting positive (nice; friendly; relatable; likeable) or negative traits in the characters portrayed (aggressive; sarcastic; brusque; harsh and mean). The terms offered in the open-ended responses were used to develop the scales for the next task, the rating task.

Table 4.1 Common comment types

	%
normal	3.46
south/country	3.46
monotone	3.90
other	6.06
young	6.06
high affect	7.36
masculine	8.23
bad affect	11.26
positive affect	12.12
speech comment	12.55
low affect	25.54

Ratings

Our first goal in analysing the ratings was to note key differences in how listeners approach the task, and to better understand how these differences illuminate the gendered ideologies which shape the process of person perception. Our focus was on the relationship between 'gay' and 'masculine' ratings, since the literature has struggled with these response tasks and their connection. On the one hand, both previous literature and non-academic discussion have stressed the importance of disentangling gendered self-presentation and sexual orientation or patterns of preference. In the simplest terms, it is not only possible, but common, for gay men to self-present with cues coded as masculine and for straight men to self-present with cues coded as feminine, whether linguistic (e.g. /s/ production) or nonlinguistic (e.g. body hexis). Perceptual work, however, has found that a majority of evaluations show correlations between these conceptually distinct axes.

Smyth et al. (2003) observed that their results showed a strong correlation between the two scales, but that the preferred ranges used by listeners differed. They suggested on that basis that the two responses reflect distinct perceptual constructs despite their close correlation. More intriguingly, they found that while neither masculine/feminine scores nor straight/gay scores were predicted by pitch, the difference between the two scales was. Higher-pitched voices showed a closer correlation between the two ratings, while responses to lower-pitched voices were more likely to allow for higher 'gay' ratings alongside more 'masculine' ratings. Munson (2007) also differentiated between the two constructs, suggesting that they may be tied to different acoustic factors, although he notes that the evidence in his study for a dissociation is stronger for male than female talkers.

As a result, we turn first to the responses to these two scales, whose distributions are shown in Figures 4.1 and 4.2.

In these graphs, we can see several general trends. First, a clear bias towards the high end of the 'masculine' scale shows that the listeners are responding to the efforts of the talkers to 'sound as masculine as possible'. Consistent with previous research on the negative associations between the scales, 'gay' ratings are concentrated on the low end of the scale. In addition to these overall distributions, we see a few marked peaks, which disrupt the otherwise relatively smooth distributions. These appear to consist of listeners 'opting out' of the rating task for these scales. We followed the first author's established practice of using an even-numbered scale to discourage use of the middle of the scale as a pseudo-neutral answer. However, the

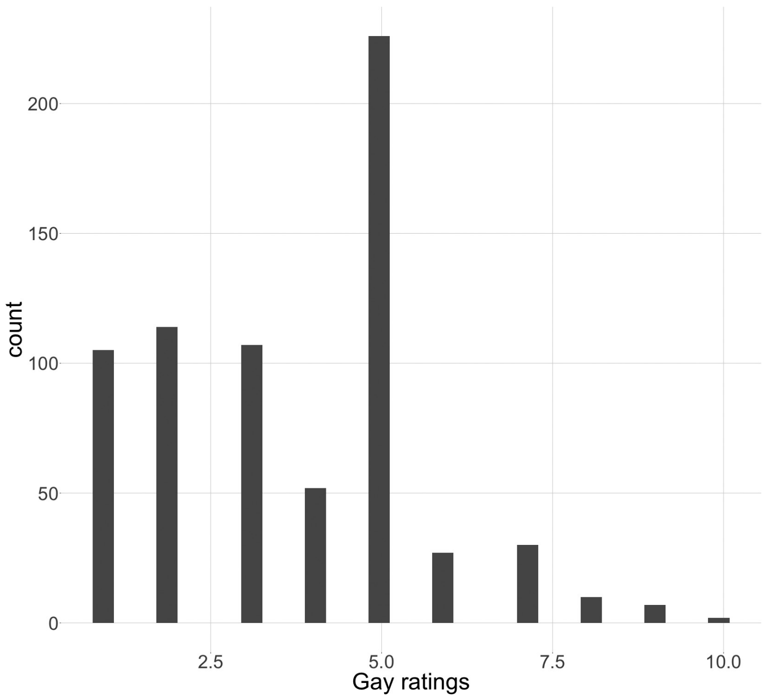

Figure 4.1 Distribution of gay ratings.

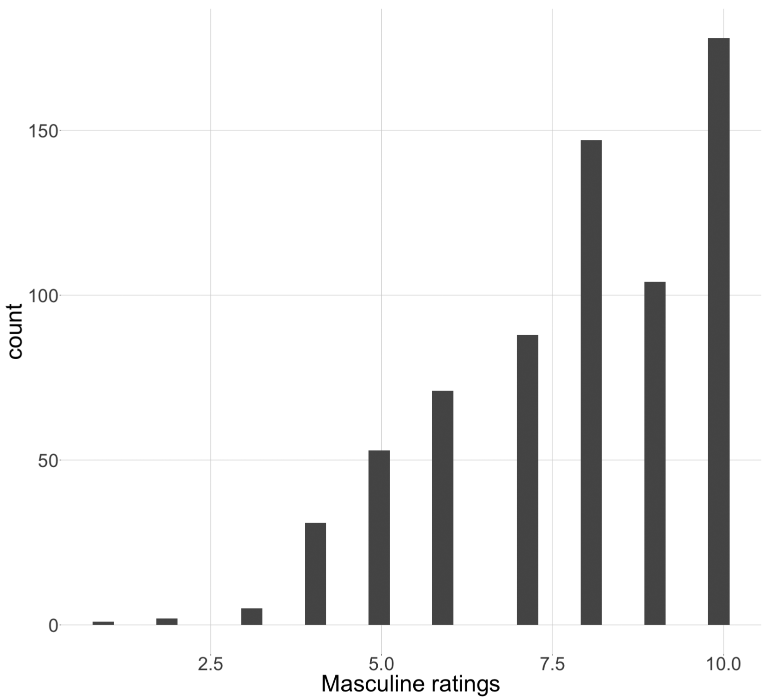

Figure 4.2 Distribution of masculine ratings.

use of a verbal response and the highly familiar 1 to 10 scale appears to have defeated that goal, with five perceived by listeners as a midpoint. Of respondents, 16% (38) answered 5 for a 'gay' rating of all three speakers, suggesting that, despite not being the mathematical middle of the scale offered, they perceived 5 as a neutral response to this question.

A similar pattern emerges in the 'masculine' scale, with a number of respondents providing exactly the same 'masculine' rating for all speakers. Interestingly, however, for this scale 5 is not perceived to be a neutral response, perhaps due to its being markedly low on the range used by listeners overall. Instead, 9% (21) of the listeners chose ten for all three 'masculine' ratings while 7% (17) chose 8. Only five of these listeners also responded with 5 for all three 'gay' ratings.

For all participants with variability in both scales, the correlation between the items 'gay' and 'masculine' was calculated based on the three ratings each listener completed. The histogram of this metric is shown in Figure 4.3.

Based on this distribution, these listeners were divided into the categories 'strongly negative', 'moderately negative', 'flat', and 'positive'. with the boundaries indicated on the graph. This measure was used to capture the diversity of listeners' pre-existing understandings of gender and sexuality and how those understandings interact with the performances they hear. The majority of listeners display the commonly-seen negative association, where high 'gay' ratings correspond to low 'masculine' ratings. However, listeners vary along this dimension, with a substantial minority reversing the trend. Gender had no effect on this distribution but Black listeners showed significantly less of a connection between 'gay' ratings and lowered 'masculine' ratings compared to white listeners ($p = 0.042$), with listeners of other racial identities falling between these two groups, not differing significantly from either.

Ratings analysis: clusters

A central goal of the study is to map out identifiable archetypes or characterological figures that our speakers might be drawing on and our listeners perceiving. To that end, we turned to

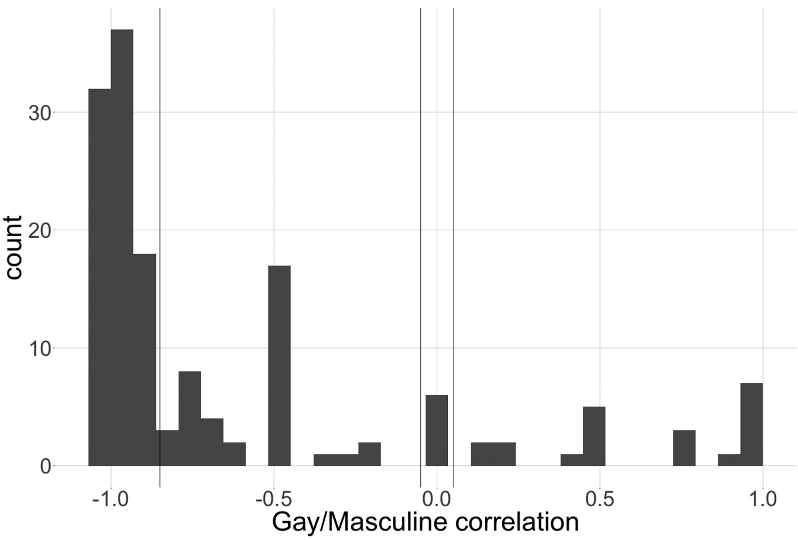

Figure 4.3 Distribution of listener slopes between gay and masculine.

cluster analysis of the responses to identify areas of the response space that might offer clues to such types. Both a clustergram (Schonlau 2002) and an elbow plot were used to determine the ideal number of clusters, which was set at four. The clusters were created using k means clustering in R, using the kmeans() function.

Although calculated in seven dimensions, for the seven rating items, the clusters can easily be summarised into two dimensions, as shown in Figure 4.4. This is due to the similarity of profile of feminine/masculine and gay/straight, and the similarity of all five of the other items. In this essentially two-dimensional space, the four clusters capture two 'high masculine' and two 'moderately masculine' percepts, where each pair consists of one more positive (more educated, kinder, more thoughtful, more outgoing, and more energetic) and one more negative characterisation.

The different listener patterns contribute significantly differently to the four clusters, as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 shows that responses with the hegemonic negative masculine/gay correlation are split relatively evenly across the four clusters. In contrast, nearly half the positively correlated responses fall into the cluster of negative, moderately masculine performances. In other words, given the performatively masculine stimuli, a positive correlation between

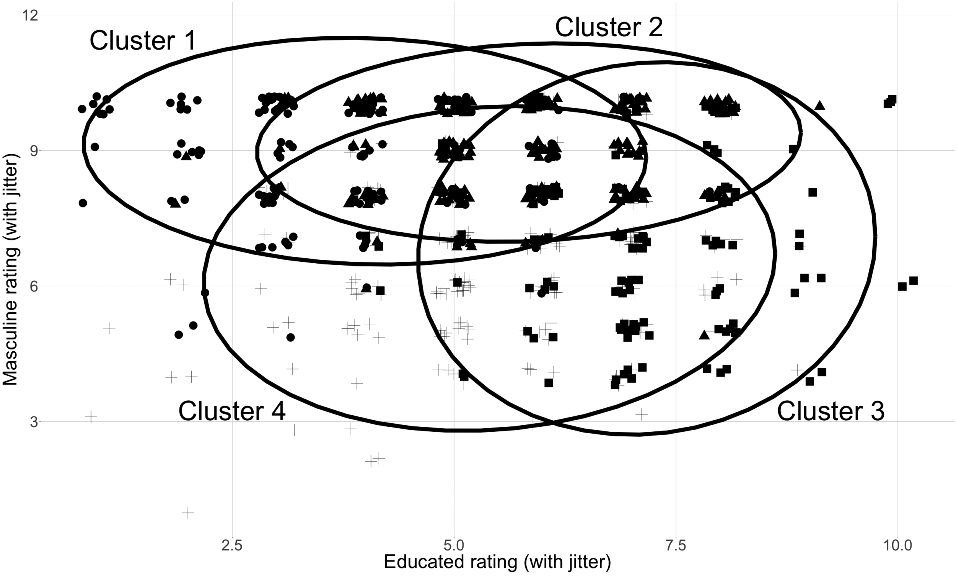

Figure 4.4 Perceptual clusters.

Table 4.2 Perceptual clusters, by listener gay/masculine pattern. Bold indicates largest cluster in the subset, italic the smallest

	Strong Neg.	*Mod. Neg.*	*Flat*	*Positive*	*Gay 5s*	*Masc 8s*	*Masc 10s*
negative Masc	**0.29**	0.23	0.22	0.24	*0.12*	0.33	0.36
negative Mid	0.24	**0.33**	0.29	**0.44**	**0.43**	*0.10*	*0.08*
positive Masc	0.26	0.26	**0.37**	0.19	0.14	**0.44**	**0.42**
positive Mid	*0.21*	*0.18*	*0.12*	*0.13*	0.31	0.12	0.14

these traits is driven more by moderate responses to perceptually moderately masculine performances rather than an active embracing of gay, highly masculine identities.

Discussion

This study offers a few points for the perception literature. First, it shows that perceptions of performative hyper-masculinity show a very simplistic perceptual structure, focused around two dimensions: degree of hyper-masculinity and a general positive–negative assessment.

Second, it shows that individual listeners do differ in the ideological structure underlying their person perception, particularly with respect to the link between gender performance and sexuality. While the majority of listeners display the hegemonic pattern linking gay men to less masculine gendered performances, this is not the case for all listeners. Black participants' differing patterned assessments of 'gay'-ness and 'masculine'-ness in our samples suggest that racial identity – and likely other axes of social identification – can influence the perception of gender and sexuality in meaningful ways. Put another way: as intersections of identities structure linguistic production, so too do they permeate perception.

Finally, these data show little support for any specific acoustic cues used by listeners. This suggests either that listeners are drawing on cues not covered in the previous literature or that different listeners are responding to different cues, leaving each individual cue without strong support.

Future directions

Building on the discussions above, we suggest that perceptual work can contribute significantly to probing the gender binary. We want to encourage continued exploration of the dynamic relationship between gender and sexuality, while acknowledging the challenges this presents in experimental work. One step is, of course, not to assume that listeners will consistently conflate the two. Additionally, however, investigating a broader range of gendered styles will broaden listener responses. Finally, we would like to support Lanehart's (2009b) and Levon's (2015) calls for attention to the intersections. Perceptual work on language and gender has been slow to engage with race in a serious way. More attention needs to be paid to the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality.

Perceptual work needs more nuanced methodological frameworks for interpreting gender's relation to language variation and perception, including attention to non-binary individuals, who are currently understudied in linguistics. One of the challenges for perceptual research is designing studies which can capture ideological differences across participants. For example, theoretical discussions of gender differentiate between 'masculine' and 'feminine' as distinct constructs and not ends of the same continuum (e.g. Bem 1977; Connell 1995). The sociolinguistic perception work has, however, consistently shown strong correlations between the two.

Without continued interrogation, research which conflates gay identity in men with femininity risks maintaining heterosexist ideology rather than illuminating it. Zimman (2013) argues that 'there is no single gay-sounding style, but rather a multiplicity of styles that can be interpreted as indexing sexuality by virtue of their departure from normative masculinity'. A style-based model creates greater flexibility in capturing the various possible connections between gendered performances and sexual practices, as distinct styles relate to gender, sexuality, and other constructs differently. One initial question that arises along this line of inquiry is whether the construct 'femininity' is the same when discussed in the context of (gay) men as when it is discussed in the context of women (see, for example Barrett 1999). Critiquing this conflation has long been a concern of the field, with Gaudio (1994) positioning his work as ‘critiquing the use of the terms feminine and especially effeminate in characterising gay male speech’. Nonetheless, these constructs have not been explored as fully as is needed, and we must inspect more closely how the categories used to study gender and sexuality are structured by speakers and listeners.

We note that one of the challenges that has prevented this move in the subfield is the difficulty of exploring complex variability through experimental paradigms. New methods are needed to capture listener behaviour and specific subpopulations need to be sought out, to allow for a broader range of listeners informing our models. One specific example is a greater interest in exploring the language and perspectives of people of colour, who have been radically understudied in the perceptual domain of language and gender, as in many subfields of linguistics. Avoidance of widespread engagement with race and racism in linguistics has also contributed to the continued marginalisation of voices of colour. To date, the majority of linguistic scholarship focusing on race has been concerned largely with production. While the study of language upon these axes has been invaluable to the field, it also has had a way of othering what are already marked and stigmatised varieties. In other words, by showing that race is only relevant when it comes to analysing the speech of people of colour (e.g. Black Englishes, Spanglish, etc.) a lack of serious engagement with race across the subfields of linguistics further normalises whiteness. Fully addressing this problem, of course, requires attention beyond individual research choices to the broader politics of research, in considering who is supported, hired, and published in the field.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks go to Alec Buchner, Jordan Maier, Rebecca Wiley, Carter Taylor, and Ashley Rambacher for their assistance.

Further reading

Lanehart, S. (ed) (2009) *African American women’s language: discourse, education, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press.

The contributions comprising this essential volume form the only sustained simultaneous treatment of Blackness and womanness by linguists to-date.

Levon, E. (2015) ‘Integrating intersectionality in language, gender, and sexuality research’, *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 9(7), pp. 295–308.

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Zimman explores listeners' gendered perceptions of cis gay men, cis straight men and transmasculine speakers, helping prompt the field beyond traditional binaries.

Related topics

Sexuality as non-binary: a variationist perspective; non-binary approaches to gender and sexuality; gender diversity and the voice; gender and sexuality normativities; an ethnographic approach to compulsory heterosexuality.

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5
Gender diversity and the voice

Lal Zimman

Introduction

Recent years have seen unprecedented visibility for transgender people and issues, and scholars of language are increasingly interested in exploring the ways gender diversity is manifested on a linguistic level. Attention to the linguistic consequences of gender diversity demands not only the inclusion of transgender and gender non-conforming speakers in sociolinguistic research, but also a shift in how the field thinks about gender and sex – especially when it comes to the voice.

'Gender diversity' is a concept that recognises a range of gendered identities, expressions, and bodies, including those that diverge from, transcend, or exceed normative ideas about what it means to be a woman or man, female or male, feminine or masculine. Transgender individuals – i.e. those who self-identify with a gender other than the one assigned to them at birth – are prototypical examples of gender diversity. The category of 'transgender', as it is currently conceived in the United States and many other parts of the English-speaking world, includes transgender women and men and, in many cases, non-binary individuals who do not identify as exclusively female or male.[1] Recognition of non-binary identities has proliferated in recent years, resulting in labels like 'agender' (no gender), 'bigender' (both binary genders), 'genderfluid' (movement between gender identities or expressions), 'genderqueer' (having a non-normative or distinctively queer gender), and 'demi'-[category] (belonging only partially to a category, e.g. 'demi-girl'), among others. In addition to Western frameworks of trans identity, gender diversity can include gender non-normativity and 'third/fourth gender' categories throughout the world, e.g. in India (Hall 2005), Brazil (Borba 2015), Thailand (Jackson 2004), and indigenous North America (Davis 2014). Finally, gender diversity is broad enough to encompass variation in the femininities and masculinities of 'cisgender' (i.e. non-transgender) women and men. Sensitivity to gender diversity thus works in concert with an intersectional perspective on gender as inseparable from race, ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, (dis)ability, and other forms of social experience (Crenshaw 1989).

Variationist sociolinguistic research typically rests on a binary model of gender, in which all speakers are categorised as either female or male, often based on the researcher's perceptions of speakers' bodies rather than participants' self-description. This binary categorisation is then implemented in both acoustic and statistical analysis, limiting the possibility of discovering a more complex gender system at work. If sociolinguists hope to learn from the gender diversity that surrounds us, a new approach to gender and the voice is necessary. This chapter begins by outlining a multi-dimensional model of sex and gender that is grounded in ethnographic research in US-based transgender communities, which enables more nuanced accounts of the relationship between gender and the voice. Rather than imposing a simplified system that uses demographic categories defined by linguists, an ethnographic approach encourages researchers to prioritise the worldviews of the communities under study, to learn about those worldviews through long-term participant-observation in community members' lives, and to be cautious about the potential for misreadings that result from the researchers' own subjectivity and cultural lens (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Geertz 1973). This approach, I argue, is crucial for the study of gender diversity, precisely because non-normatively gendered speakers reveal the inadequacies of mainstream ways of thinking about gender.

Following a brief literature review, this multidimensional approach is put to work in an analysis of /s/ among 32 English-speaking transgender people, including trans women, trans men, and non-binary individuals. By delving into the complexity of speakers' gendered subjectivities, the analysis presented here undermines several normative assumptions about the relationship between gender and the voice that circulate in variationist sociolinguistics: that sex/gender is a single, binary characteristic; that speakers' sex/gender can be conflated and categorised based on researchers' perceptions of participants' bodies or identities; and that all voices can be unproblematically categorised as either female or male on the basis of 'biological sex'. Crucially, these implications are not only relevant for the study of transgender, non-conforming, or third gender communities. A more complex model of gender also promotes deeper understanding of gender and the voice among normatively gendered speakers. (Cisgender) women and men are often treated as internally homogenous categories, but our knowledge that gender intersects meaningfully with other domains of identity should make us sceptical of claims about 'sex differences' in the voice that rely largely or exclusively on white, middle-class, (presumed) heterosexual, gender normative, able-bodied speakers. The analysis presented in this chapter, however, demonstrates that even before turning to intersectional analysis, the gendered elements of our accounts must be complexified. Specifically, it shows that the robust models of sex and gender developed in trans communities provide better explanations for variation in the gendered voice than does the normative binary. As sociocultural linguists increasingly recognise the complexities of sex and gender, our analytic tools must also be refined so they can account for the full range of gendered voices that speakers produce.

Sex, gender, and sexuality as multidimensional scales

Sex

The distinction between 'sex', as a system of classifying bodies, and 'gender', as a system for classifying the social practices, dispositions, and experiences that are associated with one sex or another, is well established in sociolinguistics. Yet phonetically oriented research, including much sociophonetic work, tends to conflate sex and gender and refer to all aspects of difference between women's and men's voices as a function of sex. This terminological choice is driven by the recognition that the size of the larynx, vocal folds, and vocal tract constrains the kinds of speech a person can produce. The practice of emphasising 'sex', however, reinforces the naturalisation of differences between women's and men's voices and constitutes a stance that the observed differences are biological in nature. Other sociophoneticians are informed by the classic feminist distinction between sex (the biological) and gender (the social), treating differences in women's and men's voices as shaped largely by physiology, with supplementation from learned gender differences (e.g. Fuchs and Toda 2010). However, this perspective misses a key contribution of third-wave feminist/queer theory: that sex itself is a social construct (Butler 1993; Nicholson 1994). Butler's theory of gender famously draws on practices of gender crossing and blurring as an example of 'performativity'. Butler's performativity mirrors Austin's (1962) notion of performative speech acts, in which utterances not only describe, but actually create, reality; for example, the pronouncement of marriage made by a proper authority over a culturally appropriate context brings a marriage into being that did not previously exist. Gender performativity, by extension, refers to the idea that a person's gender is not a pre-existing fact, but rather something that must be continuously brought into being through the enactment of social practices. As Butler (1990) famously opined, non-normative genders are particularly salient as examples of gender performativity, but they illustrate a universal process of identity creation. Importantly, Butler does not stop at the notion of the long-recognised feminist precept that gender identity is socially constructed; she also argues that the gendered meanings attributed to the body are enacted through social practice – particularly discourse – and that we can never fully separate the 'natural' body from the social and cultural contexts that produce the actual bodies which we animate and those we come into contact with. The notion that sex, like gender, is constructed is well supported by scholars of language, gender, and sexuality, who have examined the ways bodies and body parts are invested with gendered meaning (Braun and Kitzinger 2001; Motschenbacher 2009; Zimman 2014). 'Sex' may be a useful concept to highlight the embodied aspects of gender, but it is important to maintain a critical perspective on both sex and gender and to recognise their situatedness within a particular historical and cultural context. If we take seriously Butler's argument that the social and the material are fully bound up with one another, the attempt to isolate purely biological differences in the voice from those that are culturally learned may be a fool's errand (see Zimman 2014 for a thorough exploration of this stance).

Though we might separate sex and gender analytically, gender diversity includes variability in both bodily forms and the ways bodies act and interact in the world. The sex binary is a cultural imposition that erases intersex bodies, whose chromosomal, hormonal, and/or anatomical features are not contained by normative definitions of female or male embodiment. With an inclusive definition, the prevalence of intersex bodies is placed as high as 1 in 100 births (ISNA 2008), but linguists have yet to incorporate the challenges this population poses to the field's understanding of sex (see King 2016 for more on intersex bodies and discourse). What intersex bodies make clear is that sex is not a single characteristic, but rather a bundle of traits that are often, but not always, arranged in predictable constellations. As the discussion below will demonstrate, the voice itself operates in a similar manner: not as a single attribute but as clusters of features that may or may not be combined in normative ways. In addition to showing variability within, as well as between, sex categories, the characteristics that constitute sex – and, by extension, the sexed voice – can be altered in any number of ways. This is true not only for trans and intersex people, but also for cis, non-intersex bodies which are the product of normative body-changing processes (puberty, pregnancy, hormonal birth control and hormone replacement therapy, menopause and ageing, exercise, diet, cosmetic surgery, etc.) and which show variation across populations as well as across sexes (in height, breast size, muscle mass, hair, fat distribution, etc.). What remains to be investigated is how this form of intra-gender variation plays out in the voice.

With none of these elements of sex forming a simple binary, and many of them fluid to some degree or another, a classification system that recognises only two types of bodies loses the gradations that might help us understand *how* sex shapes the gendered voice.

Gender

Part of how sex and gender are naturalised is through the appearance of total continuity between an individual's body, identity, style of presentation, and how they are perceived by others. However, the study of non-normative genders requires a distinction between different elements of gender and sex that goes beyond what is typically found in sociolinguistic research. In addition to the complexity of bodily sex, people also have an 'assigned sex/gender', which represents the category they were placed in at (or before) birth.[2] People often refer to trans people's gender assignment as their 'biological sex'; however, such usage naturalises the process of binary gender assignment, implies that sex is immutable and fixed at birth, and ignores cases in which a person is assigned to a binary gender despite having an intersex body. Gender assignment is designed to determine 'gender role', which refers to the culturally and institutionally recognised social roles a person can occupy. Gender role is typically what changes for trans people in their transition, regardless of whether medical technology is employed. Even non-binary individuals may shift from one binary gender role to another without necessarily identifying with either binary gender. Gender role is difficult to define exhaustively, but it can involve self-presentation (e.g. the choice of a name), institutional recognition (e.g. identification documents), the use of gendered public spaces (e.g. restrooms), the language used by others (e.g. third-person pronouns), and other ways people are sorted into one gender category or another. Gender role, then, is based in part on the recognition of others, and it is for this reason that the primary struggle non-binary people encounter with respect to this aspect of gender is whether more than two roles can or should be recognised/able. 'Gender identity', on the other hand, refers to the category/ies with which a person self-identifies; as female, male, trans, non-binary, and so on. Gender assignment, role, and identity can be combined in any number of ways – for instance, a person might have been assigned female at birth, identify as non-binary, and live in a male gender role in cases where their non-binary identity is not recognised. A final dimension of gender that must be distinguished from the others identified here is 'gender presentation' or 'expression'. Gender expression captures the semiotic resources an individual deploys such as clothing, hairstyle, and makeup choices, gendered linguistic practices, and bodily hexis (gesture, posture, gait, etc.). Gender presentation is often taken as an index of gender identity or sexual orientation, but clearly not all (straight) women express normative femininity and not all (straight) men are normatively masculine, whether they are cis or trans. Nor can non-binary people be anticipated to have any particular gender presentation. These distinctions between different elements of gender and sex take on critical importance when gender diversity is in focus, but they also provide greater explanatory power in our theorisation of how and why normative phonetic gender differences arise. For these reasons, the community-specific model I introduce based on ethnographic fieldwork in trans communities may prove to be useful in the study of cisgender voices as well.

This multidimensional model of sex and gender is sketched out in Table 5.1, which summarises each of the elements I have discussed. It is worth noting that other aspects of identity can be subjected to similar divisions – for instance, a multidimensional model of

Table 5.1 Dimensions of sex and gender

Gender	Assignment	Categorisation (generally binary) made at birth based on recognised social categories.
	Role	Socially and/or institutionally recognised gender categories within a given culture.
	Identity	Self-identification as female, male, non-binary, trans, etc.
	Presentation/expression	The collection of semiotic resources a person displays that together index gender.
Sex	Chromosomes	Categorical but non-binary combinations of X and Y chromosomes (XX, XY, XXY, XYY, XØ, etc.).
	Hormones	The collective levels of an array of hormones including (but not limited to) testosterone, oestrogen, and progesterone.
	Anatomy	Internal and external anatomy, including reproductive organs and genitals.
	Other?	Other/more fine grained embodied gender difference (e.g. in the larynx).

sexuality might distinguish erotic desire, romantic desire, self-identified labels, and community membership.

By teasing apart different elements of sex and gender, a model such as this one demands more precision from analysts, which pushes us to make explicit our assumptions and hypotheses about *how* sex and gender, along with other aspects of identity, shape the voice.

Research on gender and the voice

The gendered voice – like the sex of the body – is often treated as a single dimension despite the fact that it is composed of a number of distinguishable features. Most phonetic research on gender and the voice assumes that differences between women's and men's voices emanate directly from the anatomical consequences of membership in one of two sex categories (see Zimman 2018 for a more in-depth review). Scholars of language, gender, and sexuality, however, have long pushed back against the idea of gender as an innate, natural, or biological phenomenon and advocated a constructivist understanding of the gendered voice. This began in early research in the field, which called attention to androcentric assumptions and the importance of childhood socialisation in developing a normatively gendered voice (e.g. Henton 1989; McConnell-Ginet 1983; Sachs 1975). More recently, studies of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and queer voices have made clear that not all men embody norms for 'male voices' and not all women exhibit the features attributed to 'female speakers' (e.g. Munson 2007; Podesva 2007). A constructivist model treats phonetic gender differences as culture-specific, non-binary, flexible, and intersectional. Importantly, constructivist approaches to gender do not maintain that the body is irrelevant. Instead, 'biology' is seen as always filtered through some sort of cultural lens and never completely separable from social practices.

A good example is fundamental frequency (or F0), which represents the speed of vocal fold vibration and roughly corresponds to the concept of pitch. As the most salient and intuitive gender difference in the voice, pitch tends to differ substantially between cisgender women and men, with much of this difference apparently arising in puberty (Hollien et al. 1994). Changing testosterone levels drive this differentiation in normative populations; the hormone also has a marked effect on trans speakers who use it for physical masculinisation (Azul et al. 2016 for a review; Zimman 2017a). Among speakers of American English, average speaking fundamental frequency is generally placed at around 100–120 Hz for men and 200–220 Hz for women (e.g. Simpson 2009). However, it is clear that sociocultural factors also exert a significant influence on the way women and men use pitch. The size of the gap between women's and men's average pitch differs across languages, with Japanese-speaking women famously maintaining a higher pitch than their English-speaking counterparts even as Japanese-speaking men use lower pitch than English-speaking men (e.g. Loveday 1981; Yuasa 2008). Furthermore, these differences tend to arise in childhood, before sex differences in the vocal anatomy appear (Ferrand and Bloom 1995; Hasek et al. 1980). While physiology constrains the types of voices speakers can produce, they have access to a far larger range of voice types than they typically employ, at least when voicing themselves. This research demonstrates that a purely biological account of gender differences in the voice is untenable.

While sex differences in the vocal anatomy clearly impact pitch to some degree or another, other gender differences in the voice seem to be driven more strictly by articulatory practice. /s/ is the most widely-studied segment in the sociophonetics of gender and sexuality in both a variety of English dialects (Bekker and Levon 2017; Campbell-Kibler 2011; Heffernan 2004; Holmes-Elliott and Levon 2017; Podesva and van Hofwegen 2016; Stuart-Smith 2007; Zimman 2017b) and other languages (e.g. Bekker and Levon 2017 on Afrikaans; Chappell 2016, Pharao et al. 2014 on Danish; Walker et al. 2014; and Zimman 2017b on Spanish). Acoustic measures for /s/ generally identify the most prominent frequencies, often in the form of a weighted mean frequency, with higher values associated with femininity. Differences in the frequencies present in /s/ depend in large part on where the tongue is placed within the mouth (Fuchs and Toda 2010). When the tongue is placed further forward in the mouth, it typically results in a higher frequency turbulent sound that might be described by non-linguists as 'lispy'. Several studies have suggested or argued that gender differences in /s/ are at least partly physiological (Flipsen et al. 1999, Fuchs and Toda 2010), but Zimman's (2017b) analysis of trans men with a particularly wide range of /s/ production challenges the viability of this supposition by showing that members of the 'same sex' can produce /s/ in ways that cover the full range reported for either women or men.

Studies of /s/ among presumed cisgender speakers also offer substantial evidence that gender differences in this sound have little, if anything, to do with anatomical difference. Heffernan (2004) shows that gender differences in /s/ are more robust among speakers of Canadian English than speakers of Japanese, which is notably a reversal of the pattern for pitch. Fuchs and Toda (2010), though focused on gender, found larger differences between Britons and Germans than between women and men of either group. Flipsen and colleagues (1999) report evidence of gender differences in /s/ among prepubescent children, and Stuart-Smith's (2007) analysis of /s/ in Glasgow shows that class predicted whether preteen girls produced the sibilant in ways more similar to adult women or adult men (see also Holmes-Elliott and Levon 2017). Other studies have identified connections to dialect or geography (Campbell-Kibler 2011; Podesva and van Hofwegen 2016; Stuart-Smith 2007), race or racialised citizenship status (Bekker and Levon 2017; Pharao et al. 2014), and sexuality (Munson 2007; Zimman 2013). When differences between /s/ among 'women' and 'men' are discussed, however, it is usually under the unspoken assumption that these categories represent socially unmarked – i.e. white, middle-class, straight, cisgender, gender-normative – women and men.

Disputes over the origins of gender differences in /s/ provide an opportunity to illustrate how trans speakers contribute something to the study of the voice that cisgender speakers alone cannot. For this reason, /s/ has attracted the attention of several researchers investigating transgender speech. Zimman (2015, 2017b) addresses the variability in the production of /s/ among trans masculine people in the San Francisco Bay Area and argues for a finer-grained theory of gender, including some – but not all – of the aspects of gender presented in Table 5.1. Podesva and van Hofwegen's (2016) analysis of /s/ in rural northern California places both trans women and trans men in relation to cis speakers to illustrate a continuum of gender normativity. In contrast to Zimman's focus on variability and queerness among trans masculine speakers, Podesva and van Hofwegen find that trans speakers produced /s/ in ways that were mostly similar to cis people of the same gender (i.e. trans women were similar to cis women and trans men to cis men), but ultimately both groups fell in-between the two cisgender identities. Hazenberg's (2016) analysis of /s/ among trans people in Canada similarly places binary-identified trans people in-between cisgender women and men. Together, these studies demonstrate that gender identity is not the only social factor driving gender-based variation in /s/ and that a finer-grained model of gender may be needed to understand why groups of trans women and trans men would fall somewhere between cisgender women and men without resorting to biological determinism or invalidating trans identities.

The analysis presented below builds on previous studies in a few ways. First, it includes a wider range of trans identities, including trans women, trans men, and non-binary individuals (both female-assigned and male-assigned). Second, while previous studies that included both women and men have generally focused on inter-group differences, the present analysis also looks at differences within categories in order to understand what might drive variation on an intra-gender basis. Finally, while Zimman (2015) sketched out different aspects of gender that are relevant for trans speakers, this chapter adds to that model and tests how a multidimensional model of gender might be used in a quantitative analysis.

From theory to analysis

As an illustration of how a multidimensional model of gender might be employed to examine a diverse set of gender identities, the remainder of this chapter focuses on an analysis of /s/ in a group of English-speaking transgender people recorded between 2010 and 2014 in and around San Francisco, CA and Portland, OR.

Methods

This analysis builds on previous work presented by Zimman (2015, 2017b), in which /s/ was compared among 15 trans masculine speakers, including transgender men and non-binary individuals who were assigned female at birth (AFAB). These speakers were recorded as part of a two-year ethnographic study in 2010–2012 in the San Francisco Bay Area focused on changes in the voices of trans masculine people starting testosterone therapy. These data are supplemented by the addition of 17 trans feminine speakers, including trans women and non-binary individuals who were assigned male at birth. These speakers were interviewed in Portland, Oregon in 2014.

This study employs a range of methods, including ethnographic fieldwork, sociolinguistic interviews, and acoustic analysis of read speech. Triangulating these approaches provides a range of benefits. Ethnography involves the establishment of long-term relationships with research subjects through participant-observation in their everyday activities. Ethnography is particularly useful for providing a culturally grounded account of quantitative analysis. It can also shed light on individual differences within a population, which will become particularly important in the discussion below. At the same time, the analysis of controlled speech genres, like read passages, can provide another set of insights. First, read speech largely controls for the content of what is said, the kinds of stances speakers are able to take, and the phonetic context of each token of a sound. This allows for a direct, equivalent comparison of /s/ produced by different speakers. Second, read speech is thought to elicit greater linguistic self-monitoring than extemporaneous speech (e.g. Labov 1972). As a result, reading a passage serves as an opportunity for a speaker to project a desirable sociolinguistic image. This idea has historically been invoked in research on standardised and stigmatised linguistic variants, but the same principle may shape the gendered styles speakers produce. The comparison of gender differences across discourse contexts will be an important area of future investigation. For now, the analysis of read speech offers a view of what speakers are able and willing to do when it comes to enacting a desired gendered style.

The acoustic and statistical methods followed here are the same as those used in Zimman (2017b), in which tokens of word-initial /s/ were extracted from productions of the Rainbow Passage that had been filtered to remove frequencies below 1,000 Hz and above 13,000 Hz (see also Stuart-Smith 2007). Centre of gravity (COG) – a weighted mean frequency – was calculated as an average across the duration of each token of /s/ using Praat's automated moments analysis function. Linear mixed effects regression models were constructed to examine the relationship between /s/, gender assignment, and gender identity. In these models, gender identity (F, M, or NB) and gender assignment (AFAB or AMAB) were treated as fixed effects while speaker and word were random effects. ANOVAs (analysis of variance) were also carried out using Tukey HSD (honestly significant difference) post-hoc analyses to explore group-based differences. Further distinctions based on sexuality and gender role experience are introduced in the discussion of results.

Speakers

This analysis presents results from 32 transgender speakers, 15 of whom were assigned female at birth (AFAB) and 17 of whom were assigned male (AMAB). The speakers' self-described gender identities, assignments, and sexualities are represented in Table 5.2. Among the AMAB speakers, 12 identified as women and 5 with a non-binary category. Among the AFAB speakers, nine identified as men and six as non-binary. Table 5.2 also reports the self-identified sexual orientations of speakers. However, the number of speakers per cell were too small and imbalanced to include sexuality in the statistical analysis of this sample. Notably, some combinations of sexualities and genders are unlikely to pair together, e.g. straight and non-binary.

Table 5.2 Number of speakers by gender assignment, identity, and sexuality

	AMAB		*AFAB*	
	Women	*Non-binary*	*Men*	*Non-Binary*
Straight	1	0	3	0
Queer[3]	5	5	4	6
Both straight and queer	0	0	2	0
Lesbian	6	0	0	0
Total	**12**	**5**	**9**	**6**

In terms of other identities, most speakers were between the ages of 20 and 35, though a few were in their 40s (three trans men), 50s (one trans woman), and 60s (one trans woman). The non-binary speakers were all under the age of 33. Almost all of the participants described themselves as white, with two identifying as Latinx[4] (both AMAB non-binary individuals), one as Native American (the straight trans woman), and one as Filipino (one of the straight/queer trans men). All were native speakers of American English, save one AFAB non-binary speaker who grew up in Spain and acquired a standardised Southern British English variety from his mother. Self-reported socioeconomic class is varied in this sample, but its assessment is complicated by the rampant employment discrimination trans people experience (Grant et al. 2011). Based on the literature review above, identities other than gender and sexuality are undoubtedly important for understanding these speakers. However, the analysis presented below underscores the fact that the gendered elements of our accounts alone must be complexified.

Results and discussion: interspeaker analysis

The results of the linear mixed effects regression analysis indicate that centre of gravity for /s/ differs according to both gender identity and gender assignment in this sample. As Table 5.3 shows, the intercept estimate of 8,459 Hz for the trans women was estimated as being 1,827 Hz lower for the trans men ($b=-1827$, $SE=680$, $t=-2.69$) and 199 Hz lower for non-binary speakers when all of the non-binary speakers are lumped together without regard to assigned sex ($b=-199$, $SE=474$, $t=-0.42$). Speakers who were assigned male at birth were also estimated as a whole to have a lower COG than the female-assigned speakers ($b=-1736$, $SE=563$, $t=-3.08$); however, as the more detailed analysis to follow demonstrates, this difference was driven largely by the non-binary speakers. Notably, given the intercept of 8,459 Hz for the women and 6,632 Hz for the men, both AFAB and AMAB speakers display a relatively high frequency /s/ relative to reference values reported for ‘women’ (6,400–8,500 Hz) and ‘men’ (4,000–7,000 Hz) in studies of American English using comparable methods (Zimman 2017b).

The group-based (ANOVA) comparisons indicate that the trans women, the trans men, and the male-assigned non-binary speakers all had lower centres of gravity than the non-binary individuals who were assigned female at birth ($p<0.001$ in each case). There was no statistically significant difference between the trans women and the trans men, the trans women and the AMAB non-binary speakers, or the trans men and the AMAB non-binary speakers. Tables 5.4 and 5.5 contain results from the ANOVA model, which uses a collapsed variable for gender identity and assignment in order to facilitate group-by-group comparisons.

Figure 5.1 shows the results for centre of gravity according to gender grouping. The figures, like the ANOVAs, sort speakers into four categories based on the intersection of

Table 5.3 Results of linear regression Model #1

	Estimate	*Standard error*	*t value*
Intercept	8459.3	629.6	13.436
Gender identity (male)	–1826.7	680.1	–2.686
Gender identity (non-binary)	–198.5	473.9	–0.419
Gender assignment (AMAB)	–1735.8	563.2	–3.082

Table 5.4 Results of ANOVA Model #1

	Degrees of freedom	*Sum of squares*	*Mean squares*	*F value*	*Pr(>F)*
Combined gender identity and gender assignment	3	155168252	51722751	44.68	p<0.001 ***
Residuals	447	517436749	1157577		

Table 5.5 Results of Tukey HSD post-hoc testing on ANOVA Model #1

Group	*Versus*	*Difference*	*Lower*	*Upper*	*Adjusted p*
NB (AFAB)	Men	1628	1222	2034	0.000 ***
NB (AMAB)	Men	–108	–514	298	0.903
Women	Men	85	–231	401	0.9
NB (AMAB)	NB (AFAB)	–1736	–2205	–1267	0.000 ***
Women	NB (AFAB)	–1543	–1937	–1150	0.000 ***
Women	NB (AMAB)	193	–201	586	0.588

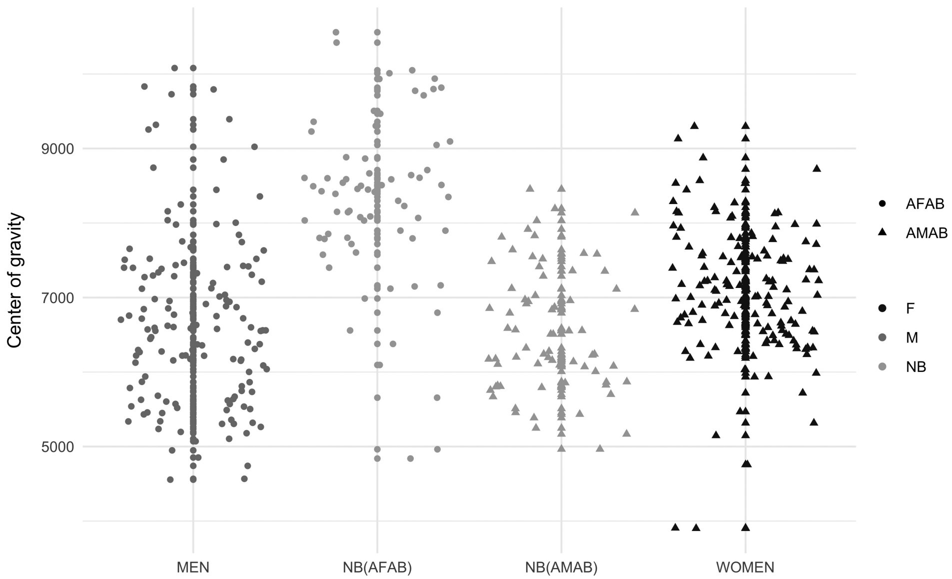

Figure 5.1 Mean centre of gravity for /s/ by gender grouping (by group). For more legible, color plots, visit http://www.lalzimman.com/GenderDiversityPlots.

gender assignment and identity: trans male, AFAB non-binary, AMAB non-binary, and trans female. Most of the findings are well represented in this image: the AFAB non-binary speakers tend to be higher than the trans men and the AMAB speakers tend to be lower than the AFAB speakers. The AMAB non-binary speakers also have a narrower distribution than the trans women speakers, perhaps due to the smaller number of speakers in the former group.

These results indicate that both gender assignment and gender identity matter. When it comes to gender assignment, it seems that the socialisation experiences trans people have early in life may exert an influence on their sociolinguistic styles in adulthood. That said, it is worth highlighting that this difference is driven in large part by the non-binary speakers, given that there is no statistically significant difference between the trans women and the trans men. The fact that the trans women and men fall into the same range and that the trans men were significantly different from the non-binary AFAB speakers, demonstrates that gender identity is important as well. Speakers do not mechanistically enact the gender norms ascribed to them; there is some room for individuals to push back against or reject the socialisation messages they receive. After all, trans people are defined as those who do not identify with the gender that their socialisation experiences were, as a whole, designed to produce. As Butler (1990) and other poststructuralist feminists have argued, agency and resistance against the gender order can be observed in the endless iterations of gender that one must perform, creating the possibility for those iterations to shift gender in new directions. In this sense, the potential for individual agency can be observed through the analysis of the gendered practices in which gender diverse speakers engage.

Although the trans women speakers tend to have relatively high centres of gravity for /s/, there is a cluster of tokens in the data from trans women that fall on the low end of these data, far lower than any of the speakers from the other groups, including the AMAB non-binary individuals. There is similarly a grouping of tokens produced by trans men that are much higher than the majority of their productions, on a par with tokens from the high end of the AFAB non-binary individuals. The distribution of data within the gender categories – particularly among the binary-identified trans people – warrants further investigation.

Results and discussion: intragroup analysis

The discussion so far has accounted for two aspects of the gender model delineated above – gender assignment and gender identity – but we have not yet discussed gender expression, gender role, or the issue of sexual orientation. These factors become important for the analysis of variation within each gender group. Since gender assignment and identity have already been demonstrated to be important, speakers are split here according to assignment, which best facilitates an intragroup comparison according to the other dimensions of gender, each of which influences speakers' relationships to the norms assigned to them at birth.

Figure 5.2 shows the centre of gravity for /s/ among the 15 AFAB speakers. Gender identity is indicated by grey for non-binary speakers and black for trans men. Sexual orientations represented in this group are indicated by shape, with circles for participants who identified as queer, squares for participants who identified as straight, and triangles for speakers who described themselves as both straight and queer. Speakers are ordered from lowest to highest mean COG.

Both sexual orientation and gender identity are important for explaining the variation in Figure 5.2. The three strictly straight-identified AFAB participants in this study also have the three lowest mean centres of gravity. The fourth and fifth lowest COGs belong to the two men who identified as both straight (by virtue of their attraction to women) and queer (by virtue of their gender and history). Figure 5.2 also illustrates the intersection of gender identity and sexuality, as all the straight speakers were – unsurprisingly – male-identified. The three straight men, along with one of the straight/queer men, were the only AFAB speakers to have means below the range typically reported for English speaking women (i.e.

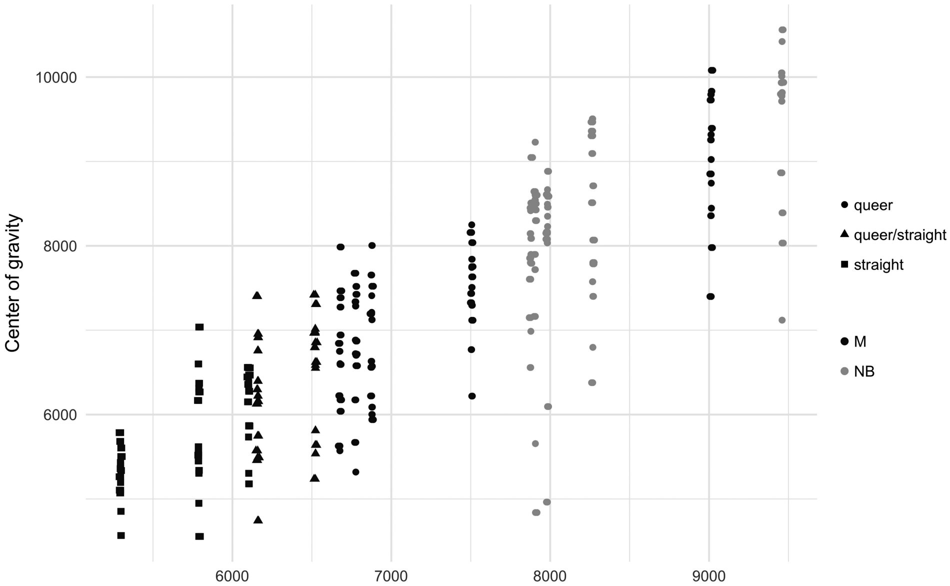

Figure 5.2 Mean centre of gravity for /s/ (AFAB speakers). See http://www.lalzimman.com/GenderDiversityPlots.

6,400–8,500 Hz), with the other straight/queer speaker following close behind with a mean of 6,522 Hz. The non-binary speakers, by contrast, all had means at or above 8,000 Hz.

Gender expression also becomes key in explaining the one male-identified speaker with a particularly high frequency /s/. This speaker, Dave, is a fem man; that is, while he identifies as a man rather than non-binary, both self-description and ethnographic observation make clear that his gender expression is not normatively masculine by the standards of his surrounding communities. Over the year we spent together, I heard Dave refer to himself as 'faggy', 'queeny', and 'flamboyant', an image he conveys linguistically through his use of a broad pitch range, plentiful falsetto and creak (Podesva 2007), and a generally expressive and engaging interactional style. His fem presentation is also constructed through his style of clothing (brightly coloured, form-fitting, body-revealing), adornment (make-up, jewellery, fingernails), and, in the context of Dave's participation in local BDSM/fetish communities, gear that is typically used or worn by women (corsets, high-heeled boots).

The trans women and male-assigned non-binary speakers, who are plotted in Figure 5.3, provide another set of insights. Like the trans masculine participants in this study, the trans feminine speakers are divided into two gender identities – female (black) and non-binary (grey) – and three sexual orientations – in this case, queer (triangles), straight (squares), and lesbian (circles).

While the trans masculine speakers showed a fairly clean division between binary and non-binary participants, the pattern is more variable in the trans feminine case. The AMAB non-binary speakers do tend to have lower centres of gravity than the trans women, but two non-binary speakers are positioned in the higher ranges along with trans women. Similarly, the two lowest centres of gravity come from trans women rather than non-binary individuals. Sexuality, too, is hard to read from this particular sample because there was only one straight-identified trans woman in the study, though she did turn out to have among the

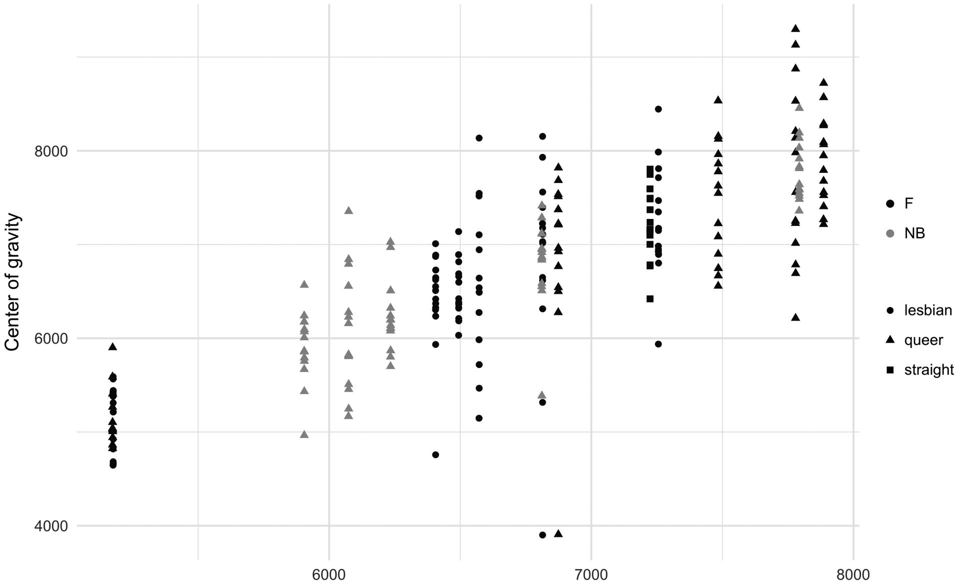

Figure 5.3 Mean centre of gravity for /s/ (AMAB speakers).

highest centres of gravity among the AMAB speakers. However, gender role turns out to be salient as an explanatory factor for the only two trans women whose mean centre of gravity falls below the normative female range of 6,400 to 8,100 Hz. There is a large gap in Figure 5.3 between these two speakers' means of 5,176 Hz and 5,905 Hz, and those of the three next lowest frequency trans women, all of whom have means of approximately 6,500 Hz. However, these two speakers also differ from the others in a particularly significant way: their relationship with their gender role.

The lowest COG in this study belongs to Erika, who identifies as a trans women but who lives in a male social role and is only out as trans to a select group of intimates. In our interview, Erika spoke at length about the barriers that kept her from transitioning, one of which was her concern about whether she could 'pass' as a woman because of her large body frame, shape, and other physical markers that might undermine her ability to be read as a woman. She also specifically mentioned her voice as a potential obstacle. Even though this speaker identifies as a woman, her day-to-day experiences – including the dynamics in her relationships with loved ones – still pressure her to present and comport herself in a masculine way. The interactional goal of being perceived as a woman is not one Erika is attending to the way other trans women in this study are, shifting the kinds of motivations that might shape the gendered styles she adopts. The fact that Erika sees her voice as 'too masculine' to transition could even introduce an ironic motivation *not* to feminise her voice, since her perception of her voice as masculine affirms the choice she has made not to transition, thereby potentially mitigating anxiety or depression about such a difficult – if not heartbreaking – choice. Although we cannot know with certainty what motivates any individual, it is clear that the context of living as a man despite identifying as a woman provides a different set of limitations and affordances than pursuing a gender role transition.

The importance of gender role and its relationship to gender expression is further highlighted by Katherine, the other trans woman with a particularly low centre of gravity. Unlike Erika, Katherine has transitioned. However, at 63 years old at the time of our interview, Katherine is the oldest participant in this study by 10 years. Katherine also transitioned fairly late in life, before which she had lived and presented herself as a fairly conventional straight man. In this sense, her experience with her gender role was, until recently, similar to Erika's: both occupied masculine gender roles for the majority of their lives, both formed ostensibly heterosexual relationships with women, and both appeared to be gender normative men from the outside. Erika and Katherine's experience with their assigned gender role differs from that of Ethan, a trans man in his late 40s who was the oldest female-assigned participant in this sample, and Adam, who was the second oldest AFAB participant at 40. Although Ethan and Adam did not begin their formal transitions until well into adulthood, they had always had predominantly masculine gender presentations, formed ostensibly lesbian relationships with women, and before their transitions had been perceived as visibly queer, gender non-conforming females. This helps to explain why Ethan and Adam have the lowest (*most* gender normative) /s/ among the AFAB speakers while Erika and Katherine have the lowest (*least* gender normative) /s/ among the AMAB speakers.

Given that Erika and Katherine are the only trans women to have had these kinds of experiences, and that equivalent experiences are not represented among the trans men in this study, a second statistical run was performed in order to consider whether group-based differences might be altered by the inclusion or exclusion of trans women who had spent so long occupying a normative male gender role. This should not be taken as a replacement for the results discussed above, but rather as another perspective on how these data might look if the sample were better controlled for gender role experiences.

In the second statistical run, both gender identity and assignment still exert a large influence on centre of gravity. As we would expect, the effect size for gender identity is larger both in the comparison between the trans women and the trans men ($b=-1736$ in Model 1, $b=-2144$ in Model 2) and between the trans women and the non-binary AMAB speakers ($b=-199$ in Model 1, $b=-516$ in Model 2). The effect of gender assignment is largely unchanged (Table 5.6).

More dramatically, the second ANOVA model indicates statistically significant differences between almost all of the gender groups considered here; the only pairing not to show a significant difference was the trans men and the male-assigned non-binary speakers. Tables 5.7 and 5.8 present the results of the second model and post-hoc testing in the same format as Tables 5.4 and 5.5. The bolded rows indicate a change from the previous model. The group-based comparison performed by the Tukey HSD tests indicate that the previously significant differences between the AFAB non-binary speakers and each of the other three groups remain. Additionally, the trans women's COGs are now significantly higher

Table 5.6 Results of linear regression Model #2

	Estimate	*Standard error*	*t value*
Intercept	8776	569.9	13.399
Gender identity (male)	–2144	610.7	–3.511
Gender identity (non-binary)	–516	431.8	–1.194
Gender assignment (AMAB)	–1736	498.6	–3.481

Table 5.7 Results of ANOVA Model #2

	Degrees of freedom	*Sum of squares*	*Mean squares*	*F value*	*Pr(>F)*
Combined gender identity and gender assignment	3	145940077	48646692	47.3	p < 0.001 ***
Residuals	419	430944134	1028506		

Table 5.8 Results of Tukey HSD post-hoc testing on ANOVA Model #2

Group	*Versus*	*Difference*	*Lower*	*Upper*	*Adjusted p*
NB (AFAB)	Men	1628	1222	2034	0.000 ***
NB (AMAB)	Men	–108	–514	298	0.903
Women	**Men**	**395**	**84**	**706**	**0.006 ***
NB (AMAB)	NB (AFAB)	–1736	–2205	–1267	0.000 ***
Women	NB (AFAB)	–1234	–1615	–852	0.000 ***
Women	**NB (AMAB)**	**502**	**121**	**884**	**0.004 ***

Bold text indicates statistically significant comparisons present in Model 2 but not Model 1.

than those of either the trans men (diff = 395, p < 0.006) or the male-assigned non-binary individuals (diff = 502, p = 0.004), though the magnitudes of difference were relatively small in both cases, at least relative to the distance between the AFAB non-binary speakers and everyone else.

Of course, simply removing speakers from a sample on the basis of their difference is not an ideal approach to understanding variation within the trans population. In this case, the speakers removed from the second model represent a very real subset of the trans community who adopt an outward appearance of gender normative cisgender identity, often even while internally identifying differently. These are *not* marginal subjects who fail to embody transness – for all we know, there are more trans people living in their assigned gender role than publicly transitioning. Instead, what these speakers make clear is that gender role and age of transition are important variables that should be accounted for when studying and modelling variation within trans communities. Their inclusion or exclusion has significant effects on the results of a study like this one. An important goal for future research will be to include large enough numbers of speakers to fully operationalise gender identity, assignment, presentation, and role. For now, a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis demonstrates how each of these elements contributes to an account of variation in /s/ in a sample of transgender women, men, and non-binary people.

To summarise, this analysis has demonstrated that both gender identity and gender expression are significant predictors of how this sample of trans speakers produce /s/. The male-assigned speakers tended to have lower centres of gravity for /s/ than the female-assigned speakers, suggesting a socialisation effect. However, there were also differences between the binary and non-binary speakers, indicating that gender identity differentiates speakers of the same assigned gender. Gender role was necessary to explain outliers among the AMAB speakers – two trans women who had spent most or all of their adult lives living in a normatively masculine role. Once gender role experiences were balanced by the exclusion of those two speakers, there were significant differences between almost every group considered here, with the sole exception of the comparison between trans men and male-assigned non-binary speakers. Notably, though, all of these speaker groups had relatively high centres of gravity for /s/ compared to reference values for straight, gender-normative cisgender men.

The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods has been crucial to address these questions about gender diversity and the voice. Quantitative acoustic measures are important to support claims about phonetic differences across groups of speakers. Acoustic measurements and statistical analysis provide solid grounding for socially informed observations about the voice, which is particularly important given that our auditory perceptions are shaped by our social expectations (e.g. Strand 1999). At the same time, the accumulation of ethnographic knowledge has been necessary for the construction of the models of sex and gender taken up in this analysis, and to account for exceptional cases. A purely quantitative approach would have missed the individual differences that led to a revised statistical model and ultimately a different set of results in which gender role was taken into account. The use of mixed methods may therefore be of particular usefulness for the study of voices at the margins of social categories, which can cause the breakdown of traditional models for identities like sex, gender, and sexuality.

Conclusion

This chapter has laid out a theory of sex and gender that complicates widely used methods and commonly held theoretical assumptions in sociophonetics by highlighting the multi-dimensionality of these aspects of the self. By distinguishing multiple elements of gender in this analysis – including the gender assigned to speakers at birth, the gender(s) with which speakers self-identify, the social role(s) in which speakers have or currently live(d), and the way speakers present their gender semiotically – it is possible to consider patterns in both inter- and intra-gender variation. In other words, this theory enables us to see broad gender category-based differences, but it also helps explain why not all members of those categories follow the overall trend. As we, as sociolinguists, increasingly include transgender speakers in our research, it is important to articulate more explicit, and more explicitly trans-inclusive, theories of how sex and gender operate on – and are produced through – the voice. To illustrate the usefulness of teasing apart different elements of gender, the analysis presented here focused on /s/ in a group of 32 transgender speakers with a varied set of gender identities, presentations, roles, and assignments. While previous analyses have distinguished gender identity and presentation, a wider variety of speakers included here illustrates further delineation based on gender assignment and gender role. Attending to gender diversity is particularly useful for investigating questions of how and why gender might influence a particular aspect of the voice. In this case, the results suggest that each element of gender – assignment, identity, presentation, and role – has a role to play in explaining the quite variable productions of /s/ among the trans speakers considered here.

When gender diversity is considered, even the categories of cisgender woman and man become complex, since gender presentation can vary considerably within those populations, as can the way people understand and relate to identities like ‘women’ or ‘men’. Even as our field opens up to include trans people of various sorts, it is important to find a place for gender non-conforming cisgender speakers as well. For instance, this model can help us achieve a better understanding of why some cisgender voices are perceived as ‘gay sounding’, and why this perception does not perfectly align with speakers' self-identification as gay (as Zimman 2013 explores). Given the way categories are defined in part through what they are *not*, a fuller picture of the boundaries and limits of gender categories is a crucial component of our understanding of gender.

The challenges posed by trans speakers run deep and push the field to question our most foundational assumptions about how and why sex/gender influences the voice. Trans speakers problematise our discipline's a priori division of voices into two categories on the basis of perceived sex and demand that we specify what we mean when we describe a voice as 'female' or 'male'. While the details of our models of gender may differ over time and across (social) space, what non-normatively gendered speakers underscore is that the female/male binary proves entirely too blunt an instrument for the study of gender in all its diverse forms.

Future directions

The study of gender diversity in the voice remains young, and there are a number of speaker populations, theoretical questions, and methodological changes that remain to be identified. One particularly promising theoretical issue is the role of individual agency over the gendered voice. Given that phonetic gender differences tend to be attributed to physiological sex, relatively little sociolinguistic research has considered the extent to which speakers can consciously shift the gendered qualities of the voice. In addition, more attention is needed to the way speakers construct their own agency and how those constructions might produce different patterns of language usage.

For example, Zimman (2016) discusses the way trans men on testosterone may reject the idea of intentionally masculinising their styles of speaking, instead depending on hormones to transform their vocal physiology. While these speakers may have the cognitive and/or vocal ability to change their speaking style, they see such practices as having problematic implications for the authenticity of their gender and/or their political stance towards gender non-normativity. Another, related, area for future investigation would focus on the degree of variation in features like vocal pitch across different interactional contexts. With analysis of read speech as a first step, it will be important to ask whether speakers maintain the same kinds of usage in interviews, conversations, and other kinds of interactions. Importantly, these questions must be approached cautiously because of their implications for trans populations and the ease with which trans identities have been delegitimated. The sensitivity of these issues makes the use of ethnographic methods particularly useful, since that approach necessarily involves a level of scepticism about and reflection on the researchers' own perspectives, assumptions, and positionalities. Other ethical safeguards that prioritise the empowerment of the communities we study, such as identifying opportunities for collaboration with non-academic community members, are also of critical importance.

Although the speakers included in this chapter represent a range of gender identities and expressions, there are other ways in which they fail to represent the diversity of transgender communities. Most notably, the majority participants included here were white young adults from urban and suburban parts of the United States. The most important direction for future work on transgender voices, then, is towards explorations of sex/gender in intersection with other dimensions of identity such as race/ethnicity, age, disability, class, politics, and speakers' native linguistic variety/ies. In my ongoing fieldwork in trans communities of colour, the way trans people are gendered is often very overtly caught up in the ways they are racialised; for instance, several African American trans men I have worked with describe sometimes being perceived as female by other Black people even while they are universally perceived as male by non–African Americans. This observation, which must be contextualised by racial ideologies about Black hyper-masculinity, also highlights the paucity of research on the production of gender difference in the voices of people of colour in general.

Another important area for future research is perception. As we learn more about the diverse ways gender is produced, we need parallel investigations into the way gender is perceived. In addition to considering how gender is perceived when speakers are trans or gender non-conforming, we need to learn about how trans and non-conforming people themselves perceive gender. Informal attempts to conduct gender perception experiments with trans listeners has at times engendered refusals to participate on the grounds that a person's gender is not determinable based on the voice. Investigating the effects of listeners' political orientation on the task of gender categorisation will help us understand the flexibility of the process of hearing gender and how social changes might produce different kind of linguistic and/or cognitive perceptions.

Finally, there is a need to connect linguistic research on trans speakers with the needs of trans communities. Much of the published research on trans people's voices is carried out by speech pathologists, who have an interest in the topic because some trans people – particularly those who wish to feminise their voices – seek out speech therapy as part of their transitions. However, much of this research offers problematic perspectives on the nature of the gendered voice while also pathologising and denaturalising trans people's identities. Culturally sensitive sociophonetic analyses can inform new approaches towards vocal change that might be more empowering for transgender communities. Far from a niche theoretical concern, the way the gendered voice is conceptualised – both in scholarly and public domains, both for trans and cis speakers – has real implications for the liveability of trans lives. We must consider how the gender of the voice acts as an arena for transphobia and how our field may inadvertently contribute towards the exercise of linguistic violence. If sociolinguists hope to benefit from the insight of trans speakers, to make linguistics a field that welcomes trans scholars, and to fulfil our ethical commitments to the communities we study, now is the time to reconsider our assumptions and discover new ways to advocate for sociolinguistic justice in a gender diverse world.

Notes

1 Not all non-binary individuals identify as 'trans' and some trans-identified people use the term to refer only to trans women or men. As the discussion in the following sections makes clear, 'transgender' is a word with a number of potential definitions. For the purposes of this chapter, I have adopted the more expansive option, which includes people who are non-binary as well as those who are binary-identified.

2 'Assigned sex' and 'assigned gender' are typically used interchangeably since the assignment process assumes that both sex and gender are identified at birth.

3 This category includes participants who identified as bisexual or pansexual (i.e. attracted to all genders), who also typically described themselves as queer.

4 'Latinx' is a gender-neutral replacement for Latina/o or Latin@ that includes non-binary as well as female and male identities.

Further reading

Simpson, A. P. (2009) 'Phonetic differences between male and female speech', *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 3, pp. 621–640.

Simpson provides an overview of research on gender differences in the voice that draws on constructivist approaches to language and gender. It also challenges some often-repeated claims about women's and men's voices, such as the notion that gender differences in formants are caused by differences in body size.

Stryker, S. and Whittle, S. (eds) (2006) *The transgender studies reader.* New York: Routledge.

Stryker, S. and Aizura, A. (eds) (2013) *The transgender studies reader*, vol. 2. New York: Routledge.

The two volumes of this reader are central texts in trans studies, making them an excellent starting point for linguists who are beginning to learn about or work with trans and otherwise non-normatively gendered speakers.

Zimman, L. (2018) 'Transgender voices: insights on identity, embodiment, and the gender of the voice', *Language and Linguistic Compass*, 12, p. e12284.

This article presents a brief overview of the kinds of questions transgender voices can help answer and the sociophonetic lessons to be gleaned from the existing research on trans people's speech.

Zimman, L. (forthcoming) 'Transgender', in Hall, K. and Barrett, R. (eds) *The Oxford handbook of language and sexuality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This paper synthesises three decades of research on transgender people's linguistic practices. It also sketches a framework, trans linguistics, that can be used for the empowerment and ethical study of language in trans communities.

Related topics

Non-binary approaches to gender and sexuality; perception of gender and sexuality; sexuality as non-binary: a variationist perspective; gender and sexuality normativities; an ethnographic approach to compulsory heterosexuality.

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Part II

Anthropological and ethnographic approaches

6

Ethnography and the shifting semiotics of gender and sexuality

Kira Hall and Jenny L. Davis (Part II leads)

Introduction

This chapter focuses on ethnography as a multi-method research approach in the study of language, gender, and sexuality. Based on the practice of long-term participatory fieldwork, the approach primarily originated within cultural and linguistic anthropology, where it remains the central anchor of research today. Yet, as seen in the following chapters in Part II, ethnography has also been taken up by scholars in diverse fields across the humanities and social sciences and shaped to fit the particularities of each discipline. Several recent collections have addressed the use of ethnography within language-oriented fields such as linguistic anthropology (Perrino and Pritzker forthcoming), linguistic ethnography (Snell, Shaw, and Copland 2015), and ethnography of communication (Kaplan-Weinger and Ullman 2015). Our overview focuses on the use of ethnography within the now robust tradition of research in the field of language, gender, and sexuality.

Our discussion highlights the ways that ethnography enables the analysis of semiosis – here defined as sign processes that produce social meaning – as embedded in social context. This approach is uniquely appropriate to the field's long-held understanding of gender and sexuality as intertwined social systems that are brought into being through everyday discursive practice. Although the development of this understanding is often traced to Butler's (1990) philosophical work on performativity, it is also evident in early language and gender scholarship informed by ethnography, including research on indexicality (Ochs 1992), language ideology (Gal 1989), and communities of practice (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992). The ethnographers who advanced these formative concepts, each in different ways, enabled the field's later uptake of Butler's work by countering sex-based generalisations with a dynamic vision of gender as produced in everyday discourse (for a review, see Hall, Borba, and Hiramoto 2021). Each stressed the crucial role played by social context in this production, establishing ethnography as a necessary partner to the analysis of discourse. In one of the chapters appearing in Part II, Philips, a leading ethnographer of language and social life, calls this partnership 'anthropological discourse analysis'. If gender is cultivated through community-based practice as a 'dynamic verb', as Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992: 462) argue in their early influential review, then ethnography is the approach for tracing those dynamics in discourse (on ethnography as a central approach in language, gender, and sexuality research, see Besnier and Philips 2014; Gaudio 2019; Hall 2009).

We have come together to co-author this discussion as two linguistic anthropologists who are deeply committed to what ethnography can bring to the social analysis of language, even as we acknowledge the important critiques made of the method by each new generation of scholars. In fact, ethnography is one of the 'most critiqued' methods in the social sciences, in part because it asks for a kind of reflexivity from the researcher that methods aspiring to a dominant model of scientific objectivity do not share. Today's ethnographers are trained to be suspicious of claims to objectivity, holding that all research – even research based purely in quantitative methods – is in some sense influenced by the position of the researcher. Certainly, our own positions as a 'native ethnographer' writing from the inside about Indigenous communities in the United States (e.g. Davis 2014, 2018, 2019) and a 'foreign ethnographer' writing from the outside about Hindi-speaking communities in India (e.g. Hall 2005, 2009, 2019) affects the kind of data we collect and the type of analysis we pursue. This reflexive awareness arises in the very act of doing fieldwork, whether in a village, at school, in front of the television, or online. In ethnography, researchers do not do *objective* observation, collecting specific pre-determined information from a detached vantage point; rather, they do *participant* observation, taking part in the everyday practices that are formative to the social, cultural, and linguistic behaviours they analyse. In the broad interdisciplinary study of language and society subsumed under sociocultural linguistics (Bucholtz and Hall 2008), these practices include the face-to-face interactions that are the focus of more traditional fieldwork alongside the digital interactions that pervade twenty-first-century social life. We are all participant observers of the media systems that surround us; an ethnographic sensibility makes this participation the subject of analysis.

This chapter advances an understanding of social context as situated in a specific time and place yet complexly informed by what came before and what exists elsewhere. This deep contextualisation is the hallmark of ethnography and, as we argue in the pages that follow, undergirds all phases of ethnographic activity, from collection and analysis to writing and dissemination. The term 'ethnography', in our view, comprises much more than simply 'describing a social group', as its Greek etymology (*ethno* 'social group' + *graphia* 'description', 'writing') may suggest. As a kind of describing that is based on the author's participation in the practices of others, ethnography refers to the process of research as well as its product, involving much more than narrowly defined tools for data collection. As researchers of language in social life, we have found it challenging to represent the dynamism of gender and sexuality in published work: How can we write about a specific time and place in a way that acknowledges the ongoing processual nature of that particularity? We suggest that ethnography offers an answer through its attention to the conceptual triad of practice, ideology, and theory. We draw from our own work and the excellent work featured in Part II to illustrate how ethnography, designed anew to encompass the heavily mediatised nature of contemporary sociality, enables researchers to assess how gender and sexuality come to matter in the semiotic exchange of everyday life.

Practice

The concept of practice runs deep in language, gender, and sexuality scholarship. Prominent lines of research assume Bourdieu's (1977) influential understanding of language as a practice that shapes, through repetition, a social actor's habitus, or way of being in the world.

Where the concept of practice has perhaps surfaced most robustly in the field is in research focused on 'communities of practice' – a term initially advanced by Lave and Wenger (1991) in their exposition of learning as a process of becoming a member of a sustained community. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's (1992) introduction of this model into language and gender scholarship countered broad-scale generalisations about women and men's language patterns found in early research in the field. In a community of practice view, links between language and gender are not merely a binary product of childhood language socialisation, as scholarship advocating a two-cultures understanding of gender often implied. Rather, these links are 'learned' throughout the life course as social actors become members of diverse communities that cultivate the relationship between language and gender differently.

Ethnographic research inspired by the community of practice tradition has convincingly shown that indexical knowledge – that is, knowledge of how linguistic forms are connected to social meanings – arises from sustained participation with others. In her research on uses of ethnic jokes by lesbian and transgender youth in Delhi, Hall (2019) identifies this kind of knowledge as 'indexical competence' to emphasise the exclusionary semiotic mastery that is required for localised forms of identity work (see also Parish and Hall 2021). The importance of this form of competence is amply illustrated by research on organisations of gender in educational youth environments such as high schools, institutions that are recognised in social scientific scholarship as vital sites of identity formation. Ethnographers entering these sites have explored the ways that competing youth communities ascribe social meaning to constellations of language, apparel, embodiment, and space as a means of achieving stylistic distinction (e.g. Bucholtz 2011; Eckert 2000; Mendoza-Denton 2008; Pichler 2009; Shankar 2008; Smalls 2018). Consider, for example, Bucholtz's (1999) influential account within language and gender studies of a community of female nerds at a Northern California high school. As the girls in her study engage with one another across multiple interactions, they learn to use and interpret hyper-standardised uses of the English language as indexical of a female nerd identity that opposes the perceived superficiality of more popular peers. Community members display nerd identity by demonstrating knowledge of these indexical relations and the ideologies that inform them.

The link between knowledge and practice is what makes ethnography, with its key component of participant observation, such an important approach for understanding the social analytics of language. A primary strength of ethnographically informed analysis is its attention to the ways that indexical relations are situated within time and space. Through longitudinal participation in situated communities, researchers can come to know the multiple, ever-shifting, and often competing indexical relations that give meaning to gender and sexuality. Scholars often comment on the paradoxical nature of participant observation: How can one be both a participant and an observer? But the term is paradoxical only within a perspective holding that observational knowledge must be detached from participation to escape bias. This perspective, still dominant across the social and natural sciences, is built on the premise that 'knowing' must exist independently from 'being' – that we can only know *about* the world when we refrain from participating *in* it (see discussion in Ingold 2014). However, community-based research in sociocultural linguistics has demonstrated that our understanding of how to use and interpret language ('knowing') is in fact cultivated through our everyday interactions with others ('being'). When cultural anthropologist McGranahan characterises ethnography as a 'unique way of knowing', she is speaking to the sensibility that derives from this cultivation: 'The ethnographic consists of the rhythms and logics through which we, in sociocultural groups, collectively make, and make sense of, the world' (2018: 2). In this respect, we are all participant observers, acquiring indexical knowledge as we engage with others through our bodies, minds, and senses. As a research method, participant observation is designed to approximate the learning process that takes place in everyday life, as lived experience.

Nevertheless, this approximation is always partial, given the ethnographer's peculiar investment in the learning process. Feminist anthropologists have argued for decades that the asymmetry between ethnographer and subject has consequences and requires care. Scholars in language, gender, and sexuality do not often display the self-reflection seen in certain genres of anthropological writing, yet the field's ongoing concern with power relations requires researchers to be attentive to biases that unavoidably pervade all stages of the research process, whether personal, cultural, or institutional. For instance, how might our own social backgrounds affect the kinds of things we notice in the field? How might our previous histories of knowing and being influence the way we analyse the data we collect? This attentiveness is precisely what is captured by the term 'reflexivity'. Ethnographers of language, as a special category of ethnographers, must also consider the semiotic biases that inform our entry into worlds of practice different from our own. How might our interpretations of language be influenced by life experiences in communities that view the relationship between linguistic form and social meaning differently? As Briggs (1986) argued over three decades ago when reflecting on his research among Spanish speakers in northern New Mexico, the assumptions academics may hold about communicative events as seemingly ubiquitous as the interview can lead us to ask the wrong kinds of questions and to draw interpretations that may inaccurately reflect the perspectives of those we write about.

It is for this reason that the feminist concept of intersectionality figures so prominently in ethnographically based research on language, gender, and sexuality (cf. Chun and Walters forthcoming; Cornelius 2020; Levon and Mendes 2016). Because identity is multiply constituted by engagement in diverse communities of practice, there can never be seamless congruence between a researcher's subjectivity and the subjectivity of the individuals under focus. Rather, as language-and-gender scholar Jacobs-Huey has pointed out, 'ethnographic fieldwork is an intersubjective process that entails an interaction of various subjectivities' (2002: 791). It is this acknowledgement of intersubjectivity that transforms ethnography into a feminist method, compelling us to see our interlocutors not as objects of study but rather partners in discovery. This brings us to the second concept we see as integral to ethnographic analysis, 'ideology'.

Ideology

In the course of our respective careers, we have each encountered colleagues in linguistics who view ethnographic work as 'narrow'. A recent event in one of our departments comes to mind, when a sociolinguistic presentation analysing over 14,000 tokens of the sound /s/ as used by a gender variant community was characterised as based on 'small data'. We counter with the following response: ethnography is big data. It is the kind of data that can be collected only by immersive participation over an extended period of time, often involving observation of hundreds or even thousands of hours of interaction. In fact, as Radin (2017) and Lemov (2017) point out, Big Data owes much to ethnography and the associated methods outlined in this chapter. Consider, for example, the Pima Indian Diabetes Dataset (PIDD) that now forms an integral part of the UC Irvine Machine Learning Repository responsible for testing data-mining algorithms (Radin 2017: 53) or the more than 300 hours of anthropological interviews with Hopi consultant Don C. Talayesva that are foundational to the web-based full-text database eHRAF World Cultures (Human Relations Area Files). The difference between big data and small data, then, is often more a matter of how the 'local' is acknowledged:

> What makes data "big" is not so much its size – though that is relevant too – but its ability to radically transcend the circumstances and locality of its production. Computers and algorithms make that possible, but understanding the politics of Big Data also requires attention to the creation and processing of the data itself, including the recognition that it often comes from living, breathing people.
>
> *(Radin 2017: 45–46)*

Because ethnographers of language and social life investigate the ways that linguistic forms and social meanings emerge within an array of practices that include consumption, cultural traditions, education, kinship relations, media, politics, and religion, there is nothing 'narrow' or 'small' about ethnography. On the contrary, ethnographers examine a situated aspect of semiotic practice in comprehensive detail as a means of discovering the historical, cultural, political, and interactional processes that invest language with social meaning in the (living, breathing) lives of those who use it.

To recall a well-cited phrase from Silverstein (1985), ethnographers seek to uncover the 'total linguistic fact' – that is, the dialectic interaction between linguistic form (structure), social use (practice), and human reflection on the meaning of those forms in use (ideology) (see also Woolard 2008). This totality makes ethnography time-intensive with respect to both data collection and analysis, so much so that it often disadvantages scholars in departments expecting rapid publication. And yet for an ethnographer, a focus on only one or two of these elements instead of three would betray the fundamental anthropological insight that relations between form and meaning are forged in 'situations of interested human use mediated by the fact of cultural ideology' (Silverstein 1985: 220). For ethnographers of language and social life, ideology is the glue that holds form and meaning together. When community members ascribe gendered meanings to a certain sign form – whether a phonetic variable, a taboo term, an intonational contour, or a movement of the body – they do so through appeal to local and broader ideologies that give sense to everyday life, that bring a logic to its messiness. Language ideologies are never really *just* about language; rather, they reflect the prejudices and privileges of the social systems in which they are situated.

Participant observation is often held up as the investigative practice that makes ethnography unique, but ethnography is inherently a mixed methodology. It involves a methodological complexity that is in many senses iconic of the complexity of social life (Blommaert 2007). While the field-based method of participant observation is the bedrock of ethnography, it is always used together with a variety of other methods (some specific to sociocultural linguistics; others associated with cultural anthropology or other fields), among them sociolinguistic interviews, archival research, media analysis, collaborations with field-based research partners, recording, transcription, translation, discourse analysis, and fieldnotes. The multifaceted methodologies that result from these combinations are designed to make the ideological bond between micro and macro discoverable. A central tenet of ethnography is that more information is always good information, particularly when taken from data sources that illuminate the focus of investigation from different spacetimes. For ethnographers of language, one of the most challenging aspects of this tenet is that the methods associated with this diversity may lead to contradictory findings regarding language use. For example, the method of sociolinguistic interviews may uncover ideas about language use that are not borne out in an analysis of actual language practice. It is in this disconnect that ideology is found.

A case in point comes from Hall's (1995) early dissertation research among Hindi-speaking hijras in northern India (see also Hall and O'Donovan 1996), a group whose members identify as *na mard na aurat*, 'neither man nor woman'. When conducting sociolinguistic interviews with members of the community, Hall repeatedly heard the refrain 'We *never* speak like men! We *always* address each other as women!'. Yet longitudinal participant observation of hijras' actual speech practices, coupled with discourse analysis, revealed that they did in fact often use masculine reference for each other and even for themselves. Why this disconnect between saying and doing?

For ethnographers of language, methods such as sociolinguistic interviews highlight the ideologies of language and society that background speakers' discursive behaviours. Further interviews revealed that hijras, most of whom were raised as boys, wished to distance themselves from the masculine representations of their youth. This stance was made stronger by society's unwillingness to address them in the feminine, which to them indicated a lack of respect. However, in actual language practice, a pattern emerged whereby these same hijras would use masculine self-reference among themselves when establishing relations of hierarchy. The disconnect between saying and doing is thus explained as the difference between a public-facing communal identity that distances itself from masculinity ('indirect indexicality', in Ochs's 1992 terminology) and an in-group practice-based identity that deploys masculine self-reference for certain conversational ends ('direct indexicality', in Ochs's 1992 terminology). Should Hall have stopped at the sociolinguistic interview she would not have seen the complexity of identification practices within the community, where hijras exploit broader indexical links between language and gender to take stances of hierarchy and solidarity. In fact, it was these shifting uses of gender morphology that enabled Hall to understand hijra positionality as non-binary.

Davis's work (2014, 2019) in a Native American Two-Spirit community in the western United States additionally illustrates how ethnography can explain a contradictory use of identity labels, in this case through a consideration of local vs. regional social contexts. In her fieldwork, Davis encountered several instances in which individuals identifying as Two-Spirit (Native Americans who are spiritually both male and female) simultaneously used and contested a variety of terms for their identity, among them 'gay', 'trans', and 'queer'; 'Two-Spirit'; and tribally specific terms such as *nadlé* (taken from Diné/Navajo). Multi-sited discourse analysis revealed seemingly contradictory transcripts, both within single events and across multiple discourse events, in which terms used as synonymous in some instances were used with different meanings in others. Davis argues that these terms are contextually polysemous: their meanings change based on factors that include the audience's presumed knowledge (or lack thereof) of Indigenous cultures in North America as well as discourse uses of micro- and macro-categories with which Two-Spirit identity might be compared.

As in Hall's research, the disconnect between ideology and practice becomes most visible in moments when language use appears to contradict community members' previous statements. Consider, for example, Brent's discussion of his use of these different terms, which he shared with peers in a regional Two-Spirit group (Excerpt 1):

Excerpt 1

Brent:	that is actually one of the biggest misconceptions.
	on on the reservations
	(.3)
	all these tribes actually had names for for Two-Spirit
	people.
	but how people see them as
	just like ‘oh they just mean gay’ but there is a deeper
	root
James:	((cough))
Brent:	um that um for nadhle.
	I’m sorry I say nadhle more than I say Two-Spirit cause
	I (hhh)’m just stubborn that way
TS Group:	((laughter))

Brent’s justification for using ‘nadhle’ (‘cause I’m just stubborn that way’; Lines 11–12) indexes a belief that community-specific terms are more automatic or even more ‘natural’ for Native Americans than the term ‘Two-Spirit’. His reluctance to use the more generalised term echoes Epple’s critique of the broad academic use of terms such as ‘berdache’, ‘gay’, and even ‘Two-Spirit’, which in her view lack cultural and temporal grounding: ‘current analytical concepts simply do not accommodate the simultaneous distinctness (identity as nádleehí [plural]) and fluidity (identity as context-dependent) of nádleehí’s self-descriptions’ (1998: 268). It is perhaps for this reason that when group members offered accounts in a formal presentation of specific historical figures now included under the Two-Spirit umbrella, they referred to such figures as ‘Two-Spirit’ even as they used the term specific to that individual’s tribal affiliation: for instance, *winkte* (Lakhota), *nadhle* (Dine), and *lhamana* (Zuni). Individuals in the group were thus very attentive to using the appropriate local designation for historical figures as well as for themselves and other group members.

However, it is important to note that these tribally specific terms were asserted in a regional, multi-tribal Two-Spirit group, not in a local organisation comprised of individuals from a single Nation. Participant observation combined with the analysis of discourse in varied settings revealed that these same group members strongly identified as Two-Spirit in ways that were relevant to their daily lives. The importance placed on local Indigenous identity labels in the above example in no way contradicts the appropriateness of the Two-Spirit label as another facet of these speakers’ identities. In fact, the mutual dependence of local and multi-tribal terms could be observed in their formal presentations precisely because the presenters were recognised as holding multiple forms of identification that crossed local and regional lines.

The above examples taken from our respective fieldwork sites illustrate what can be gained by combining participant observation with more specifically linguistic methods such as sociolinguistic interviews and multi-sited discourse analysis. Identity claims are never simple; like all features of language, they emerge from complex social processes that inevitably bring semiotic instability. The digital recordings that constitute the gold standard of sociocultural linguistic data collection are important, but as static snapshots of a much longer discursive history, they are never enough. At the same time, they are sometimes not even necessary, as demonstrated by the rich linguistic insights offered by ethnographers who are asked to refrain from using this method due to a community’s marginalisation, as seen in Borba's (2018) work on Brazilian sex workers and Gaudio's (2019) work on Nigerian 'yan daudu. Although rarely highlighted in language, gender, and sexuality scholarship, the anthropological method of writing fieldnotes is a powerful tool for tracking the shifting meanings of language across time and space. As qualitative data ideally recorded immediately after a research encounter, fieldnotes can provide important descriptive evidence (both factual and reflective) about the discourse context under investigation. Indeed, as Goldstein (2017) shows in her analysis of FBI director James Comey's scrupulously detailed memos of his interactions with President Trump, fieldnotes, when done well, may even bring to life the behind-the-scenes manipulations of a corrupt leader. The importance of Comey's note-taking after his meetings with the President was not lost on the media; in fact, his fieldnotes offered credibility to his testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee and helped break the usual 'he said, he said' stasis. This reminds us of the importance of the *-graphia* in ethnography's etymology. In comparison to other approaches, ethnography is especially concerned with the descriptive techniques of writing that will best display the complexity of the people under focus, which for sociocultural linguists, also includes their language practices.

This brings us again to the topic of reflexivity. We suggest that all of ethnography's methods, when adopted and adapted for the needs of a study, require the reflexivity that we often associate with participant observation. Consider, for example, transcription, the workhorse method used by discourse analysts to represent language practice in written form. As Bucholtz reminds us, 'transcription is not solely a research methodology for understanding discourse but also, and just as importantly, a sociocultural practice of representing discourse' (2007: 785). Sociocultural linguists have hundreds of transcription systems to choose from, each with their own set of conventions. Decisions about which conventions to use in a given transcript may be driven by research needs, but they also have 'potentially significant analytical and political consequences' (2007: 786). In this sense, methods such as transcription are inherently theoretical (cf. Ochs 1979), a point that leads us to the final element in our conceptual triad, 'theory'.

Theory

In an article entitled 'Ethnography as theory', Nader reflects on key ethnographic texts across 100 years of cultural anthropology and asserts the following: 'Ethnography, whatever it is, has never been *mere* description. It is also theoretical in its mode of description. Indeed, *ethnography is a theory of description*' (2011: 211, emphasis in the original). As we conclude this chapter, we want to reflect on the ways that this claim is also relevant to the history of ethnographic research on language, gender, and sexuality.

The first observation to make in this regard is that the field's use of ethnography has evolved in tandem with shifts in theoretical understandings of gender and sexuality. For instance, early ethnographies of non-Indo-European 'women's languages' and 'men's languages' in the first half of the twentieth century (e.g. Chamberlain 1912; Jespersen 1922) are often characterised as descriptive, but their emphasis on the rigidity of linguistic gender in non-European languages affirmed colonialist readings of these languages as primitive (Hall 2003). In the second half of the century, ethnography was deployed by a new generation of scholars to challenge broad generalisations made about women's speech in so-called difference models of language and gender. Research in sites such as Madagascar (Keenan Ochs 1974), Hungary (Gal 1978), southern Mexico (Brown 1980), a US high school (Eckert 1989), and a Philadelphia African American community (Goodwin 1990) brought complexity to the field's unmarked focus on middle-class white speakers. In the 1990s, Butler's (1990) theory of gender performativity inspired the application of ethnographic work to non-normative organisations of language, gender, and sexuality in varied locations (see, e.g. articles in Leap 1995; Livia and Hall 1997). Many of the ethnographies emerging in this period were positioned as overtly political in their commitment to 'queering' a largely heterosexual and cisgender canon, hence the field's name 'queer linguistics'. Similarly, the rise of multicultural feminism and its emphasis on intersectionality inspired a deeper ethnographic consideration of the relationship between gender and race, as seen in turn-of-the-century work by Jacobs-Huey (2006), Mendoza-Denton (2008), Morgan (2002), and Zentella (1997).

In our current era of research on language, gender, and sexuality, ethnography continues to assist this decisively critical turn towards political advocacy for marginalised perspectives. Its diversity of method is now dedicated to the task of uncovering how gender and sexuality articulate with systemic hierarchies of race, class, age, disability, colonialism, imperialism, and geopolitics, among other topics. LGBTQ scholars are now using ethnography to retheorise binaries (Zimman, Davis, and Raclaw 2014), counter cisgender assumptions found in previous language and gender scholarship (Zimman 2020), establish the centrality of the body to sociolinguistic investigation (Calder 2019; King 2019; Peck and Stroud 2015; Zimman and Hall 2010), and revise the queer theoretical concept of normativity (Barrett 2017; Cashman 2019; Hall 2019; Hall, Levon, and Milani 2019). Scholars of race are using ethnography to explore connections between language, sexuality, and Blackness in ways that challenge the whiteness of previous work on gay male speech (Cornelius 2020; Cornelius and Barrett 2020) and draw attention to everyday political pressures confronting Black Queer Women (Lane 2019). Finally, scholars of the Global South are using ethnographic methods to rethink organisations of gender and sexuality in Southern contexts and thereby contest the dominance of Northern-originating forms of knowledge production (Borba 2017; Deumert and Mabandla 2017; King 2017; Lazar 2017; Ostermann 2017; Shaikjee and Stroud 2017). This latter body of scholarship is particularly relevant to our discussion, as it turns the reflexivity that is ethnography's strength onto geopolitical exclusions in the language, gender, and sexuality canon (for programmatic statements, see Hall, Borba, and Hiramoto 2021; Milani and Lazar 2017). To return to Nader's point, ethnography is never merely descriptive. Like all scientific methodologies, even those held up by their practitioners as pillars of objectivity, ethnography is embedded in the broader theoretical questions that motivate its application.

Our second and final observation concerns the importance of social theory to ethnography more generally. Those of us who identify as ethnographers frequently characterise our research approach as 'bottom-up', much like our colleagues in conversation analysis, a field that shares our disciplinary roots in ethnomethodology. Our work is focused on the micro-details of everyday discourse, collected across space and time in our capacity as participant observers. At the same time, we share with our colleagues in the field of critical discourse analysis an interest in top-down questions of power: How are broader social hierarchies constituted through interaction? As researchers situated between the micro and the macro, we would never characterise our method as 'atheoretical', as conversation analysts often do. Rather, we make sense of the patterns we find across diverse sources of data by consulting the ideas of those who have dedicated their careers to understanding social life, otherwise known as social theorists. The importance of social theory is perhaps obvious to researchers in language, gender, and sexuality, particularly given the field's long-term intimacy with evolving traditions of feminist and queer theory (Bucholtz 2014; Kramer 2016; McElhinny

2003). And of course sociocultural linguists have also developed their own social theories, among them the social semiotic concepts of indexical order, enregisterment, style, and language ideology. Together, such theoretical perspectives carry the potential to illuminate patterns in our data, to make our claims regarding the workings of language in society more robust. In addition, by engaging with broader social theoretical perspectives, we may be able to persuade our colleagues in other socially oriented fields that language, no matter how small, matters to societal organisations of gender and sexuality.

The authors of the five chapters that appear in Part II each make use of the triad of concepts we have outlined in this essay: practice, ideology, and theory. Locating their analysis in the practices and ideologies they have observed as participants, they build on social theory in ways that highlight the importance of language to the constitution of gender and sexuality. In keeping with the spirit of this Handbook, the authors are reflexive about their methodologies, offering a wealth of perspectives on how ethnography may enable us to see the workings of language, gender, and sexuality more clearly.

Shaw situates her 'elite ethnography' of UK parliamentary contexts within an emergent tradition of scholarship known as 'linguistic ethnography' (Snell, Shaw, and Copland 2015), an approach that arose primarily in Europe. Shaw relies on a triangulation of methods that include participant observation, formal interviews, field notes, and archival work. Longitudinal fieldwork in a variety of debating chambers revealed the ways that parliaments share a habitus that prioritises some speakers and not others. For instance, Shaw details how a 'full view' experience from the public galleries enabled a more robust understanding of the gendered hierarchies that inform interaction in the chamber: Why is the *female* minister sitting in a row of male ministers asked to fetch the First Minister a glass of water? This same habitus appears to explain Assembly Member reactions to a female colleague who performed 'illegal sustained interventions' when Cheryl Gillan, the British Secretary of State for Wales, visited the chamber. Backstage interviews revealed that Assembly Members were uncomfortable with their female colleague's contrary behaviour, even as they disapproved of Gillan's elite 'queen-mother like' demeanour. On the surface, the Assembly Members' disapproval of the behaviours of both women appears to affirm Lakoff's (1975) early reading of women's language as 'damned if you do, damned if you don't'. But Shaw's ethnographic insights offer more complexity, exposing how the responses of the Welsh Assembly Members (and indeed the female Assembly Member's own behaviour) are also guided by a history of tension between Wales and Westminster. Her analysis of how micro-details of interaction connect to 'macro questions of exclusion and power' comes to life through her reflexivity at every stage of the ethnographic process, an approach she views as distinctly feminist.

Clark's chapter also engages the theoretical work of Bourdieu when she asserts the usefulness of ethnography for exposing practices of symbolic violence – the unmarked forms of non-physical violence that manifest in organisations of social hierarchy. Her focus is on the compulsory heterosexuality found in everyday discourse: How do we analyse something so systemic in conversation that even participants themselves may not recognise it? For Clark, the answer to this question lies in ethnography's 'sustained engagement' with the people we study. Her analysis of interactional data collected over time through her participation on a women's hockey team brings to light the everyday grammar of compulsory heterosexuality and its adverse effects on LGBTQ individuals. As seen in other queer linguistic work, Clark's use of ethnography in this chapter is overtly political: in her words, 'a priority for Queer linguistic ethnography is to reveal instances in which those unwritten rules [of interaction] require participants to adhere to a heteronormative framework'.

Philips returns the focus to gender ideology as she reflects on her ethnographic work in Tongan courtrooms in Polynesia. In a careful discussion of the ways 'ideas about women vary systematically across social domains', Philips distinguishes uses of ethnography in linguistic anthropology (her professional field) as requiring discourse analysis across time and space, a method she identifies as 'anthropological discourse analysis'. She compares discourses about 'bad words' in two different domains – the public domain of the Magistrate's Courts and the private domain of a women's work group – to uncover the ways that gender ideology differs across organisational contexts. Her work thus emphasises the importance of understanding the 'larger system' in which ideologies about language and gender circulate, as the nature of the activity may shape the way gender ideology emerges in the data. Importantly, Philips also outlines how her analytic observations arose from collaborations with co-researchers in the field who offered key insights as they recorded, transcribed, and translated discourse data from different domains. When these backstage forms of linguistic labour go unrecognised, ethnography retains its colonialist roots, extending the power relations inherent to fieldwork to practices of description, authorship, and citation. However, when this linguistic labour is the site of recognised collaboration, it can produce theoretical and methodological models that better align researcher and community positions. In sum, ethnographic research is made better – more honest, more feminist, even more insightful – when we are transparent about the ways these backstage forms of collaboration unfold to shape our findings.

With Nagar's chapter, we move to one of our field's signature frameworks for the ethnographic investigation of language, gender, and sexuality: the community of practice (see Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999). Nagar reflects on her use of this framework for understanding meaning-making among jananas, a non-normative gender identity in India. Not all communities have clearly defined boundaries; members of the janana community, for instance, cannot be located in a 'common space, profession, or cause'. Rather, they come together around mutually defined practices, which ethnography, as a method 'based in practice and learning', enabled her to discover. The excerpts she analyses from her conversations with jananas in 2004 and 2006 suggest different and even contradictory views of janana identity, yet through a diversity of ethnographic methods applied over time, she was able to 'find' the shared practices that gave these divergent views meaning.

Finally, Varis reflects on her research in a discourse environment that has only recently captured the attention of ethnographers of language: digital media. Her focus on an early twenty-first-century online genre known for rapid semiotic shifts in gender and sexuality – YouTube 'camgirl' broadcasts – provides a fitting conclusion to our discussion. We mentioned at the outset of this chapter that ethnography must be revised to reflect the highly mediatised nature of current social life. Drawing on her immersion in social media culture, Varis constructs a compelling analysis of why the broadcasts of one female YouTuber, Hannah Witton, have attracted almost 400,000 subscribers. She seeks to understand why Witton's videos of her encounters with normative reproductive practices such as menstruation and birth control are so tantalising for her viewers. The answer is found not just in the agentive intimacy Witton displays in these videos, but also in the way her broadcasts are mediated by ever-shifting online environments.

Varis suggests that digital ethnography is novel in its assumption of a 'changing media and communication landscape', but as we see in the chapters that follow, all ethnographers grapple with the challenge of following people and their social practices over time (see also methodological discussions in Goldstein 2020; Hall 2009; Wortham 2006; Wortham and Reyes 2015). In fact, Philips asserts in her chapter on Tongan gender ideology that we can truly understand larger systems of social organisation only by examining the ways 'talk at different points in time are related'. Taken together, the work featured in this section reminds us that the strength of ethnography lies in its ability to consider forms of discourse across time as well as space. Like all social scientific research approaches, ethnography is imperfect, but its reflexivity, diversity, and staying power are well suited to the elusive nature of social life.

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7

Gender, language, and elite ethnographies in UK political institutions

Sylvia Shaw

Introduction

In this chapter I critically evaluate how linguistic research using mixed ethnographic and discourse analytic methods can contribute to an understanding of the complex workings of gender and power in parliamentary institutions. This feminist research has at its core the problem of the continued and persistent underrepresentation of women in politics. Tackling this problem involves recognising that both formal and informal institutional rules are not gender-neutral and 'have gendered consequences that can reinforce or challenge a status quo in which men enjoy greater access to and power within the political arena' (Franceschet 2017: 115).

My use of the term 'elite ethnography' in the title of this chapter reflects the interdisciplinary orientation of the research primarily in sociolinguistics but also in political science and its focus on political elites. Elites can be thought of as groups of people who have the most influence, power, or skill in a given field, and in the case of politics this is a closed group of elected members. As Rhodes et al. (2007: 2–5) note, the adoption of ethnography for studying powerful political actors such as Members of Parliament (MPs) opens up the 'black boxes of elite behaviour' and allows 'studies of elite attitudes, and studies of elite decision-making in context' that have not traditionally been the preserve of quantitative methods within political science (Gains 2011; Jourde 2009). My use of the term does not rule out the existence of other types of elites (from areas as diverse as sporting, intellectual, and military elites) but is adopted here to encapsulate the characteristics of the parliamentary contexts in which the linguistic ethnography is undertaken.

The strength of qualitative, ethnographic work in political science aiming to uncover such informal rules and traditional gender norms lies in its ability to identify their impact on wider political innovations such as gender quotas or women-friendly policies (Gains and Lowndes 2014: 530). Here I explain how a specific focus on linguistic rules, practices, and norms can complement these approaches by 'helping researchers with a range of different backgrounds to reach deeper into the ethnographic description of institutional processes' (Hymes 1996: 8). In doing so, I draw upon two sociolinguistic research projects in which over 60 ethnographic interviews were conducted with men and women politicians in order to investigate gender and linguistic participation in different UK parliamentary institutions:[1] the House of Commons (HoC); the Northern Ireland Assembly (NIA), the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) and the Scottish Parliament (SP). As the focus of this chapter is on methodological concerns, the presentation of the research projects is necessarily selective and partial, and fuller accounts are given elsewhere (Shaw 2000, 2006, 2011, 2013, 2020).

In the following sections I first explain my use of linguistic ethnography as part of a 'mixed-method' approach to investigating gender and linguistic participation in parliaments. Then I reflect on some of the challenges and dilemmas faced by the researcher when 'researching up' or interviewing people of a higher professional status than oneself, such as members of the political elites. Using discourse analytic and ethnographic data, I then show how these mixed qualitative methods can be used to enrich an understanding of gender and language, both in the minutiae of debate discourse and in exposing wider cultural norms and attitudes to 'produce a fuller picture of a social world' (Dörnyei 2007: 164) through the 'triangulation' of findings from different types of data.

Linguistic ethnography in parliamentary institutions

Analyses of the linguistic participation of women in traditionally male-dominated forums, such as the UK Parliament and the Church of England, has found that women's public rhetoric is likely to be fractured by competing, often contradictory, norms and expectations (Walsh 2001). Further, it has been claimed that 'institutions are organised to define, demonstrate and enforce the legitimacy and authority of linguistic strategies used by one gender – or men of one class or ethnic group – whilst denying the power of others' (Gal 1991: 188). The reasons for this are complex and related in part to the 'fraternal networks' (Walsh 2001) that exist in parliamentary institutions and also the 'visibility' of women in a traditionally male-dominated forum (Bourdieu 1991). Traditional parliaments can therefore be viewed as a 'linguistic habitus' in which 'silence or hyper-controlled language' is imposed on some people, while others are allowed the 'liberties of a language that is securely established' (Bourdieu 1991: 82). In my view, parliaments are 'gendered spaces' in which the setting and the communicative tasks together become an index of a gendered style (Freed 1996: 67).

Given these observations, one aim of the research was to 'measure' the linguistic contributions of men and women MPs in formal parliamentary proceedings to establish whether the habitus silenced women and privileged men. A second aim of the research was to investigate the wider cultural linguistic norms of the institutions in order to examine the ways in which legitimacy and authority related to gender. Gender is viewed as a variable and contested concept, being both a flexible category in which gender is a 'doing, an incessant activity performed' (Butler 2004: 1), and a category which is partly fixed by the institutional arrangements based on stereotypical notions of male and female linguistic behaviour.

The decision to use a mixed-method approach reflected a desire to capture and examine these institutional arrangements in all their complexity, aiming to: 'describe the sometimes chaotic, contradictory, polymorph of human behaviour' (Blommaert 2007: 682). Ethnography was selected as a method in order to uncover the informal institutional rules in parliaments that: 'are *often taken for granted – usually submerged and barely visible – and are therefore difficult to study*' (Chappell and McKay 2017: 24, emphasis mine). Ethnography is suitable for this purpose as an interpretative approach that studies the actions of participants from their own point of view and considers how these interactions are embedded in wider social structures (Copland and Creese 2015). This approach holds that the contexts for communication should be investigated rather than assumed and that the detailed analysis of linguistic data is essential to understanding its significance (Rampton 2007).

The ethnographic data consisted of archival research (standing orders, the Official Reports, and parliamentary publications and documents); and visits to the research sites where observation of debates took place from the public galleries in the different chambers. This allowed a full view of the debating chambers, rather than the restricted view offered by video recordings. A view from the public galleries allows the observer to hear more of the interaction and get a better sense of the rapport or confrontation between speakers to gain a sense of how the chamber operates. For example, in a debate in 2010 at the NIA at Stormont, it was possible to see Peter Robinson (the First Minister) sending the then DUP Minister Arlene Foster out of the chamber to fetch him a glass of water – rather than any of the other male front-bench Ministers sitting nearer to him. This could indicate that traditional ideas about women's domestic roles permeated the DUP. Furthermore, the visits also allowed observation outside the debating chambers, which gave a broader impression of the culture of the institutions. For example, political divisions in the NIA at Stormont are also reflected in the seating arrangements in the Assembly's refectory. It operates under an informal but strict layout according to political affiliation and role so that members of one party sit in a 'designated' area, as do the press and domestic assembly staff. So, the ethnographer can observe that informal segregation together with formal power-sharing appear to permeate all institutional arrangements of the NIA. These observations took place at the same time as undertaking ethnographic interviews with participants. As I explain in more detail below, this process allowed for the observation of the 'frontstage' performances of debates in the chamber and gave the opportunity of asking interviewees 'backstage' (Goffman 1959; Wodak 2009) about their reflections on their own and other MPs' behaviour in the debate 'performances' that had just taken place.

Alongside the ethnographic research, a close analysis of the debate floor was undertaken to investigate the relationship between gender, power, and linguistic participation, assuming power in these contexts is 'power as territory: gaining access to discursive space' (Thornborrow 2002: 27), where 'power can be construed as one participant's ability to affect what the next participant does in the next turn' (2002: 136). Applied conversation analysis was used for its formal tools (in the form of units and models of interaction) for analysis, particularly in relation to turn-taking in spoken interaction (Sacks et al. 1974) rather than for its strict theoretical stance in its 'pure' form that gender can be enacted only by direct indexicality when speakers directly orient to the category. This analytical approach is particularly compatible with ethnography (Copland and Creese 2015: 51) because the emphasis of the analysis is not solely on how the participants obey relevant rules but also 'on how they jointly construct the conversation and their shared understanding of what is happening within it' (Richards 2006: 13, cited in Copland and Creese 2015: 51).

A distinguishing feature of traditional ethnographic research is its use of observation as 'the principle source of knowledge about social phenomena' (Gobo 2008: 190). However, much linguistic ethnographic research necessarily adopts an 'ethnographic perspective' (Green and Bloome 1997: 6) rather than a traditional ethnographic approach (Copland and Creese 2015: 30). Research with an 'ethnographic perspective' recognises that not all the aspects of the research questions will emerge through observation alone, making 'formal interviews valuable data sources' (Copland and Creese 2015: 30). In my own research, I adopted an ethnographic perspective where formal, semi-structured interviews supplemented the observational and archival data. The reasons for this were that I was seeking insights about politicians' own experience of communicative norms in relation to interpretations I was making about discourse analytic data, and also restricted access to the research sites (see discussion below) meant that time spent 'in the field' to carry out observations was limited.

Conducting ethnographic interviews with political elites

The ethnographic researcher of political elites needs to recognise the participants as *political* actors who, as interviewees, often play out their professional political roles according to party political and ideological allegiances. These actors are, on the whole, expert interviewees with years of experience in answering and managing different types of interview contexts. As Williams notes of the experience of interviewing MPs for research purposes: 'habits bred in their daily conversations with constituents, journalists or lobbyists seem to persist in these quite different circumstances' (1980: 310). This has led to the observation that 'political interviews are themselves highly political' and that politicians as interviewees can shape the interview in different types of dominant and resistant behaviour that have been noted to 'range from monologues of speech, highly defensive off-hand behaviour, to a delivery of pre-scripted official speech' (Puwar 1997: 1.1).

The power wielded by interviewees as members of a political elite means that the researcher is 'researching up' from a position of less power and status than that of the interviewee. This power relationship – in common with other workplace contexts – has various ramifications for the research process, including the problem of access to interviewees and the research sites. These difficulties range from obtaining an interview in the first place, to the last-minute cancellation and rescheduling of interviews, particularly when they take place in the bustle of parliamentary business as MPs can be called away to vote or to respond to unfolding political events. Time constraints mean that the lengths of interviews are largely unable to be controlled by the researcher. As has been noted by many scholars, traditional ethnography has, at its core, a commitment to long-term participant observation 'lurking and soaking' or immersion within the research site for long periods (Shaw et al. 2015: 7). In relation to parliamentary contexts, this type of access is unrealistic for most researchers and only the privilege of a very small number of ethnographers who are aligned with the institutions through disciplinary or personal contacts with MPs or civil servants (Puwar 1997: 5.4).

The power relationship between the researcher and the researched also calls into question some of the tenets of feminist research that assume the researcher is at a position of power over the interviewee and it is therefore incumbent upon them to create a friendly, non-hierarchical, and emancipatory environment (Gobo 2008: 58). One of the dilemmas posed by 'researching up' for feminist researchers is that 'the emphasis on power-sharing and the vulnerability of the researched (…) may not be transferable, indeed may be counter-productive to the development of feminist theory and practice in research with the "powerful"' (Luff 1999: 692). My interviews with men and women politicians showed the difficulty inherent in making any global claim about the power of individuals in relation to the interviewer according to their professional role. I experienced the highly defensive and off-hand treatment described above from some male and female interviewees and genuinely collaborative, friendly, and constructive 'treatment' from others. Some MPs were self-conscious and cautious in expressing their opinions about speaking in debates to me (as an academic and linguist), while others held forth with confidence on the intricacies of the conventions of the institutions. However, given a central claim of the research – that there are 'institutionalised advantages and disadvantages' (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly 1995: 44) for men and women in political institutions, gender (alongside other social categories such as race, and social class) can be viewed as a contributory element to the power relations of all the ethnographic interviews that were conducted. Therefore, I agree with Luff (1999) that interviews with both men and women MPs have 'moments of rapport' involving both understanding and disjuncture based on 'a recognition of the fractured and often contradictory subjectivities of researcher and researched' (Luff 1999: 687).

Self-disclosure and reflexivity are also established principles of ethnographic interviewing (Kezar 2003: Luff 1999). Reflexivity is about sharing one's own perspective as a researcher and is viewed as an ideal rather than a goal as 'one can never fully know oneself' (Kezar 2003: 401). Reflexivity refers to the aim of challenging one's own assumptions and how they affect the research project, and about sharing some of these reflections with the person interviewed (Hertz 1997). These relational aspects of interviewing are all associated with power: 'Power impacts the nature of the interchange, who guides the process, whose values shape the interview context, the ability to interpret and make sense of the responses, and how the data are ultimately used' (Kezar 2003: 401). When interviewing less powerful individuals these principles are straightforwardly strategies to equal power relations (albeit with the complex and often contradictory dimensions of power relations noted above). However, it is questionable as to whether self-disclosure and reflexivity help to level power relations when the interviewer is 'researching up'. As Kezar notes: 'Can self-disclosure actually heighten power differentials and provide more ways for the elite to retaliate if they move in that direction?' (2003: 406). Limited access also plays a part here as ideally feminist research in an ethnographic context would build trust through empathy, mutuality, and shared understanding (Wolfe 1996), and this would be achieved through 'a feminist ethic of commitment in contrast with the scientific ethic of detachment and role differentiation between the subject and the researcher' (Reinharz 1992: 27). This commitment would normally be expressed through multiple interviews to establish trust with the interviewee – an objective that is wholly impractical given the time-constraints under which political elites operate. This is compounded by the sheer number of interview requests received by MPs – for example women MPs in the 1997 intake in the House of Commons reported being overwhelmed by requests for interviews (Puwar 1997: 5.1).

Given the constraints of researching the powerful, in particular as manifested by the problem of limited time in the research site and access to the participants, I found it necessary to reveal little about my own views to the interviewees. On the contrary, I needed to glean the interviewees' interpretations of linguistic participation in parliamentary debate (both generally and in relation to specific examples from the data corpus – see below) without 'leading' them by sharing my own views and interpretations first. The limited time for interviews also meant that exposing differing views from those of the interviewees would run the risk of spending all the time exploring those differences of opinion rather than focusing on MPs' knowledge of specific informal 'rules of speaking' or wider cultural norms within the institutions. Another risk of exposing differences of opinion while 'researching up' is that it could jeopardise a researcher's 'access to elites in the future' (Punch 1986) in the ongoing research process. Reflexivity, however, remains a core concern of feminist and ethnographic methodologies. While the aim of the complete openness and self-disclosure of feminist ethnographic work can be seen as an ideal that is contingent on the particularities of the research context, a commitment to a reflexive approach 'means that feminist researchers should acknowledge their own orientations, bringing to an end claims that 'objective' knowledge has been produced with the researcher not influencing the research process in any way' (Mills and Mullany 2011: 119). This is particularly important given that 'other factors intersecting with gender – such as nationality, race, ethnicity, class and age – also affect the anthropologist's field interactions and textual strategies' (Callaway 1992: 33 cited in Mills and Mullany 2011: 120). Reflexivity is therefore important at all stages of the research process from the selection of particular methods, the questions asked and omitted 'in the field', the interpretation of data and the highly selective process of presenting final accounts of the research.

A mixed-method approach: researching the debate floor

In this section I show how the mixed-method approach, using linguistic ethnography combined with discourse analytic techniques can be used to investigate gender and linguistic participation in four political institutions. By mixed-method research I refer to the practice of collecting multiple data types to address a particular research question. Triangulation is the term that, in the social sciences, 'is synonymous with combining data sources to study the same social phenomena' with the aim that 'methodological triangulation can help to reduce the inherent weaknesses of individual methods by offsetting them by the strength of another' (Dörnyei 2007: 43). I start by explaining how characteristics of the parliamentary debate floor relate to these different approaches to the collection of data and then go on to show how different types of data can illuminate the analysis and interpretation of a particular event.

The 'ideal' or canonical form of debate is 'the most extreme transformation of conversation – most extreme in fully fixing the most important (and perhaps nearly all) of the parameters that conversation allows to vary' (Sacks et al. 1974: 731). The ideal or 'legal' progression of debates is formalised by explicit rules in the 'standing orders' of the parliament, governed by the moderator (the Speaker or Presiding Officer). These rules embody democratic ideals in that they ensure speaking turns are divided fairly between politicians from different political parties, and that only one person speaks at a time in order that their speech can be heard. This formal ordering of debates is emphasised by the use of strict address forms; having to direct all speeches to the moderator (to avoid overt confrontation between political opponents); and the physical standing position of the 'legal' speaker with all other interjections from politicians in a sedentary position prohibited. Together, these formal orders and restrictions are devised to 'permit the equalisation of turns' (Sacks et al. 1974: 730). However, the canonical or 'legal' progression of the debate exists alongside an unofficial or 'illegal' set of conventions that routinely operate on the debate floor, including the use of 'illegal' address forms and interventions which vary from full interjections and questions to individual and collective jeering, shouting, and heckling. This means that 'thus an event that should allow everyone an equal chance becomes an event in which prior inequalities (e.g. gender, age and ethnicity) can be re-enacted' (Edelsky and Adams 1990: 171).[2]

Both the 'legal' and 'illegal' debate floors need to be accounted for in an assessment of the linguistic participation of a parliament's members. The legal floor is particularly accessible as it is routinely and systematically documented in the 'Official Report' (the 'Hansard Report' in the HoC). Although this is commonly referred to as a 'verbatim' report it actually represents a selective, orderly, written version of the spoken parliamentary discourse. Illegal interventions and overtly 'spoken' features of the discourse are omitted, address forms are routinely standardised, and various grammatical adjustments are made to standardise the official contributions of the participants (see Shaw 2018 for a detailed account of these editorial changes and omissions). The textual practices that create these documents, as well as the selectivity of the documents themselves therefore offer valuable ethnographic information about the institution's values, cultural practices, and exclusionary practices. The Official Reports also give researchers a valuable resource for examining *some* aspects of parliamentary participation – they are electronically available and allow the quantification of some of the different types of speaking turns (speeches, questions, responses, give way requests, give way interventions, give way refusals, 'points of order', and so on). For the research projects in the different parliaments a quantitative assessment of debate turns found that in all the institutions apart from the NAW, men and women took legal turns in proportion to their overall representation in the institutions (Shaw 2020).

However, illegal interventions are not systematically represented in the Official Reports as an unattributed 'interruption' is only shown when it gains a response from a 'legal' speaker (so that the official discourse remains coherent in the report). Therefore, in order to assess the participation of MPs in the 'illegal' floor, qualitative methods were used. Detailed transcripts from video recordings of debates were made of the proceedings. An example of this type of data can be seen in Example 1 below, showing sustained illegal interventions made by a female Assembly Member in the National Assembly for Wales. The occasion of this extract was the statement of the Secretary of State for Wales (Cheryl Gillan) on the Queen's Speech, and the subsequent debate on the same topic.

Example 1 Sustained illegal interventions in the National Assembly for Wales (16th June 2010)

CG = Cheryl Gillan; FL = Female Labour Assembly Member; DPO = Deputy Presiding Officer AM = An Assembly Member

CG:	I think that the single new back-to-work programme
	will provide numerous new opportunities for national and
	local partners (.) to contribute to the coalition
	Government's programme (.) to tackle er unemployment (.)
FL:	well you haven't convinced me
CG:	Um(.) well I may not have convinced the Honourable Lady
	as she says from a
	sedentary position (.) [but I am] (.)
FL	[I am not] an honourable lady
	I am an [Assembly Member]
DPO:	[um excuse me]
CG	um well the the honourable Assembly Member (.)
FL	no I am an
	Assembly Member
CG	an Assembly Member (.) an Assembly Member um and I'm
	sorry I'm I'm not trying to convince her (.) I'm trying
	to reassure the people that she
	may have frightened outside this
CG	cham[ber]
FL	[no] I am not the one who is
	frightening [them]
CG	[that] we [are looking] (.)
DPO	[Ann Jones] (.) please
CG	that we are looking at this area and we

25		[will approach it with compassion] (.)
26	FL	[unclear]
27	CG	in closing (.)
28	AM	hear hear
29	CG	Madam [Presiding Officer Deputy] Presiding Officer I
30	FL	[unclear]
31	CG	reiterate how impressed I have been in my first few weeks
32		*(turn continues)*

(Shaw 2011: 284–285)

Example 1 can be used to illustrate how the ethnographic ‘mixed-method’ qualitative approach can be used ‘to achieve a fuller understanding of the target phenomena’ (Dörnyei 2007: 164), in this case, illegal utterances, rule-breaking, and the transgression of formal rules. On this occasion I was present in the debating chamber and made field notes to record my observations. After the statement and debate I carried out three ethnographic interviews with Assembly Members (AMs) in the NAW and was able to ask them directly about their impression of this event (these interviews were subsequently transcribed for analysis). The speech event itself was video recorded and transcribed as shown in the example and was therefore available for the analysis of turn-taking and floor apportionment.

Taking each of these qualitative types of data in turn (transcripts of the debate, observational field notes, and ethnographic interviews) and looking first to the discourse analytic observations of this extract (a full account of which is given in Shaw 2011), it can be noted that the female AM initially interrupts the Secretary of State to contest the remark she has made about the back-to-work programme, using the discourse marker ‘well’ and then saying ‘you haven’t convinced me’ (line 5). Gillan responds to this illegal intervention and refers to the interrupting AM as ‘the Honourable Lady’ (line 6), highlighting the AMs illegal intervention from a ‘sedentary position’. The AM makes another illegal intervention to correct Gillan by saying ‘I am not an Honourable Lady I am an Assembly Member’ (lines 9–10). Line 12 shows an example of other initiated self-repair (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977) when Gillan says ‘The Honourable Assembly Member’ (line 12). The AM interrupts once more to correct her by saying ‘No, I am an Assembly Member’, to which Gillan says ‘An Assembly member, an Assembly member’ (line 15) in a further example of other initiated self-repair. Gillan then accuses the interrupting AM of ‘frightening people’ outside the chamber, which gives rise to another illegal intervention (line 20–21). The Deputy Presiding officer intervenes but the AM continues to disrupt the debate floor (lines 26 and 30). Finally, Gillan attempts to control the floor by a change in conversational alignment or ‘footing’ (Goffman 1981) in which she clearly signals the final part of her speech by saying ‘in closing’ (line 27). This change in footing is recognised by a Conservative AM supporter who shouts ‘hear hear’, although the interrupting female AM illegally intervenes once more while Gillan introduces her closing remarks.

The second source of data is taken from my observational field notes, from which the following indicative description can be drawn:

> On the day the event took place, the viewing gallery was much more crowded than normal. Cheryl Gillan looked ill at ease as she entered the chamber and my first impression was that she was struggling to use the headphones that offer English– Welsh translation. I noted that failing to use this equipment – in itself a symbol of Wales’ distinctive politics and commitment to inclusivity and openness – would not endear her to the AMs. I was surprised at her lack of awareness of the procedures of the Assembly and

> startled by the extent of the barracking and vehement interventions against her, as they were much stronger than at any time I had attended the chamber before. I was struck in particular by her inability to use the correct address forms and noted that she seemed to have expected the Welsh Assembly to operate in the same way as Westminster. The sustained interventions by the female Labour MP were greeted with a mixture of embarrassment and support from fellow AMs, with the Presiding Officer trying a number of times to call her to order.

These types of ethnographic notes give detailed impressions of the event itself and can form the basis of subsequent interview questions and discussion points. It is also significant that while an observer cannot strictly be said to be a 'participant' in these events from the gallery, being present in the chamber creates shared understandings that can be used to create 'moments of rapport' with subsequent interviewees.

Third, taking the interview data into account (described fully in Shaw 2011) can give the following insights into the AMs attitudes towards the event, and wider cultural norms in the Assembly. Three women AM interviewees used this speech as a point of reference when discussing interactional norms in the debating chamber, and gave their reaction to the performance of Gillan and other AMs taking part in the debate. Although a political opponent of Gillan, one female AM felt that the heckling of Gillan in the debate was 'totally pointless bluster' and reported being 'a bit unhappy with the tone of some of the oppositional stuff' because 'whatever we feel we have to work with this person, we may not like what they stand for but we're not going to progress any of the agendas if you attack someone on a personal level'. However, all three interviewees were annoyed by Gillan's failure to adopt the procedural norms of the assembly. The same female AM observes:

> I think we were all irritated with her and she was slightly condescending I think the way she spoke to us on a few occasions: 'I'd like to say to the Honourable Lady'. Haven't you done your homework you've been Shadow Secretary of State for 'x' number of years you know we're not Honourable Members here and you know no-one has ever called us that.

A female Labour AM noted that it was not just Gillan's failure to adopt the correct forms of address, but a more general lack of preparation and familiarity with procedures that gave a negative impression:

> She was working from notes quite a lot and saying 'oh sorry hang on I've lost my notes' I thought aw come on you know I wouldn't want to be Secretary of State for Wales but she's chosen to be she wanted to be so yeah she is condescending and patronising. It's the way she spoke it was like 'oh so lovely to be here'.

Gillan's lack of proficiency in adopting the Assembly's norms contributes to her negative assessment by interviewees and emphasises her 'outsider' status. It is also clear that gender (and social class and national identity) plays a central role in the AMs' assessment of her performance. One female Labour AM says:

> I don't know but her whole demeanour I suppose was and this may be unfair just because she's a woman but her whole demeanour I think was quite sort of Queen Mother-like you know 'I'm here aren't you lucky that I'm here I've come to talk to you peasants'.

Here the AM recognises that her negative appraisal of Gillan may be attributable to gender and reveals the strength of the discourse of gender difference in her appraisal. This discourse of gender difference can be seen as a 'significant "lens" for the way people view reality, difference being for most people what gender is all about' (Sunderland 2004: 52). The description of Gillan as 'queen mother-like' is interesting because it refers to British monarchy as a distinct marker of national identity and at the same time it orients to the role of 'mother', which has been claimed to be one of the very limited roles available to women leaders (Kanter 1977). It is also significant that the women AMs view the female Minister of State negatively and this example shows traces of a gendered discourse of 'women beware women' (Sunderland 2004).

These examples illustrate the way in which mixed-method research can contribute to fuller understanding of an event and enrich a description of the wider norms of the institutions. In this example, women are not silenced, but on the contrary dominate this interaction yet orient to gendered discourses of differentiation in their interviews, showing that political institutions are 'historically variable in their composition and effects' (Krook and Mackay 2011: 3). The methods thus allow assessments of 'illegal' rule-breaking by female AMs on the debate floor, together with evidence of gendered discourses and assumptions about male and female linguistic behaviour by the participants themselves. A further benefit of triangulation in relation to investigating linguistic norms is when the data show divergent findings or interpretations, which can lead to an enhanced understanding by pointing to areas for further investigation (Dörnyei 2007: 165). This is certainly important when the interpretations of discourse analytic observations by the researcher are confounded by the participant's own interpretations. This occurred on several occasions in the course of these research projects. For example, when initially investigating turn-taking in the HoC, I interpreted legal 'give way' interventions from political opponents as violative interruptions that were intended to wrest the floor from the legal speaker, and present interactive and substantive challenges to them. However, interviews with MPs revealed that 'give way' interventions (even from political opponents) were viewed positively by many MPs as an indicator of respect and interest in the speech they were delivering – one MP even commenting that 'at least it shows that everyone isn't asleep'. These divergent interpretations of events and norms therefore show that multiple data sources are important in these 'closed' parliamentary institutions where it is not possible for the researcher as 'outsider' to reliably interpret interactive phenomena.

Concluding discussion and future directions

This chapter has given a critical feminist account of some of the methodological considerations associated with investigating linguistic participation in elite political institutions. The results gained from the different data sources continue to raise interesting questions about mixing qualitative methodologies and contribute to discussions about both the descriptive (numerical) and substantive representation of women in political institutions.

It is difficult to assess the transformational effects of asking political questions about gender, language, and power in elite institutions, but it is possible to underestimate or ignore this aspect of research. It is important to recognise that taking our research questions and research agendas into powerful political institutions can have effects on powerful actors. I do not agree with Wax's assessment of the role of the elite interviewer that: 'the fieldworker is naïve if he (sic) thinks that most of these important personages will really listen carefully to what he says, much less, believe it' (Wax 1971 cited in Kezar 2003: 398). My experience, informed by the different perspectives offered by the triangulation of data, showed that, for example, after asking one of the institution's moderators (who wished to remain anonymous) about how s/he brought politicians to order on the debate floor, his/her subsequent behaviour in the debating chamber was affected. Three of the four politicians interviewed after the debate all remarked (without being prompted) on how the moderator's behaviour in keeping order in the chamber had been stricter than usual. It is therefore *possible* that there are effects on political actors brought about by questions that highlight the micro-details of interaction and connect these to macro-questions of exclusion and power. This aspect of the research is extremely pertinent for investigations into language, gender, and sexuality in institutional contexts, and certainly warrants further investigation. It would also be interesting to extend this mixed-method research to wider political contexts both within parliament (for example, in committees), and outside parliament (for example at political rallies, conferences, and meetings). In this way, it would illustrate how research into language, gender, and sexuality can influence actors outside the academy and have relevance to the wider world.

Transcription conventions

(.)= micropause of less than a second
[= beginning of overlap with the utterance above or below
] = end of overlap with the utterance above or below
<u>underline</u> = particular emphasis on word or syllable

Notes

1 The research projects were first conducted in the House of Commons and the data was collected between 1998 and 2000. Second, the Economic and Social Research Council funded project 'Gender and linguistic participation in the devolved parliaments of the UK' (RES 000223792) collected data between 2009 and 2010 in the devolved political institutions of the UK and in the HoC.
2 See Shaw 2000 for a fuller discussion of the parameters of formal debates.

Further reading

Snell, J., Shaw, S. E., and Copland, F. (eds) (2015) *Linguistic ethnography: interdisciplinary explorations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book demonstrates the scope and breadth of research in linguistic ethnography with useful introductory chapters on practical and theoretical aspects.

Waylen, G. (ed) (2017) *Gender and informal institutions*. London: Rowman & Littlefield.

This book represents a feminist institutionalist perspective in political science, giving analytical frameworks for approaching different types of informal institutions

Wodak, R. (2009) *The discourse of politics in action: politics as usual*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

A critical ethnography of the European Parliament, this book aims to go 'behind the scenes' of the institution to uncover the reality of daily political discourse.

Related topics

Anthropological discourse analysis and the social ordering of gender ideology; gender in interaction: ethnomethodological and ca approaches to gender; feminist conversation analysis: examining violence against women; identity construction in gendered workplaces; ethnography and the shifting semiotics of gender and sexuality.

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8

'Gay, aren't they?' An ethnographic approach to compulsory heterosexuality

Jodie Clark

Introduction

Ethnography holds a particular appeal for researchers who wish to resist generalisations about gender and sexuality and focus instead on the local ways in which gender and sexuality affect people's lives. Language, gender, and sexuality ethnographies have offered insights into the unique gendered and sexed practices in schools (Bucholtz 1999; Eckert 2000; Moore 2006), sports teams (Clark 2012; Sauntson and Morrish 2012), LGBTQ+ groups (Jones 2012, 2016) and drag queen performances (Barrett 1999), to name just a few. Ethnographic research can also offer a window into the sometimes small but always significant ways in which people's lives are adversely affected by constrictive gender and sexuality norms. By focusing on individual experiences of gender and sexuality, ethnography can posit an implicit counter-argument to claims that 'everything is so much better than it used to be' in relation to sexism, homophobia, and transphobia.

One focus of ethnographic research is on the norms that participants in various communities and social spaces abide by. Sometimes these are explicit – they can be explained by members of the community in interviews for instance – but they are more often under the radar. Ethnographic methods are often used to identify the unwritten rules of interaction, acceptance, and belonging. Language, gender, and sexuality ethnographies frequently focus on the heteronormative frameworks that govern particular social spaces (Bucholtz 1999; Clark 2012; Eckert 2011).

This chapter focuses on what Adrienne Rich (1980) calls 'compulsory heterosexuality' – a set of ideologies that make it very difficult, especially for women, to imagine a life free from the power imbalances of heterosexual relationships. I draw upon two ethnographic studies – one of a university women's field hockey team and one of a university friendship group – to explore instances in which compulsory heterosexuality effected both physical and 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu and Waquant 1992: 166). I focus on instances in which participants were required by their peers to engage in heterosexual activity – specifically, they were compelled or coerced to kiss men against their will.

Seidman (2009) argues in favour of making a clear distinction between heteronormativity (as discourses, norms, and social pressures) and compulsory heterosexuality (where heterosexuality is an official requirement). From my point of view, to focus on this distinction is to miss an important perspective. Seidman's account presents both terms, heteronormativity and heterosexuality, as oppressive forces that impose themselves on individuals. I propose instead an approach that draws upon ethnographic data to identify those fleeting instances in which heterosexuality makes itself *felt* as compulsory, where the result of not engaging in heterosexual acts results in violence to the self. The opportunity then presents itself to explore the structure of the social space at that precise moment, and then to ask questions about how it might otherwise have been structured.

The approach I describe here makes use of the analytic method described in Clark (2016), which outlines a method for analysing 'the grammatical structures of participants' accounts of their social worlds' (2016: 9) as a means of imagining possibilities for social transformation. The methodology supplements ethnography with the methods of critical discourse analysis (CDA) described in Part V, 'Sociocultural and critical approaches', of this Handbook (for other uses of CDA within gender and sexuality research, see Koller 2015; Morrish 1997 and Peterson 2010). My approach differs from CDA in that it is designed to orient not to ideology (claims to truth), but rather to discursively constructed selves and social worlds:

> I propose a CDA that asks different questions. … Instead of, what are the claims to truth, and wherein lies the struggle? I would ask, what is the shape of the social structure here, and where is the desire for an alternative? What are the 'selves' that are textually constituted here and how might they be otherwise constituted? What are the possibilities for transformation here?
>
> *(Clark 2016: 38)*

When these questions are applied to compulsory heterosexuality, the orientation shifts from understanding heteronormativity as an oppressive discourse (Motschenbacher and Stegu 2013), an inescapable 'contract' (Wittig 1992: 34), or a regulatory 'matrix' (Butler 2006: 208). Instead, instances in which heterosexuality makes itself felt as compulsory in participant accounts can be used as windows into the shape of the social world at that precise moment. A key focus in this chapter will be on the different 'selves' that are grammatically constructed in these accounts. I will explore two different ways in which selves are presented as vulnerable in the face of compulsory heterosexuality. My analysis demonstrates that grammatical constructions of the vulnerable self coincide with grammatical constructions of alternative social worlds – worlds in which vulnerable selves are protected, and heterosexuality loses its force.

The method of analysing ethnographic data I demonstrate in this chapter is unique from other approaches in that it does not focus on norms, discourses, belief systems, and ideologies that structure a particular social space or community. The analysis here is concentrated on very specific instances within the context that the ethnographic fieldwork provided – precise moments when compulsory heterosexuality is at issue in participants' accounts. The aim here is not to chart how heteronormativity *governs* a particular social group, but rather to identify moments within social group interactions in which *alternatives* to heteronormativity present themselves.

The ethnographic fieldwork

Another way in which the analysis I present in this chapter is different from other ethnographic work is that it draws upon data collected from two different ethnographies, situated within two different social groups. The first is a women's university field hockey team (Clark 2012) and the second a small group of students in a module I taught called 'Language and social life' (Clark 2016). Comparing these communities enables me to explore two very distinct moments of compulsory heterosexuality, to situate these in two different social contexts and to identify the distinct ways in which the selves and the social worlds are constructed in each. Despite the participants' distinct responses to these moments, it became clear (as I will show) that the accounts of compulsory heterosexuality consistently reveal, first, the grammatical construction of a vulnerable self and, second, the grammatical construction of an alternative social world.

The members of the Midland University[1] women's field hockey team were straight cis women, white British middle-class, between the ages of 18 and 21. They identified as high achieving hockey players, students, and citizens. They made it clear that to achieve in all these areas requires not only securing an identity as feminine and straight but also silencing any discussions of sexual desire (Clark 2012). In other words, their identities depended upon conforming to heterosexual norms.

The participants in the second group were three students (Beth, Maryam, and Andrew) in a module I was leading called 'Language and social life'. Troubled by the ways in which these three friends had been alienated by other students in the seminar group that I was leading, I asked them, at the end of the academic year, if they would be willing to talk about their experiences of feeling marginalised as part of a focus group. During the focus group Beth, Maryam, and Andrew revealed that what brought them together as friends was a shared resistance to the norms of the other students on their degree programme. Each of them had experienced a sense of lack of acceptance from others on their course, which they attributed to a certain extent to aspects of their identities: for Beth, it was her unapologetic working-class status; for Maryam, it was her ethnicity (Pakistani-British) and her religion (Muslim); for Andrew, it was his disability (which affected his mobility and required him to sometimes use a crutch) and his non-normative gender (transgendered man).

The similarities between the two groups (their ages, for instance, as well as their engagement in university communities of practice (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992)) serve as a backdrop against which to highlight the points of contrast around compulsory heterosexuality. The hockey players expressed explicit homophobic attitudes throughout the ethnography (see Clark 2012 for an analysis of these). The 'Language and social life' group, on the other hand, consistently voiced their disapproval of any exclusionary attitudes and advocated in favour of diverging from the mainstream. The fundamental differences in perspective of the two groups offer a unique backdrop from which to explore their responses to specific moments of compulsory heterosexuality.

The role of the ethnographer

An important part of the complex decision-making process involved in doing ethnography involves the researcher's relationship to the community or the social space they are studying. Most ethnographic methodologies define these relationships in terms of four types of role, defined in Gold's (1958) work: the complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant, and complete observer. As O'Reilly (2009) points out, however, most ethnography requires some form of participation and some form of observation, and roles are likely to shift as the ethnography progresses. In my ethnography of the university field hockey team, I initially understood myself to fit within the category of 'observer as participant' – I was not part of the hockey team, nor did I know any of the team members before asking their permission to conduct the study. As I became more involved in their activities – attending socials, supporting them at matches and, indeed hosting meals – I moved more into the 'participant as observer' role. The duration of the hockey-team ethnography was an academic year, during which time I observed the team's activities at training sessions, matches, and social events. I collected conversational data from ten members of the team over a period of seven 'data-gathering evenings', in which I served meals to self-selected groups of two or three participants and recorded their conversations. I allowed the participants to steer the conversation for these evenings, contributing just enough to stay involved in the conversation. The data-gathering evenings produced a corpus of about 18 hours of conversational data, a corpus of 225,000 words.

My participation in the second ethnography followed a different trajectory, one in which I moved from being a 'complete participant' (a member of the community I was investigating, as their tutor) to a 'participant observer' (a researcher seeking answers to questions that had emerged as part of my institutional participation). 'A complete participant', O'Reilly explains, 'is not an ethnographer; he or she is a participant. If she decides to research the group or culture in which she participates, she becomes a participant observer' (2009: 154). The focus group marks the moment when I became participant observer.

The second ethnography was much smaller in scope from the first: I had known and observed the participants for five months before inviting them to participate in the focus group. As for the first ethnography, I allowed the participants to steer the conversation, but asked a few open-ended questions designed to elicit narratives about belonging or exclusion. The focus group lasted 2 hours and generated a corpus of about 20,000 words, which made it just under one-tenth the size of the hockey-team ethnography.

Beginning in the 'observer as participant' role, as I did in the hockey-team ethnography, required me to engage in quite a lot more information gathering, explicit observation, and permission-seeking. I was an outsider to this community, and indeed, to the larger world of university sport in which this community was situated, so I had to gain access by introducing myself to prominent members of the community, including the team captain and the president of the Student Athletic Union. I was also dependent upon the willingness of team members to allow me to participate in their team-only social events and to attend the meals I had arranged. My initial position as outsider required me to fill the gaps in my knowledge about the team and its context by engaging in a large amount of time-consuming fieldwork, research, recording, and transcription. As Eckert remarks, ethnography 'requires a considerable time investment, and frequently more of an investment than an academic [or student!] is free to make' (2000: 74).

The second study I conducted provides some ways of using an ethnographic approach when it is not possible to engage in such intensive, time-consuming fieldwork. As I mentioned above, my role as tutor on the participants' course of study made me a 'complete participant' in the community I chose to later to observe, which meant there were fewer issues of access and information gathering. The challenge for smaller-scale ethnographic studies is less about time and more about perspective and critical distance. As Hammersley and Atkinson explain, 'it is in the "space" created by this distance that the analytic work of the ethnographer gets done. Without that distance, without such analytic space, the ethnography can be little more than the autobiographical account of a personal conversion' (2007: 90).

It is worth pointing out, however, that to do research in language, gender, and sexuality is *already* to engage in the intellectual and critical distance that Hammersley and Atkinson describe. The priority within Queer approaches, for instance, is to see heterosexuality as constructed in discourse. The term ‘Queer Linguistics’ (Motschenbacher and Stegu 2013) is often used to encompass research that critically analyses how language use reinforces or challenges heteronormativity. Many scholars working within Queer linguistics have drawn upon ethnographic methods as a means of achieving this critical angle.

Because ethnography privileges sustained engagement with participants over a longer period of time than survey methods, they usually generate richer data in relation to each participant in the study. The rich data my own ethnographies produced made it possible for me to draw connections between participant narratives and community norms and practices, and thus to recognise instances in which symbolic violence was being chronicled. As Bourdieu and Waquant (1992: 166) point out, ‘symbolic violence’ can work more ‘efficiently’ than physical violence as a form of social control: it can cause individuals to undermine those aspects of self that they consider to be valuable. Symbolic violence is not as easy to detect as physical violence, because participants may not be able to recognise it as such. The ethnographic data from both studies offered a rich source of participant narratives in which compulsory heterosexuality inflicted symbolic violence.

Grammatical analysis and social change

A familiar difficulty for the ethnographer is how to analyse the vast amounts of data that ethnographic methods generate. As Angrosino points out, the analysis of ethnographic research is most often ‘“custom-built” to suit the needs of particular projects’ (2007: 74). In an earlier work (Clark 2012) I discuss how heteronormativity serves as a structuring principle for the local and institutional practices of the hockey team. In this chapter, I am focusing on participant narratives in both groups that depict some form of compulsory heterosexuality – what I have called ‘moments’ of compulsory heterosexuality. The shift from analysing norms to analysing participant accounts of their social worlds is motivated by a desire for empirical research to orient more explicitly towards social transformation. My argument is that ‘critical readings of individual accounts reveal traces of new, yet-to-be-imagined social structures’ (Clark 2016: 8) and that by bringing these new possibilities to light, researchers will be contributing to social change.

As I mentioned above, the critical readings I offer are informed by grammatical analysis, specifically Halliday’s (2014) Systemic Functional Grammar, which describes language in terms of three metafunctions: ideational (how human experience is construed), interpersonal (how social roles and relationships are construed), and textual (how textual coherence is achieved). I argue that this type of grammatical analysis ‘can reveal the structure of a given text (textual metafunction), the specific constitution of each “self” construed or invoked in a text (interpersonal/ideational metafunction) and the “shape” of the world that is produced in a segment of discourse (ideational metafunction)’ (Clark 2016: 36). In this chapter I focus particularly on the ideational metafunction, drawing upon Halliday’s framework for analysing transitivity. An analysis of the transitivity of a chunk of language categorises how different types of experience are construed as processes (through verb phrases) and participants (usually through noun and prepositional phrases). I will demonstrate how these categorisations construct different configurations of selves and social worlds.

The grammar of compulsory heterosexuality

As I mentioned above, drawing upon two ethnographies offers the possibility of exploring distinct responses to similar moments – in this case, moments of compulsory heterosexuality. I was fascinated to discover that the conversational data from both the hockey team and the 'Language and social life' ethnographies offered moments in which participants told stories about women being coerced into kissing men. At first glance, the narratives seem rather different. Consider, for instance, Extract 1, which is part of a conversation between three members of the hockey team – Speedo, Emma, and Sullivan. They are all middle-class cisgender women between 20 and 21 years old. Speedo and Emma are from the English Midlands; Sullivan is from Northern Ireland. Speedo is team captain and is in her third and final year at university; Emma and Sullivan are in their second year. Speedo is telling Emma and Sullivan about travelling home on the bus after a match with the women's and men's football teams, where the 'football boys' tried to get the 'football girls' to kiss them. When the women refused to kiss them, the men came to the conclusion that they were gay, which Speedo confirmed.

Extract 1[2]

1	Speedo:	they ((the football boys)) were trying to make the football girls snog
2		one of them [and I was like oh, it's not gonna happen]
3	Sullivan:	[Oh were there football girls in the bus]
4	Speedo:	It's not gonna happen. They're like gay, aren't they. And I was
5		like, mmhm, yeah? [((laughs))] I KNOW them
6	Sullivan:	[((laughs))] [All of them are!]

It takes Speedo only a few seconds to tell the story, and the response to it is light-hearted, as evidenced by the laughter on Lines 5 and 6. Indeed, as will be shown later, the focus of the subsequent conversation is on which players in women's football and hockey are gay – not on the men's sexual advances.

Extract 2, from the 'Language and social life' ethnography, seems to tell a very different story. Beth is retelling (for my sake) an account she has already shared with Andrew and Maryam, about her experiences of being bullied at school as a child. Beth describes being part of a 'wrong crowd' when she was in school. The 'wrong crowd' was a group of girls with a set of rules about how to fit in, what to wear, how to do your hair, who to go out with. The consequences for not abiding by these, for Beth, was physical and emotional abuse.

Beth, Andrew, and Maryam are all 20 years old. Beth and Andrew are white British, from the same working-class village in the north of England. Maryam is Pakistani British from a working-class city in the north of England. Beth and Maryam are cis women; Andrew is a trans man. Extract 2 comes from Beth's account of her school friends trying to force her to kiss a boy. When she refused, her friends became physically violent.

Extract 2

1	Beth:	Erm (0.4) they tried to make me go out with this boy that I didn't want to-
2		(0.7) like, I didn't want to be near him, he were nasty. (0.4) And then when I
3		wouldn't kiss him, cos I- I didn't want to, I mean, I were like ↑thirteen and he
4		were a dick (0.7) a:nd er when that didn't happen they shoved me off a kerb?
5		(0.4) And I cut all me leg, I've still got a scar.

The tone is very different in Beth's account of compulsory heterosexuality than in Speedo's. Beth's story has significance to her personally – it represents a specific memory from her childhood that she has shared at least once before. Beth presents herself as the victim of the sexual coercion here. Speedo's story, in contrast, is of something that happened only a few days before she tells it, and she presents herself in Extract 1 as an observer, not as a main character in the narrative.

A grammatical analysis of some of the clauses in each of the accounts, however, reveals some interesting similarities. In both accounts the 'compulsory' moment is grammatically construed in what Halliday calls a 'three-participant causative' (2014: 579), where one participant – the 'initiator' – causes another – the 'actor' to act on a final participant – 'the goal', as shown in Table 8.1.

A further similarity is revealed through an investigation of the process types in the clauses of each account. Material clauses (processes of doing and happening) predominate in Beth's account, but there are also some mental (thinking and feeling) and relational (being) clauses, as shown in Table 8.2.

Speedo's story, too, consists of mostly material clauses, with one mental and one relational clause. Her account also includes verbal (saying) clauses, as shown in Table 8.3.

The most significant parallel between the two stories comes into view through a comparison of the material processes in each, as shown in Table 8.4. Restricting the accounts only to their material clauses suggests a striking similarity in the grammatical form of compulsory heterosexuality. In both cases 'heterosexuality' takes two forms: in the first instance, as a transitive verb indicating sexual interaction: 'go out with', 'kiss', and 'snog'; in the second as the intransitive verb 'happen'. The 'compulsory' element takes the form of the causative 'to make'. In addition, in both stories the causative is extended by a process of conation, or trying to do something (Halliday 2014: 572).

Table 8.1 Grammatical analysis of some clauses

Speedo:	they	were trying to make	the football girls	snog	one of them
Beth:	they	tried to make	me	go out with	this boy
	Initiator		**Actor**		**Goal**

Table 8.2 Investigation of the process types in the clauses of each account

Clauses in Beth's account	*Process types*
they tried to make me go out with this boy	material
when I wouldn't kiss him	material
when that didn't happen	material
they shoved me off a kerb	material
I didn't want to	mental
I didn't want to be near him	mental
I didn't want to	mental
he were nasty	relational
I were thirteen	relational
he were a dick	relational

Table 8.3 Clauses in Speedo's account

Clauses in Speedo's account	*Process types*
they were trying to make the football girls snog one of them	material
it's not gonna happen	material
it's not gonna happen	material
I KNOW them	mental
gay, aren't they	relational
I was like	verbal
they're like	verbal
I was like, mmhm, yeah	verbal

Table 8.4 Material clauses in Speedo's and Beth's accounts

Speedo's account	*Beth's account*
they were trying to make	they tried to make
the football girls snog one of them	me go out with this boy
	when I wouldn't kiss him
it's not gonna happen (x2)	when that didn't happen
	they shoved me off a kerb

Social worlds and vulnerable selves

Having identifying some parallels in the grammatical structure of these two accounts, we are now in a position to inquire about the shapes of the social worlds these accounts offer, including how 'selves' are constructed. Consider first how each account construes the participants in the scene. Although it is clear that there were multiple people in each scene, the number of clausal participants in both accounts is reduced to three, as shown in Table 8.5. In Anna's account, these consist of the plural noun phrases 'the football boys' and 'the football girls' (with their associated third-person plural pronouns, 'they' and 'them'), and the first-person pronoun 'I'. In Beth's account the participants are reduced to 'they' (Beth's school friends), 'this boy' (and the associated third-person singular pronouns, 'he' and 'him'), and the first-person pronoun 'I'. Note the tendency in each account to treat the groups as discrete entities; Beth never singles out any of the members of her friendship group (here or at any other time in the conversation), and Anna only does so one time, with her use of the indefinite pronoun 'one' as it is used in relation to the group ('one of them').

An important contrast can be seen in how each account constructs the participants involved in the act of coercion. Both set up an antagonism between two parties. For Speedo these consist of a heterosexual binary between 'boys' trying to kiss 'girls' who do not want to. In Beth's account, on the other hand, the antagonism is not between male and female participants, but between two female participants, Beth and her group of female friends. What is perhaps more noteworthy is that the two parties in Speedo's account are two groups (the two football teams), whereas Beth's narrative constructs a singular self ('I') as at the mercy of the group she is ostensibly a part of. In other words, Beth's account is shaped in relation to a singular self that is vulnerable to the violence caused by a group. Speedo's account of compulsory heterosexuality does not seem to involve a vulnerable self.

Table 8.5 Participants in Speedo's and Beth's accounts

Participants in Speedo's account	*Participants in Beth's account*
(the football boys)/they/them	they (Beth's school friends)
the football girls/they/them	
one of them (one of the football boys)	this boy/he/him
I (Speedo)	I/me (Beth)

Table 8.6 A comparison of the clauses that serve the 'justification' function

Beth's account	*Speedo's account*
I didn't want to [go out with this boy] (mental)	gay, aren't they (relational)
I didn't want to be near him (mental)	
he were nasty (relational)	
I didn't want to [kiss him] (mental)	
I were thirteen (relational)	
he were a dick (relational)	

Consider next what happens in both accounts when the sexual act doesn't happen. In Beth's account, the consequence is physical harm: 'when that didn't happen, they shoved me off a kerb'. This 'not happening' is paralleled in Speedo's story, but with the future modality in the verbal clause where Speedo's talking to the football boys: 'I was like, "oh, it's not gonna happen. … It's not gonna happen"'. Rather than describing the consequences of it not happening, Speedo offers an explanation as to *why* 'it's not gonna happen'. The two 'sayers' (Halliday 2014: 303) in the dialogue ('I' and 'they') co-construct a justification: 'They're like, "Gay, aren't they?" And I was like, "Mmhm, yeah?"'

Beth's story, too, provides a justification for why 'that didn't happen', but hers is expressed through mental and relational clauses, all of them oriented to her own reasons why she's not kissing the boy. A comparison of the clauses that serve this 'justification' function, shown in Table 8.6, is revealing.

Justification for her refusal to do the heterosexual act requires a good deal of discursive reinforcement for Beth. In the first instance, it occurs through the repeated use of the mental clause 'I didn't want to', and in the second through relating undesirable attributes to the boy ('he were nasty', 'he were a dick'). The only attribute she relates to herself as a justification for not kissing him is her age ('I were 13'). Speedo's justification, on the other hand, requires no mention of what the football girls desire, nor whether the football boys are desirable; she needs simply to assign the football girls ('they') with the attribution 'gay'. When Speedo makes it clear to the football boys that the football girls are gay, they seem to stop pushing it. The selves here do not seem vulnerable to the type of violence Beth describes having to suffer. Indeed, at this point in Speedo's narrative the heterosexuality may not even seem compulsory: the boys try to kiss the girls, the girls refuse, no one gets hurt – or no one seems to, anyway.

A closer look, however, reveals that a vulnerable self does emerge in Speedo's account. It occurs in the bit of the conversation that occurs just prior to Extract 1, where Speedo describes the boys inquiring and speculating about the sexualities of the other women on the bus.

Extract 3

Speedo:	All the boys kept going on, how many of the girls are lesbians in the bus and I was just like, oh and they eventually came and they were like you clearly are. ((laughing)) And I was like, [what?]
Emma:	[((laughs))]
Sullivan:	I've got a [boyfriend!]
Speedo:	[You've] done it! (0.4)
	And I was like [nnyah]
Emma:	These [weren't] hockey [guys though]
Speedo:	[nn yeah]
Emma:	Oh.
Sullivan:	But they don't know [Speedo]
Speedo:	[They were] freshers
Sullivan:	They were freshers
Emma:	Oh they were [freshers]
Speedo:	[But they were] with the- football

Compulsory heterosexuality does not show up straightforwardly in this extract as a grammatical construction with a three-participant causative. Nevertheless, it is here that we can find a parallel to the vulnerable self that shows up in Beth's story in Extract 2. Consider the participants in Speedo's account, as listed in Table 8.7. The singular self occurs here as the first- and second-person singular pronoun, and, as in Beth's story, it is pitted against an antagonistic group. The antagonism here occurs not through material processes, but through a series of verbal clauses, in which 'the boys' interrogate Speedo's sexual identity, as can be seen in Table 8.8.

It is worth pointing out, however, that the verbal processes here do not depict a straightforward antagonism between the self and group, as they did in Beth's account. Beth's narrative constructed her resistance to the group's coercion through a series of mental processes: 'I didn't want to', 'he were nasty', 'he were a dick'. Speedo's account does not offer any insights into her own mental processes: she does not indicate whether she agreed or disagreed with the boys' assessments about her sexuality, and the verbal responses she reports suggest a lack of commitment. Indeed, the self constructed here is one that resists being labelled as either straight or gay. I would argue that it is this self – the self that resists such labelling – that is vulnerable in this account. It is vulnerable not only to the questioning of the boys on the bus, but also to the responses to her account that Emma and Sullivan offer in the rest of the extract.

Table 8.7 Participants in Speedo's account

Participants in Speedo's account in Extract 3
all the boys/they
the girls … in the bus
I/you (Speedo)

Table 8.8 Verbal clauses interrogating Speedo's sexual identity

Sayer	*Verbiage*
the boys	how many of the girls are lesbians in the bus
	you clearly are
	you've done it
Speedo	oh
	what?
	nnyah

This vulnerability becomes visible with a closer look at how Speedo's narrative becomes a collaborative telling at line 6. Note the different constructed dialogue responses to the moment of the story in which Speedo is labelled a lesbian ('you clearly are'). Sullivan joins in at this moment, supplying a line of dialogue on Speedo's behalf – 'I've got a boyfriend' – which is likely designed to put an end to further questioning about her sexuality.

Perhaps more revealing than the dialogue that Speedo attributes to herself are those she attributes to the footballer who is interrogating her. In line 3 she has the footballer's accusation take the form of a relational clause: 'you clearly are [a lesbian]'. Once Sullivan provides what might be considered evidence that Speedo is not a lesbian (having a boyfriend), Speedo repeats the initial accusation to take the form of a material clause in line 7: 'you've done it'. This shift can be interpreted as a subtle way of countering Sullivan's assumption that being in a heterosexual relationship precludes the possibility of being gay.

Speedo's narrative in Extract 3 can be understood as an act of resistance to Sullivan's attempt to impose a heterosexual identity upon her. Not only does Speedo resist being straightforwardly labelled as straight, she also resists the silencing of her non-normative sexual experiences, as becomes clear with the continuation of Speedo's narrative, in Extract 4. Here Speedo is revealing to Emma and Sullivan that she has 'tried it' (in other words, she has experimented sexually with women in the past), but her previous team members never judged her for doing so.

Extract 4

Speedo:	But then it is- you do- the reason I- (0.2) a lot of the time I tried
	it was because the other people [were]
Emma:	[Everybody] did it, it's peer
	pressure, I understand [that]
Speedo:	[It wasn't] peer pressure!
	[It was just what I was seeing] I was like [oh, you know]
Emma:	[Not peer pressure it's just] [you're in that]
	environment [aren't you]
Sullivan:	[hhh]
Emma:	Yeah, but it's not WRONG, is it [if s-]
Speedo:	[THAT'S THE THING,]
	if everyone else did it it wasn't wrong, it didn't matter, who
	cares, if somebody did it now in front of like half of our friends,
	they'd all be like oh my God

Note Speedo's attempt to give voice to her non-normative sexual experiences in Lines 1–2: 'a lot of the time I tried it was because the other people were'. Emma's response attempts to reframe Speedo's experience to make it understandable to her. By calling it 'peer pressure', Emma can make sense of it ('I can understand that') because it fits within a framework that she and other teammates have formulated in which university students experiment with gay sex because they are insecure and have not yet matured (Clark 2013).

With Speedo's rejection of Emma's move toward intelligibility ('It wasn't peer pressure!', Line 5) comes a discussion of an image of community that Emma may not have ever considered: a community in which sexuality is not constrained by norms. In this view of community, heterosexuality is not a structuring principle, nor are sexual experiences subject to 'pressure'; instead 'it wasn't wrong, it didn't matter, who cares' (Lines 12–13).

Speedo's acts of resistance here reveal a 'self' that her friends attempt to silence in this conversation. In my discussion of Beth's account, I described a 'vulnerable self', vulnerable by virtue of being subject to physical violence from a norm-enforcing community. I would argue that Speedo constructs a self in her narrative that is vulnerable to symbolic violence from the silencing and from disavowing her sexual experiences.

Alternative social worlds

My approach here has been to identify instances in which heterosexuality makes itself *felt* as compulsory, where heterosexuality is compulsory by virtue of its imposing violence to the self. I have argued that such accounts help us understand grammatical constructions of selves that are vulnerable in the face of compulsory heterosexuality.

After having constructed an account of a vulnerable self in the face of what she calls 'the wrong crowd', Beth goes on to describe and construct another type of social world, one that protects her from the types of attacks she encountered with her former friendship group. She recounts joining a drama group, where she met people with whom she was to form 'lasting friendships' (Clark 2016: 64). 'I just knew,' she said, 'that I needed to keep with these friends that I made, cos they were- they still are so protective over me' (Clark 2016: 65). With the arrival of the new friendship group, Beth said, the 'bullying just stopped. […] It's like they saw me get confident and get a good group of friends around me and just backed away' (Clark 2016: 65).

The image Beth presents here is of use to gender and sexuality scholars, especially in relation to the account of compulsory heterosexuality discussed in this chapter. The social world Beth describes is not one that resists the force of compulsory heterosexuality, but rather one that supports and protects the integrity of each member's sense of self.

Speedo's account also offers a new way of thinking about community. In the same way that for Beth, her 'good group of friends' served as 'an envelope to protect the integrity of the self' (Clark 2016: 71), Speedo's nostalgic account of a more sexually progressive hockey team serves as a means of making visible a disavowed, unintelligible self.

Future directions

I have argued that ethnographic methods make it possible to identify the adverse effects of gender and sexuality norms at particular moments in particular social spaces. I have analysed two instances of compulsory heterosexuality from my own ethnographic data, both resulting in violence, one physical, one symbolic. As I mentioned above, instances of symbolic violence are harder to spot, especially in largely norm-enforcing communities. Identifying these moments is well worth the effort, though, because it sheds light on the specific, localised, and largely unnoticed ways in which people are adversely affected by heteronormativity.

More importantly, though, focusing on accounts of symbolic or physical violence makes it possible to ask questions about how the self and the social world are grammatically constructed in these accounts, and to identify the alternative structures that these accounts produce. My analysis of Beth's and Speedo's accounts of compulsory heterosexuality reveals a fascinating pattern. They both first constructed a self that is vulnerable to the norms of the community. They then made reference to an alternative type of community, one that is accepting and protective of this vulnerable self.

Much gender and sexuality ethnographic research focuses on community-level resistance to compulsory heteronormativity. That said, as Hall (2013) points out, such research focuses on how these social spaces are structured according to locally constructed norms. In Barrett's (1999) ethnographic study on drag queen performances, for instance, the norms take the form of a culture-specific notion of authenticity, which become the criteria upon which these performances are evaluated. Similarly, Jones's (2012, 2014) ethnography of a British lesbian hiking group reveals a set of norms that centre around community-specific ideas about what it means to be an authentic lesbian. In Jones's (2016) ethnography of an LGBT youth group the normative pattern is oriented to the racialised marginalisation of others. These studies present a pattern in which social spaces will inevitably be governed by sets of norms.

I would encourage language, gender, and sexuality ethnographers to widen their focus, such that they look not only to the norms that structure the community, but also to those fleeting moments in the data in which participants construct alternatives to oppressive structures. A close look at Beth's and Speedo's responses to instances of compulsory heterosexuality offers a new way of thinking about how selves might be situated in social spaces. Their accounts make it possible for gender and sexuality researchers to consider the possibility that social worlds might be configured in such a way as to protect the integrity of a vulnerable self, rather than to enforce norms upon individuals.

Such a perspective, combined with the ethnographic depth and the analytic rigour of grammatical analysis, offers gender and sexuality researchers new ways of understanding the complexities of heteronormativity and the possibility of imagining how these might be transformed.

Notes

1 The name of this university, and the names of all participants are pseudonyms.
2 The transcripts follow my modified form of the conventions used for conversation analysis (CA):

[ ]	Overlapping speech
Underlining	Emphasis
CAPITALS	Loud speech
(0.4)	Length of a pause in seconds
(.)	Pause less than one-tenth of a second
((laughs))	Transcriber's descriptions or comments, contextual information
((...))	Words or lines omitted
( )	Indecipherable
(word)	Transcriber's best guess at what was said
sto::p	Colons indicate elongation of a sound (number of colons corresponds to length of elongation)

hhh Out-breaths
.hhh In-breaths
(as with colons, number of h's corresponds to length of out-breaths or in-breaths)
, Weak, 'continuing' intonation
? Rising, 'questioning' intonation
. Falling intonation

Further reading

Clark, J. (2012) *Language, sex and social structure: analysing discourses of sexuality*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

A detailed explanation of how I conducted the hockey-team ethnography can be found here. The book describes the structuring principles of the heteronormative practices of the women's hockey team.

Clark, J. (2016) *Selves, bodies and the grammar of social worlds: reimagining social change*. London: Palgrave.

This book contains more background on the ethnographic study of Beth, Maryam, and Andrew that I describe in this chapter. It offers insights into how to draw upon ethnographic and discourse analytic research to reimagine social structure.

Livia, A. and Hall, K. (1997) *Queerly phrased: language, gender, and sexuality*. New York: Oxford University Press.

This edited collection offers a wide range of contexts in which questions of identity, community, selfhood, and normativity are explored through the lens of language, gender, and sexuality. Many of the chapters in this volume draw upon ethnographic research.

Motschenbacher, H. and Stegu, M. (2013) 'Queer linguistic approaches to discourse', *Discourse & Society*, 24, pp. 519–535.

This article outlines the basic principles of Queer theory and reviews its applications in linguistic and discourse-oriented research.

O'Reilly, K. (2009). *Key concepts in ethnography*. London: Sage.

This text offers a concise and critical explanation of issues and terminology associated with ethnographic research.

Related topics

Language, gender and sexuality: reflections on the field's ongoing critical engagement with the sociopolitical landscape; applying queer theory to language, gender and sexuality research in schools; identity construction in gendered workplaces; using communities of practice and ethnography to answer sociolinguistic questions; gender and sexuality normativities.

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9

Anthropological discourse analysis and the social ordering of gender ideology

Susan U. Philips

Introduction

In this chapter I explain how I carried out anthropological discourse analysis of gender ideology in the Polynesian Kingdom of Tonga, a tiny nation in the South Pacific. I show how anthropological discourse analysis examines the relationship of forms of talk to their position within the broader social order, as well as to their immediate contexts of speech production. The ability to provide such analysis depends on a methodology that records not just one form of talk, but multiple forms of talk. When this approach is applied to the study of gender ideology, it reveals how ideas about women vary systematically across social domains. Anthropologists are also interested in how the same gender ideology occurs over and over again in repetitions of a single form of talk, or in the reproduction of culture in discourse. In this respect anthropological discourse analysis complements contemporary approaches to the study of gender and language that stress the processual, emergent, and contingent orienting to gender in face-to-face interaction.

In the discussion to follow I first explain how diversity in gender ideology came to be an issue in feminist cultural anthropology. I then focus attention on the ethnographic methodology used by anthropologists to study gender. This includes the role of recording units of interaction or discourse units within that ethnographic methodology. Finally, after a description of the design of my research project in Tonga, I provide an account of gender ideology in Tonga. I contrast two published microanalyses of gender ideology from two recorded contexts: courtroom cases of bad language and the singing, and comment on singing, in a workgroup where women were putting pieces of bark cloth together and decorating the larger piece they were making. The main purpose of this comparison is to show how different kinds of analysis can be done using different parts of a data base. The possibilities for analysis depend on how the larger project was designed and on aspects of the original data collection and processing of data in the field.

Gender ideology

The concept of gender ideology emerged during the women's movement of the 1970s. The women's movement, formally called the Women's Liberation Movement, began in the

United States and spread rapidly to other countries. Today this movement is often referred to as 'second-wave feminism', to relate it back to the first wave of feminism in the nineteenth century. A much wider range of issues was raised in the 1970s when every aspect of women's lives was subjected to feminist critique, including very general ideas about men and women.

The term 'ideology' had deliberate Marxist connotations. This was particularly true of the influential pioneering feminist theory of Firestone (2003 [1970]). The idea was that men dominated women just as the bourgeoisie dominated the working class. This domination was accomplished partly through ideology maintaining that women's subordination was both natural and in women's interest when, in reality, it was neither. In current discussions of ideas about women some scholars use the term 'discourses' in the Foucauldian sense (Foucault 1971) to talk about conventionalised sets of ideas about women and men that appear in language use. Others, like myself, retain the concept of gender ideology to foreground its connotations of the obscured power relations entailed in ideas about women and men.

Negative visions of women harm them psychologically and are used to justify their subordination. Multiple gender ideologies exist in all societies and some gender ideologies clearly benefit women more than others. Those beneficial to women can be used creatively. For example, in the United States, when fathers are urged to support stronger laws against sexual assault by being asked how they would feel if their daughters were raped, they are being asked to extend positive concepts of the father–daughter relationship to all women. The expansion of positive views of women and the denial of negative views of women, then, is a necessary part of a feminist agenda for enhancing the well-being of women worldwide. The cross-cultural documentation of gender ideology provides the basis for understanding the nature of both positive and negative views of women.

Gender ideology was taken up from the women's movement by feminist anthropologists in the early 1970s as a topic of interest. Feminist anthropologists are committed to the relevance of feminism for all women everywhere, and not just in Western European societies. In feminist anthropology the organisational distinction between public and private domains and women's exclusion from public domains was early on characterised as central to women's subordination worldwide and as justified by gender ideologies (Philips 2001, 2014).

Gender ideologies are often specific to the activities in which women participate, and to whole social domains or institutions made up of multiple activities. The location of a particular activity within a larger system can play a role in whether a given way of thinking and talking about women can travel, can move or spread from one institutional domain to another (Philips 1998, 2004a). Consider the spread of critiques of male hegemony due to the women's movement of the 1970s. These critiques moved rapidly from community activism into academia, law, education, and medicine, but how the critiques have been central ideologically differs from institutional domain to institutional domain.

For example, in the educational domain there was and still is a concern with girls' and women's access to the same forms of knowledge as men have, and to equality of treatment in and by educational institutions. In contrast, consider the legal domain. Here one key feminist issue, and the one given greatest attention in the language and law literature, has been to stop various forms of aggression towards women through the greater criminalisation of such forms that were more acceptable in the past. In this language and law literature, the key issue in both legal behaviour and in gender ideology has been women's moral credibility and the way it is undermined, particularly in cases of rape (Matoesian 1993).

There are also domains where feminist ideologies have had difficulty penetrating. Some would say that would be all domains, yet, clearly, we see more response to feminist issues in some domains than others. Worlds of engineering, computer science, and business are far more resistant to the presence of women than is true of law, medicine, and academia. As McElhinny (2014) has argued, more thinking organisationally, more pursuit of social order, is needed in the study of gender and language. Linguistic and cultural anthropologists have developed the idea that gender ideology or views of women emerge differently in different social contexts by methodologically recording multiple forms of talk which vary in some socially significant way.

Ethnography and discourse analysis in linguistic anthropology

Anthropologists typically gather discourse data while engaged in ethnographic field work. Ethnography as a methodology emerged conceptually within anthropology in the early twentieth century and has spread to other disciplines over the last half century. With this spread, the meaning of ethnography has undergone change and has come to centrally mean different things to researchers in different disciplines.

In the anthropological subdisciplines that deal with living people, ethnography as a methodology has several core or classic features not all of which may be present in a particular research project. Direct presence, or the immediate personal involvement with people in the field situation, is the key feature (as opposed to, say, mailing questionnaires to people or focusing on documents in archives). Long-term continuous presence in the field site of ethnographic fieldwork and learning the local first language are important features of ethnographic fieldwork. Immersion in the local culture so that one occupies a social organisational position within the society in some sense is also considered highly desirable. This often means living with a local family while in the field.

Participant observation in local activities is considered the specific method most characteristic of ethnography (as opposed to the interviews or experiments that anthropology shares with other disciplines). To engage in participant observation a researcher joins in or becomes part of the activities relevant to the research topic of the project. The aim is to be involved in a way that does not significantly transform or disrupt the activity in which one participates. Often the easiest way to be a participant and a selectively focused observer at the same time is as a member of an audience. Selective focus of attention is guided by the theoretical orientation of the research project. For example, in a study of gender ideology there is a focus of attention on how men and women talk and on how people talk about men and women, often regardless of the situation one is in. Field notes written during and after an activity are the standard way to make a record of the focus of attention sustained during participant observation. These properties of ethnographic fieldwork are considered relevant for a wide range of kinds of projects.

Various subdisciplines of anthropology also have more specific activities tailored to their particular theoretical and substantive agendas. For example, cultural and biological anthropologists interested in the relation between adaptation to an environment and other aspects of culture and biology might take soil samples or count crop yields.

In linguistic anthropology our specialised method is the recording, transcription, translation, and computer entry of socially occurring speech. By 'socially occurring' I mean activities that would take place whether the researcher was present or not, activities that are part of the social fabric of a place. Audio and video recordings are technological extensions of participant observation. They preserve communicative behaviour in far greater detail than field notes, although they cannot take in an activity in the way that being present can for the researcher. Long-term ethnographic experience provides information about the positioning of the activity being recorded within a broader social order. The broader ethnographic experience also offers insight into how the activity is related to other activities.

This comparative thinking about the activities in which speech occurs is motivated by linguistic anthropological theory about the nature of language that was initially put forth in the ethnography of communication (Hymes 1964). It is part of the nature of language that its central role in human society is to communicate, to transfer information from one person to other people. Culture is constituted through language use, as well as through other semiotic means. Social life itself is differentiated into various institutional domains and all humans draw selectively upon their linguistic resources to accomplish different social actions. From the inception of the ethnography of communication, with its emphasis on studying language ethnographically, there has been a fundamental methodological commitment to comparison of different speech genres or forms of talk as a way of revealing what specific linguistic forms are implicated (how linguistic resources are drawn upon selectively) in the constitution of different social realities.

Units of interaction that are bounded in some way are the basic units of research focus in this tradition because they are viewed as discourse units of meaning. Units of interaction can of course vary in complexity and scale. They also vary in how boundaries, i.e. beginnings and endings, are created and made sense of. For example, in trial courts in the United States a trial can be considered a unit of interaction, yet within that unit there are smaller named units, such as the opening, testimony, and the closing. A trial opening will consist of opening speeches by both the prosecution and defence. The boundaries between larger units are often marked by actual physical shifts in the spatial positioning of participants who have social identities specific to the activity. For example, in a trial where one witness's testimony constitutes a unit, that witness leaves the witness box when her testimony ends and she is replaced by another witness.

Different speech genres, forms of talk, or units of interaction will be enacted through different frequencies of particular linguistic forms. Comparative analysis of multiple instances of the same form of talk or of different forms of talk reveals how through language different cultural actions are accomplished. Close examination of different forms of talk makes it clear that such units, like a meeting, a dinner, a song, or a prayer, not only accomplish different social purposes through the selection of particular linguistic forms, but also through the organisation of turns at talk relative to participant identities and through the sequential structure of the discourse itself. The cultural meaning of an activity is not constituted through the particular selection of linguistic resources alone.

I have emphasised here that the recording of multiple forms of talk and their comparison distinguishes anthropological discourse analysis from other kinds of discourse analysis. In other respects anthropologists have a great deal in common with other discourse analysts in our approach to discourse. Under the influence of conversation analysis anthropologists have relied heavily on recordings that are transcribed, on diacritics in the transcripts that capture some qualities of speech, and on analysis through repeated readings and reformattings of the transcripts rather than through repeatedly listening to the recordings themselves. Like conversation analysts, anthropologists have also been influenced by ethnomethodology and see social realities as constituted through talk in face-to-face interaction. Like critical discourse analysts, anthropologists who analyse discourse are interested in power, in the way relations of domination and subordination are constituted through discourse (Philips 1998, 2004b). And like social interactionists who share our ethnography of communication heritage, anthropologists have a theoretical commitment to the idea that language has meaning through its indexical relationship to the context in which speech is uttered, or to its situatedness.

In contrast to other discourse analysis traditions, however, anthropologists tend to work in non-European cultures and on non-Indo-European languages. Here the broader ethnographic method of participant observation is crucially drawn upon in making sense of spoken discourse and in locating multiple forms of discourse within a broader social order.

In thinking about how speech is socially organised above the level of its immediate interactional context, linguistic anthropologists draw upon sociocultural distinctions that have proved useful in cultural anthropology and sociology. General organisational concepts such as 'social domains' and 'institutions' have been part of sociolinguistics as broadly defined for decades. The distinction between private and public social domains has been important in cultural anthropology and linguistic anthropology in describing the gendered organisation of speech and the way such organisation can subordinate women. As we will see in the next section, the distinction between state and civil society and the role of political economy in the gendering of speech have also been important social organisational concepts for me as well as for other students of gender.

I turn now to a discussion of the research design that led to my characterisations of gender ideology in Tongan discourse.

The research design of my Tongan study of language use

The data I have on Tongan gender ideology comes from a research project I carried out in the Polynesian Kingdom of Tonga. Culturally and linguistically Tonga has a great deal in common with other Polynesian societies in the region, including Samoa, Tahiti, and Hawai'i. Tonga as a nation state is comprised of a group of islands in the South Pacific with a population of approximately 100,000. An equal number of Tongans live overseas in a diaspora located primarily in former British colonies, including Great Britain itself, the United States, New Zealand, and Australia. Tonga was a colony of Great Britain for a period during which British governmental and legal forms were introduced into the country. And it is a constitutional monarchy up to this day.

The primary purpose of the research project that provided the data on Tongan gender ideologies was to examine the way convincing evidence is created through language use in Tongan courtrooms. What Tongan linguistic resources were mustered to convey greater or lesser certainty or persuasiveness about what really happened in court cases where guilt or innocence is decided? My thinking was that to describe what was characteristic of evidence in Tongan courtroom resolutions of conflict, it would be useful to compare language use in different court jurisdictions with each other, and also to compare courtroom speech with non-courtroom speech. For non-courtroom speech, I sought language use in other formal or highly structured public activities, particularly meetings where conflicts might similarly be dealt with. I also aimed to record more conversational activity to see if non-court and court activities were similar to each other yet different from conversation by virtue of their formal public nature.

I was particularly interested in comparing language use in the higher versus lower trial courts. In Tonga the lower-level Magistrates' Courts that heard misdemeanors and minor civil matters were all carried out in the Tongan language and were presided over by Tongan magistrates who did not have formal legal degrees. The higher-level Supreme Court heard felonies and major civil suits, was bilingual in Tongan and English, and was presided over by a British judge with formal legal training. In British-derived legal systems evidence standards are more strictly imposed in such higher-level trial courts. This raised questions about whether and how different legal standards for evidence would be manifested in the two court levels.

In an earlier pilot research project in Tonga I had seen how these two court levels differed in their locations in ways that correlated with a political economic concept of social organisation. Gundar-Frank's concept of political economy (1967) directly or indirectly had already influenced other linguistic anthropological research relating language, gender, and political economy that I have reviewed (Philips 2004b). Frank characterised nation states in Latin America that had been colonised by Europeans as consisting of communities of increasing size and institutional complexity. Each community had economic resources that were being extracted from it by the next largest community under the coercion of Europeans, with all wealth ultimately flowing to European economic centres.

I had seen the way Alaskan indigenous communities were organised into villages and regional centres, and I had seen how actual formal law only extended institutionally as far 'down' as the regional centres in Alaska. In Tonga I saw again that courts functioned differently in regional centres and villages. The villages on the main island of Tongatapu had homes, churches, schools, multi-purpose halls or large sheds, and small thinly stocked roadside stands that sold canned food and cigarettes. In addition to such structures, the regional centre of Nuku'alofa had supermarkets, a large open-air market for local produce, banks, government offices, stores, restaurants, gas stations, and a bus station that was the starting point for all routes on the island. The other smaller island groups similarly had a village-regional centre organisational distinction based on the kinds of activities possible in them.

In Tonga, only Nuku'alofa, the capital of the country, had a higher-level trial court, the Supreme Court, a court of general jurisdiction. The judge from that court went on circuit to outlying island groups to hear cases. This regional centre also had two lower-level Magistrates' Courts with limited jurisdiction that met every day. Most villages did not even have Magistrates' Courts. There were three such courts on each side of the main island and each of them only met for a few hours one day a week.

Based on my awareness of this political economic organisation of Tongan communities, the first year of the project was located in a village and the second year of the project was located in the regional centre of Nuku'alofa. In Year One, I lived with a family in a large village for several months where there was a court and I first observed and then recorded all proceedings in the local court on a weekly basis. I also recorded a women's work group in which women put pieces of bark together and stencilled designs on them with a vegetable dye. My purpose was to get a sample of women's conversation. I had learned during an earlier pilot project that although people in the village were comfortable with, and some were even keen on, having public activities recorded, they were not so eager to have their private lives recorded inside their homes. In addition, socialising that was not on a large scale was usually gender segregated. Such socialising might take place in a work group in a back yard. Or it could be a party on the verandah where the narcotic root *kava* was drunk during conversation and singing. So I knew my recording of more casual conversation would be gender segregated. It was these understandings that led me to the women's work group, called a *koka'anga*.

Following those few months that I lived in this village, a University of Arizona graduate research assistant moved into the village and took on responsibility for recording other kinds of non-court speech activities that included village-level meetings of various kinds, church activities, feasts, and men's conversation in gender segregated *kava* parties and a work group. At my request this research assistant made a point of recording women as well as men in public activities, even though their presence in public was limited.

Year Two was based in the regional centre. I spent the first few months recording proceedings in the higher-level Supreme Court and then in the final phase a second graduate student assistant moved into the regional centre and recorded proceedings in the two lower-level Magistrates' Courts. In these four phases of the research as I alternated with my research assistants, we timed our presences so that we always overlapped, so that before one of us left the next one would arrive.

During all phases of this two-year period we hired local Tongans to transcribe, translate, and computer enter subsets of the audio recordings. Roughly about half of the audio recordings, or about 50 hours of recordings, were processed in this way.

In sum, this project was designed to allow for several different kinds of comparisons. These comparisons were both potentiated and constrained by my political economic understanding of Tongan social order: comparison between Magistrates' Courts in the village versus the regional centre; comparisons between the Magistrates' Courts and the Supreme Court; comparisons between village-level court talk and village-level non-court formal public activities; and comparisons between conversational speech and more formally organised speech at the village level. This did not mean that I fully intended to pursue all of those comparisons; rather, it meant that I could make such comparisons if it appeared that to do so would shed light on what was characteristic of Tongan legal language. It was at this stage of the research process, then, that the potential for anthropological discourse analysis involving the comparison of multiple forms of discourse, recognised as socially ordered, was created.

The gender ideology data

When all of the data was considered together, it was clear that three gender dyads were being made salient by Tongans in discourse across a range of situations, including many in which I participated without recording. These were the sister–brother relationship, the husband–wife relationship, and the sweetheart–sweetheart relationship (Philips 2014). In Besnier's earlier (1997) discussion of Tongan *faka-leiti*, 'men who act like women', one can see that the men talked about all three of these relationships: the duty to the sister not to shame her and the pain that the sweetheart relationship could not become that of husband and wife. In later work (2004), Besnier characterised these dyads as traditional and argued that there were many kinds of modern identities such as flea-market seller or pawnshop dealer deriving from transnational relationships with overseas Tongans that simply could not be captured by those dyads. Nevertheless their generative power is still robust. Earlier research on gender identities in Samoa and Tonga by cultural anthropologists had given attention to the sister and wife identities, but had not recognised the import of the sweetheart relationship. In addition, these identities were often discussed as if they floated free, rather than being focused on and made explicit in particular social contexts that were part of the larger social organisation of Tongan life. A linguistic anthropological approach that relies on recording socially occurring activities is able to provide this grounding.

The three dyads were predictably talked about or oriented to in socially organised specific forms of talk and social situations. The sweetheart relationship was salient in love songs that saturated the radio and were composed and sung live in and for a range of situations. The husband–wife relationship appeared early on in my data collection, but it was the least salient of the three dyads overall in the data base. The sister–brother relationship was the dyad that came up in the greatest range of circumstances. The brother is said to be subordinated to the sister and should adhere to her wishes, whereas in the wife–husband relationship the husband is clearly dominant. This means the sister identity is the most productive and prominent identity to draw upon metaphorically in advocating positive treatment of women.

There were four key sources of information that I drew upon to make sense of the recordings themselves. First, there was my actual participation in a wide range of Tongan situations, and participation with my research assistants in the activities I recorded. Second, my female assistants and I took notes during recording and afterwards we reviewed what had gone on and I asked them questions about their knowledge of the activity we had just recorded. I also reviewed some data with two highly respected older Tongan consultants considered to be specialists in Tongan language and culture, one male and one female. With the male who was considered the most respected intellectual in Tonga, I reviewed data from the village Magistrate's Court. With the female, who had been the principal of the most highly regarded girls' high school in the country, I worked on translating a play she had written for the girls in her school that modelled traditional female behaviour.

Third, during the processing of the speech data with my assistants, through transcription, translation, and computer entry of data while in the field, I asked them questions about the material we were working with and they also frequently brought to my attention issues they thought they needed to explain to me. Fourth, I carried out close textual analysis of transcripts and translations of subsets of the data we had worked with, primarily while back in the United States, bearing in mind the other sources of information already drawn upon.

Close textual analysis of gender ideology was carried out on two subsets of data: four cases of 'bad language', or *lea kovi*, from the Magistrate's Court data (Philips 2000) and one four-hour women's work party from the village where I lived during my first field trip (Philips 2007). As I noted in the introduction, my main purpose in describing these two analyses is to show how the location of a subset of data within a larger database both constrains and facilitates the kind of analysis that can be done with it.

Magistrate's Court data

Overall, more data from the Magistrate's Courts was recorded, transcribed, translated, computer entered, and analysed than from any other setting. Approximately 32 hours were recorded and 16 hours were processed in the field, with about half of the data coming from the village court and half from the town court. The internal sequential structure of the processed Magistrate's Court cases was analysed. Of the 86 cases complete from charge to sentencing, only what were considered the three more serious criminal charges, based on sentencings, had a discourse unit within the sequence called in Tongan, *'akonaki*, 'counselling'. In this moralising section defendants were told why what they did was wrong. These three charges were theft, assault, and bad language (Philips 2004a).

Women only appeared in the Magistrate's Courts as victims of bad language or assault, not as perpetrators (except for one case of theft) or in any other court role such as magistrate, clerk, lawyer, police prosecutor, or policeman. In bad-language cases men were described as yelling angrily in public, using bad language, swearing, or threatening women. In all four of the cases I examined closely, and in others not examined closely, the brother–sister relationship was mentioned or heard by my research assistants as referring to the brother–sister relationship (Philips 2004a, 2000).

Here is an example of the magistrate moralising about a bad-language case:

1) Ko e ‘ulungaanga palakū
That was a disgusting thing

Na’a ke fai
You did.

Na’a o kinaua,
They two went,

Ko si’i ongo faifekau
The two little missionaries

ke fakamafola
to spread the gospel

‘e fu’u kape mai.
And you swore repeatedly

‘Ikai ke ‘ilo na’a
You didn’t know

Ko homou kāinga.
If they were your relatives.

(Philips 2004a: 240)

The relationship between ‘brother’, *tuonga’ane*, and ‘sister’, *tuofefine*, is extended to cross-gender cousins indefinitely (i.e. to what in English are called second cousins, first cousins once removed, third cousins, etc.). The relationship has its own language ideology. One is not supposed to engage in even allusive ribald scatological talk when brothers and sisters or cousins are co-present out of respect for this relationship, and the siblings should likewise not do so with each other, sometimes to the point of significant mutual avoidance.

In actuality none of my four closely analysed cases involved sisters and brothers, although one involved distant cross-gender cousins. The other cases I did not examine closely, including cases not processed, seemed to involve angry boyfriends yelling at their girlfriends in public. Yet magistrates either told defendants that the bad language was wrong because relatives and, more specifically, brothers and sisters, might have been present, or that it is necessary to ‘stay mutually respectful’, *nofo feulu’ufi*, which my assistants heard as a direct reference to the brother–sister relationship. These young adult female research assistants said it is common for people to be exhorted to stay mutually respectful in public gatherings and this expression is heard as specifically referring to cross-gender relations modelled on the sister–brother relationship.

Since, Tongans explained to me, one cannot personally know all of the members of the opposite sex with whom one is in this tabooed relationship, particularly when going outside one’s own village, it is necessary in public to treat all as potential cross-gender siblings – or, since the view seems more that of men than women, to act as if any woman could be a classificatory sister, and treat her like a sister. This then becomes the cultural foundation for respectful cross-gender relations in civil society. Since the primary goal of the Magistrate's Courts is to maintain social order, and discourage disorder, this particular morality that rests on the brother–sister relationship has a readily comprehensible logic. Broad Tongan gender ideology conceptualises the brother as subordinated to the sister. Examples of this subordination often involve the sister asking the brother for things that belong to him, such as his crops, or pieces of his furniture. This means the sister female identity, and not that of the wife or the sweetheart, is the most productive and prominent identity to draw upon metaphorically in advocating positive treatment of women. This is similar to the earlier example where fathers in the United States are asked how they would feel if it was their daughters who were raped when trying to get support for more effective legal treatment of rape cases.

The strength of the micro-analysis done on the four bad-language cases stems from the close analysis of the entire Magistrate's Court database and from the multiple occurrences of bad-language cases where the brother–sister relationship is invoked. I consider it a weakness that I was not able to interview the parties to the conflicts at issue. I would like to have seen how they talked about the conflicts. I would also like to have obtained social background information on the men and the women to determine whether bad-language cases (and women taking men to court) are associated with particular life situations. Clearly young women predominated in these cases and there is a view expressed by some Tongans that disrespect to the woman disrespects the entire family and cannot be allowed to pass. I could not, however, go beyond this in efforts to understand the cases.

Women's work group data

The women's work group, as noted earlier, was recorded in order to get a sample of women's conversation. Because the legal proceedings were the focus of the research and not women's speech, only one work group was recorded in this project. However, it was considered important and interesting enough to process in the field. The work group lasted four hours, which means there was much less data to consider closely here than in the Magistrate's Court data of approximately 16 hours.

In this activity, called a *koka'anga*, 'bark cloth work group', 12 women in the village were making a large sheet of *tapa*, 'bark cloth', about 70 feet long, out of many small pieces brought by the women. Gifting of tapa is important on ritual occasions such as funerals and college graduations, among other uses. As the women stuck the pieces together they stencilled a design on them. Each month a different woman in the group took the final product home as hers. In the paper I wrote about this activity (Philips 2007), I explained that the women and their work symbolically invoked the powerful image of a traditional activity that produced women's wealth. At the same time their work was materially marginal in that the value of the work product was not great relative to what the women could be paid if they had work that paid an hourly wage or salary.

At the most general level, the activity consisted of alternations between conversation and the singing of love songs. Because there were so many women in the group and a great deal of thumping from applying the stain over the stencils and rolling over the bark cloth, the conversation was difficult to process. We were still able to identify enough segments of speakers and speech to get a general idea of their conversations. The love songs, sung by all together, were much clearer.

The love songs are usually mentioned by Tongans as composed by men to their girlfriends, although women do compose love songs and love songs are sung in a range of situations. They generally elevate the person addressed in the song and speak of the longing and/or loss experienced by the composer/singer for whom the loved one is unreachable, temporarily or permanently. The phrases of the work group songs themselves were gender neutral, so could be imagined as referring to a same-gender relationship as well as a cross-gender relationship.

Here is the transcription and translation of one verse and chorus of a love song from the work group:

2) First verse

He uisa ‘e kuo kafo si ‘oku loto	Oh my wounded heart cries out
He me’a vivili ko e māvae	From this unending separation
He’uisa ‘e kuo kafo, si ‘oku loto	Oh my wounded heart cries out
He me’a vivili, ko e māvae	From this unending separation
Chorus	
He ‘oiauā tangi ‘oiauā	Oh cry oh
Kuo ‘ikai te u ‘ilo pe ‘e anga-fēfē	I cannot understand a thing like this
He ta’e ‘alo’aloa si’i tokelau	How could it have come from the gentle northern wind
He ngahau kuo uhu si ‘oku mafu	The arrow that pierces my heart

(Philips 2007: 60)

These songs are metaphorical, sweet, and saturated with tender romantic feeling when one hears them on the radio or sung while a young woman dances a *tau’olunga*, a traditional individual dance. In the context of the *koka’anga*, however, the songs were sung vigorously with a heavy beat that matched the pounding and rolling of the tapa. The women, especially the older women, called out reports that this or that other woman in their group was longing for a man, or missed her man overseas, hinting at unlikely infidelity, and even pointing at one’s own private parts. They were imagining the words of the songs of longing as coming from a woman, not a man. These remarks were greeted with loud raucous laughter and understood as ways of teasing and joking with the older women who were accused of dreaming of and longing for a man. There was also the added benefit of embarrassing the younger women. Because the sweetheart relationship is supposed to be chaste, all the joking and teasing offered a counterpoint that foregrounds sexual attraction and even the possibility of infidelity. The same people are offering both the tender words and the bawdy commentary on the words, providing two different visions of the sweetheart relationship, but with both views treating it as outside of and separate from marriage. Here an advantage of this data is that is allows the researcher to arrive at a different understanding of the gender ideology provided by the women’s style of singing and commentary than could be gleaned from other contexts where the genre of love songs is performed.

A key difference from the court research was that all the women in the group lived in the village where I was living and where my research assistant had lived all her life. She knew all the women in the group and her sister was a member, so I was able to obtain social background information on the women in a way I was not able to do with the parties to court cases. This included their age, whether they were married, had children, what their husbands did for work, and to some extent what the household composition of their homes was. This data supported my claim that the women engaged in the work were relatively poor compared to some in the village. They were also predominantly from a minority church denomination that had been politically and economically marginalised for at least decades and its members were thought to adhere to traditional Tongan ways more than members of other religious denominations. The work group activity was in these specific ways socially positioned.

There was a weakness in the analysis possible from this data because I only had recorded the one work group, and I did not know how much I could generalise about what I witnessed, whereas I was confident from the more substantial Magistrate's Court data that I was documenting a common phenomenon. I was fairly confident that I would see the same counterpoint between words and the way they were sung among women of the same religious denomination because denomination is, as I have already noted, predictive of a range of aspects of life. I do not, however, know when sexual joking is appropriate across social domains.

Discussion

There are several general points illustrated by this comparison of two gender ideology analyses. There are multiple distinctive gender ideologies in any given society. Gender ideologies are context- and genre-specific, although they may have underlying principles in common. In this case both the bad language and the sexual joking have scatological elements, but these are framed very differently. Understanding of a familiar gender ideology can change when it is examined in more than one context. This was the case with the love songs, which are no longer demure as cast by the singers in the work group. It was also true of the bad-language cases in that the context of the Magistrate's Court generalises the principle of respect for the sister to all cross-gender public activities in a way I could not glean from talk about real family lives.

Methodologically it would not be possible to carry out such comparative analyses of this kind without recording different types of social activities. It would also not have been possible without the broader ethnographic methodology that helped make sense of those activities. Even then, however, the overall research agenda created constraints on the kinds of analyses that were possible. That same agenda also made possible or potentiated certain kinds of analysis.

Future directions

Ethnographic methodology is particularly important for cross-cultural studies of gender, language, and sexuality. Given a commitment to the relevance of feminist critiques and desires for change in all societies, there is a need for more research in non-Western cultures where non-Indo-European languages are spoken. Methodologically the ability of the researcher to anchor her claims empirically by reference to actual recordings of speech is again particularly important in the study of other cultures.

I think of the research I have described here as 'synchronic' in that it treats all of the Tongan data as happening at a given point in time, even though the research project took place over two years. My own broader involvement with Tonga and Tongans in both Tonga and the United States took place over more than a 20-year period and I saw many changes in Tongan society during that time. An important future direction for ethnographic methods in the study of gender and language is the study of changes over time, or 'diachronic' studies. This is particularly important where there is a strong sentiment for change that directly affects women's well-being, as in many Western nations. For example, the recent #MeToo movement in the United States involved strong demands for women to be free of sexual harassment in the workplace. A business that has a poor reputation regarding its treatment of women, yet asserts a commitment to change, can be studied ethnographically at two points in time to determine whether and how change is taking place.

Ultimately, at the heart of this anthropological methodology is the idea of thinking comparatively to ask how the speech produced in one real-time activity is both similar to and different from speech in another real-time activity.

Acknowledegments

The research described here was funded by the National Science Foundation Linguistic Program. I thank the Government of Tonga for permission to carry out this research, and the Honourable Geoffrey Martin, then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who oversaw the court research. Among the many Tongans who supported this work I would particularly like to express my appreciation for the many kindnesses of the late Vili Salakielu, Loukinikini 'Ahio, Kalasi Salakielu, and Toti and Liliani Maile.

Further reading

Dick, H. (2018) *Words of passage: national belonging and the imagined lives of Mexican migrants*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Dick describes gender differences in how people in a Mexican city use talk about migration to the United States. Methodologically the author shows how interview data can capture the same kinds of gender representations heard in everyday talk.

Hoffman, K. (2008) *We share walls: language, land, and gender in Berber Morocco*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Hoffman shows how the political economy of southern Morocco takes men out of Berber mountain villages for migrant labour in non-Berber towns while women stay in the villages. This labour organisation is related to ongoing changes in gendered forms of song and speech that in turn also organise Berber and Arabic languages.

Kulick, D. (1992) *Language shift and cultural reproduction: socialization, self and syncretism in a Papua New Guinea village*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kulick shows how the local village-level indigenous language is associated with negatively evaluated women's genres of speech. Tok Pisin, a language of wider communication, is associated with positively evaluated men's genres and the wider national political economy, resulting in language shift.

Mani, L. (1998) *Contentious traditions: the debate on sati in colonial India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

This book documents multiple representations of widow-burning in written genres of discourse drawn from diverse colonially relevant forms of social organisation. Europeans used the treatment of women in colonial contexts to justify colonial cultural transformations.

McElhinney, B. (ed) (2007) *Words, worlds, and material girls: language, gender, globalization*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

This edited collection show how gender is articulated with changing global economies through the ordering of multiple linguistic varieties and forms of talk.

Related topics

Interactional sociolinguistics: foundations, developments, and applications to language, gender, and sexuality; text trajectories and gendered inequalities in institutions; the accomplishment of gender in interaction: ethnomethodological and conversation analytic approaches to gender; semiotic representations of women criminals; ethnography and the shifting semiotics of gender and sexuality.

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10

Using communities of practice and ethnography to answer sociolinguistic questions

Ila Nagar

Introduction

My research focuses on what informs identity and how identity is formed in interaction. This chapter provides a diachronic view of my interactions with *jananas* and engages with sociolinguistic and ethnographic methods as reliable tools to study marginalised communities. In doing so, I engage with my work with the *janana* community but the primary focus is the theoretical and methodological frameworks that guided my research. I study a community of men who self-identify as *jananas*, also called *kotis*, in Lucknow, India (Cohen 2005; Hall 2005). *Jananas* are assigned male at birth, fall in the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder, desire other men, possibly engage in sex work with other men, and simultaneously embrace heteronormative sexuality (with their wives and families) and reject it (as *jananas* with other *jananas* or with their male sexual partners). Thus, they occupy a complex space in the gender and sexuality continuum. I have been working with *jananas* since 2003. An essential guideline for understanding sexualities in South Asian contexts is that sexuality goes beyond mere sexual practice and marginalised people manage it in varied ways that are locally meaningful. Standards with which we view some sexual identities might not apply to others and vice versa.

I use ethnography and communities of practice (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992) as methodological frameworks to study the *janana* community of practice (CofP). Ethnography is defined as theoretical and methodological assumptions that guide a researcher in the field. Ethnography as a theoretical framework for being in the field, writing about research findings, and ways of collecting data has been widely used across disciplines and in language, gender, and sexuality research (see Zimman and Hall 2016 for an overview of this research). CofP is a theoretical framework that, within the study of language, helps researchers understand motivations behind linguistic variation. My goal in this chapter is to highlight the implications of using ethnography and CofPs as methodological frameworks in my work and to underline the collaborations between these two frameworks in sociolinguistic research. It has been more than 25 years since Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) fundamentally changed the way we understood how language variation works and called for understanding local practices to explain more global movements in language change. The CofP framework distinguishes practice from activity, and practice is understood as an aggregate of aspects of practice. These are practice as meaning, practice as community, practice as learning, practice as boundary, and knowing in practice (Wenger 1998: 54). For the CofP framework the concept of practice implies a deeper engagement with the community which goes beyond simply participating in activities together (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2007: 28) and extends to being incorporated in practices to the extent of being defined by them and also defining them. While early sociolinguistics mapped language use onto gender, class, socio-economic status, occupation, and education, sociolinguistic theory in the last two decades has moved towards investigating local practices that guide specific language usage. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (ibid.) brought the communities of practice framework into linguistics from the work of Lave and Wenger (1991), which was a step towards understanding how people learn in certain situations and how this learning is a social process, which is a matter of participation in communities of practice. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet demonstrated that identifying communities of practice has an application for sociolinguistics. They proposed looking at language use and social indicators as informing one another. By tracing language variation to the local realities of members of communities, it is possible to understand how local practices govern large-scale language variation. The benchmark of the framework is social practice, and the ways in which regular practices influence language use. The framework suggests that language variation happens within communities of practice which are 'aggregates of people who come together around a mutual enterprise' (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992: 464); something that brings members together on a regular basis for a practice that changes their interaction with their world. Engaging in this community of practice/mutual enterprise leads to specific forms of learning. According to this framework, an individual's identity is constructed in terms of what they experience in their communities of practice and how they (re)present the experience.

This chapter accomplishes the following: (1) it defines the communities of practice framework; (2) it shows how ethnography and understanding meaning-making within communities of practice go hand in hand; and (3) it demonstrates why the communities of practice framework in spite of some of the critiques of the framework (Angouri 2018; Davies 2005; King 2014) was an appropriate tool for me to understand meaning in the *janana* community. In the next section, I outline major works that inform our understanding of communities of practice and ethnography. I then discuss how, as sociolinguistic researchers, we can use CofP to find nuances in the gender and sexuality continua and language use in cultures that we do not know well or in cultures to which we belong. Cultural anthropologists understand culture as historically specific meaning-making. For CofP, culture and meaning are tied to one another. As Wenger (1998: 54) writes, 'The negotiation of meaning is a productive process, but negotiating meaning is not constructing it from scratch. Meaning is not pre-existing, but neither is it simply made up. Negotiating meaning is at once both historical and dynamic, contextual and unique'. I explain how the nuances in gender and sexuality which are situated in culture allow us to comment on how language use becomes meaningful in communities. I use examples to highlight how the communities of practice framework and ethnography inform my findings. This chapter addresses questions about identifying cultures in communities, finding identity in interaction, and how to make local meaning speak to global ideas about culture, gender, and language use.

Communities of practice and ethnography

A CofP serves as a theoretical tool to determine how people use language to understand their own place within larger structures. The *janana* community is not clearly defined by any boundaries; by which I mean, one cannot locate them by a common space, profession, cause, or other commonalities that one can use to identify a community. Nonetheless, *jananas* come together around mutually defined practices, and that is what makes them a CofP. These defined practices are what need to be 'found', and ethnography seems to offer the other fundamentally important tool in helping 'find' these practices.

The CofP framework has been used by scholars to understand language use and to investigate identity in social practice. Moore (2006) uses analysis of narratives to show how girls in Midland High School negotiate meaning and use seemingly simple social practices like dance to symbolise their affinity with a particular social group. Mendoza-Denton (2008), Bulcholtz (1999), and Eckert (2000) have all found similar meaning in social practices unique to the groups that they studied in high schools and communities formed by teenagers around school activities. An entire issue of the journal *Language in Society* was dedicated to identifying and analysing the usefulness and applicability of the framework. In this issue, scholars found that the framework could be useful in explaining language use (Bucholtz 1999), in seeing categories such as nerd girls and the influence of outside communities of practice on the experience of pregnant women (Freed 1999), and how certain language uses cannot be explained by the community practice framework (Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999). While the scope of the framework has been tested in various communities across the world, scholars have also debated limitations of the framework (Davies 2005). Eckert and Wenger (2005) have responded to the critique, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999) have cautioned against using the framework in situations where it might not apply, and others have noted that defining exact practices should be a given for scholars using the framework (King 2014). Scholars have also pointed to macro-concepts 'such as taken for granted presuppositions about appropriate cultural behaviour' (Holmes 2018: 34) that can influence interactions between people. An understanding of the full extent to which social factors and cultural norms influence linguistic behaviour cannot be achieved without studying local meaning and deciphering what influences minute speech and behavioural patterns in a community.

A CofP is defined by learning and practices. It is not enough to say that a community of people living together or occupying spaces where they meet and share practices constitutes a CofP. These practices define how a community works in response to the world around it and the parameters of community interaction. These parameters must be articulated by members of the community for themselves and as a negotiation with the broader structures within which they operate to understand the interactions and reactions of a CofP. To say that a community is a CofP without explaining the practices that make it a CofP is not productive to the framework. When it comes to defining motivations behind specific linguistic choices like showing why exactly variation in language use might happen in some contexts and not in others, it is important to highlight practices of a CofP. Ethnographic method is essential in coming to know a community and its motivations. The CofP framework relies on finding local meaning and, by default, propagates ethnographic methods. O'Reilly (2009: 3) writes: 'Ethnography draws on a family of methods, involving direct and sustained contact with human agents, within the context of their daily lives (and cultures), watching what happens, listening to what is said, and asking questions'. Ethnographic methods assume significant time spent with a community, and presenting a written ethnography is an exercise not just in reporting what the researcher learned in the field but is a way to represent social life in its complexity and nuance. How can one find meaning in a community without rigorous study of practice in the community? Therefore, in my view, it is unlikely that one can study meaning and practices in a community without collecting data with ethnographic methodology in mind.

Strathern (1991) points to the complexity of practice and suggests that any practice within a community can be seen from perspectives that make it more and more complicated. Practice is a process, and ethnography engages with it in ways that make the presentation of practices true to whatever level possible. The complexity of practice makes the task of a sociolinguist working with the communities of practice framework critical since no one method of data collection is enough to produce results that can be considered sufficiently transparent. In a way, recognising that only partial connections between practice, communities, and their context can be made is a powerful notion. As we address questions of language use in context within communities, we can look for perspectives that come from ethnographic fieldwork and address their meaning to members of the community. My work with *jananas* included ethnographic methods such as participant observation, one-on-one interviews, and focus group interviews. Working with the *janana* community using ethnographic methods has shown me varied perspectives on the community which come from the participants who give multidimensional perspectives in what they say about their lives and how I saw their lives in Lucknow. This enhances the richness and diversity of the findings and tells me that *jananas* are a CofP. Questions of meaning within particular practice also need to be explained within the specific context of broader social configurations like patriarchy, casteism, racism, sexuality, or class. Our job as sociolinguists has to be understood as negotiators of these four separate spheres: ethnography, communities of practice, research questions, and the place of a specific community of practice in its own global context (Nagar 2019). A discussion about ethnography and working with a specific community of practice cannot be complete without also establishing the researcher's role, positionality, and the power dynamics their positionality creates within the community that they study. According to Strathern (1991: 27):

> I wish to suggest a third way of personifying the ethnographic experience, to draw a figure who seems to me more than one person, indeed more than a person. What happens 'takes place' because it happens somewhere, in the presence of others, because events become interventions, the subjectivity of different persons the issue.

Strathern complicates the picture of ethnography. Representation, the ethnographer, and writing an ethnography inform how one should look at and represent a community of practice and answer sociolinguistic questions. Local ethnographic findings within a CofP can be indexical of wider social factors, power interests, and conflicts. When a researcher is working to understand language variation s/he cannot make connections between language use and a community of practice without also addressing her own positionality, and issues of practice and power that the community engages in to respond to the world – task that only ethnography can answer.

In the next section, I discuss examples from my own research that highlight the complexity of being a member of a community and how this is manifest in linguistic choices members make.

Background and method: *jananas* and their lived experiences

Jananas live in transitional spaces. They are lower-middle-class to lower-class people with uneven incomes and uneven prospects of income. Many *jananas* marry women and fulfil responsibilities that come with being a man in their cultural context: providing financial support to parents, siblings, nieces and nephews, children, wives, and sometimes siblings' families. Since income is uneven for members of this community, supporting families financially is a constant struggle. Many *jananas* use the money they earn from sex work to support families. In spite of their admissions of masculine roles, *jananas* say that they are not men, they are not women, and they are not *hijras*.[1] In fact, they place themselves in all of these categories and none of them, depending on their context. Being a *janana* means being fluid with gender roles and subjectivities.

My interactions with *jananas* started in 2003 when I was a graduate student starting a research project on language and gender. I knew nothing about this community. As I was looking for a dissertation topic, a contact at a non-profit organisation in New Delhi suggested that I visit Lucknow and meet with *jananas* since my interest was language. I went to Lucknow from New Delhi without any information about what I was going to do. I established contact with a non-profit organisation that worked in the HIV/AIDS sectors for at-risk men and met *jananas* first through the non-profit organisation and then through *jananas* I had initially met. My participant observation and interviews with *jananas* usually happened in three spaces – the non-profit office, city parks where *jananas* 'hung out' and some homeless *jananas* lived, and in spaces where they invited me, usually monuments around the city, a quiet street, or, in some instances, their homes. The *jananas* I interviewed presented a range within the lower socio-economic classes. The examples I present below show how I used my ethnographic data to analyse *jananas* as a community of practice to answer sociolinguistic questions. The examples come from two different points in my fieldwork with *jananas* who were rather different from each other yet inhabited the same marginalised social space. As is often the case with ethnographic research, my research questions changed over the years and with the amount of time I spent with *jananas* in Lucknow. I started working with *jananas* in 2003 when my research question was primarily about the *Farasi*: a secret code *jananas* use in situations that need discretion. By 2015, I was primarily interested in the relationship between legal discourses and how something not necessarily experienced by *jananas* on an everyday basis (specific laws concerning homosexuality) affected *janana* subjectivity and ways in which this was reflected in language use.

While my questions changed over time, my methodology remained consistent. I started noticing dimensions of a CofP in the *janana* community early in the process of fieldwork. In the community, there was mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and a set of negotiable resources that members of the community shared. Mutual engagement entails that participants interact with other participants on a regular basis. According to Wenger (1998: 85), 'Over time, the joint pursuit of an enterprise results in a shared repertoire of joint resources for negotiating meaning', and joint enterprise is, 'not just a stated shared goal but a negotiated enterprise, involving the complex relationships of mutual accountability that become part of the practice of the community' (Holmes and Meyerhoff 1999: 175). For the *janana* community, mutual engagement was establishing a certain kind of relationship with *hijras* who could be perpetual sources of support or physical and verbal violence to the *janana* community, or both. It was also establishing a way to engage with family; to hide their *janana* status while maintaining all responsibilities of being a family man in some cases. It was finding a way to be *janana*, and this translated into finding other *jananas* and being with them to learn to be *janana* or mentoring younger *jananas* to be *janana*. Joint enterprise was sharing in the marginalisation that came their way. Reactions to the marginalisation were also shared. Negotiable resources included using gender marking in Hindi in a specific way, giving each other *janana* names, specific swear words, clapping to signify group belonging or anger, and using the special register, *Farasi.* The question for me was not whether *jananas* were a community of practice but why it was relevant to my research aims to show that they were and how showing that they were a community of practice strengthened my arguments and conclusions about this community. Showing that *jananas* were part of a CofP that was organised in a certain way with dimensions that corresponded with what scholars had suggested as essential for the functioning of a CofP was important because *jananas* were not organised or recognised in an institutionalised way. They were not in a school, they were not learning a trade, there was much fluidity in who was *janana* when, and there was no single way in which *jananas* defined themselves. Yet, they were a CofP because they shared practices, unique to their community. The mutual enterprises of accountability to family, which for *jananas* can be a burden and a challenge, takes the form of hiding from family, running away from one's family, or negotiating family obligation and the *jananas*' non-heteronormative desire. Accountability to family contradicts initiating and helping young *jananas* to become *janana*. Living as a *janana* becomes a process that is deeply tied to maintaining value systems initiated by the family that are contradicted by *jananas*' own desires. The fact that most *jananas* walk these thin and often dangerous lines makes their community a community of practice. However, elaborating on why *jananas* are a CofP does not necessarily achieve a research goal. The assumption of a community of practice is that it can change and influence practices – it can create meaning that is relevant only to the community and as a response to the world (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2006). The idea that identity is constructed discursively has been explored by many scholars of language, gender, and sexuality (Bucholtz and Hall 2004, 2005; Eckert 2000; Mendoza-Denton 2008). In the next section, I explore three ways in which *jananas* express their identity: gender marking in Hindi, defining the boundaries of gender and where *jananas* fit, and the parameters of being a *janana*. My ethnographic work shows that *jananas* are a community of practice who learn to use language and other means to define their interactions with the world.

Three cases: the analysis

In all the years that I interacted with *jananas* in Lucknow, Neerja was never too keen on chatting with me, but I could always see her in the sidelines smiling at me or some other *jananas*. I knew she was a *janana*, and she was friends with many of my informants. In 2006, I had been seeing Neerja in and around the non-profit office where she worked for several years, and I asked her if I could interview her and ask questions about her life. She said 'yes' but did not come at the time of the interview. I asked her why, though she did not give me a direct response. I understood her to be shy of the recorder or not wanting to be interviewed. In 2013 when I returned to Lucknow after a hiatus of five years, Neerja approached me to be interviewed. Neerja had had a rather typical experience for a *janana* in Lucknow. She was from a lower-middle-class family, was literate and had a job at the non-profit office, was admonished and eventually abandoned by her family because of her sexuality, had friendships in the *janana* community (many of which were decades old), had a regular male partner, and often encountered violence. My questions for Neerja centred on her interactions with the law, with other *jananas*, and her experiences as a *janana*. Excerpt 1 below is from an open-ended interview that started with a question about Neerja's boyfriend. She told me stories of heartbreak, cheating, and abandonment and how bad the past year had been. That lead me to the question about how she was now. Here Neerja spoke about a deep sense of loneliness she feels in spite of her friendships, access to sex, and making a life for herself. While the excerpt reveals much about Neerja's life and expectations, the last few lines of this interview indicate a subjectivity that Neerja has carved for *jananas* – they are even weaker than women, 'ladies', when it comes to matters of the heart. In the distinction that

Neerja makes, *jananas* are not part of a masculine identity nor a feminine identity. They have their own place on the continuum.

Excerpt 1.

1.	I: Thoda sa better feel kar rahe hain aap?	I: Are you feeling a bit better now?
2.	N: Haan, ab to pehle se thoda	N: Yes, now I am a little
3.	better feel kar rahe[n2] hai. Matlab apna hai.	better. I mean it is mine,
4.	Apni zindagi hai	it is my life.
5.	Hum kha rahe[n] hain,	I am eating.[n]
6.	pi rahe[n] hain, reh rahe[n] hain.	I am drinking[n], I am living.[n]
7.	Fir bhi yeh hai ki man me	Even so in my heart,
8.	ek adhoorapan sa	there is some emptiness
9.	hamesha rehta hai ma’am	that is always there.
10.	Pata nahi kya?	I don’t know what?
11.	Aisa lagta hai kisi cheez ki	It feels like I am looking for
12.	hume talaash hai	something,
13.	jo nahi mili hai	something I can’t find.
14.	Aur jaane kya shayad wahi dhoondne	And perhaps I am searching
15.	ke liye hum sochte hain.	and thinking about it.
16.	Kotiyon me baithte[n] hain	I hang out with *kotis* (*janana*)
17.	Giriyon se milte[n] hain	I meet with *giriyas* [boyfriends or clients].
18.	Ma’am, hota kya hai ki	Ma’am, what happens is that
19.	giriya aate hain. Mil jaate hain	the *giriyas* come. We meet.
20.	Khair wo to baat alag hai koi	Although that is a different matter.
21.	kabhi sex bhi ma’am ho jata hai.	Sometimes I have sex too, ma’am.
22.	Hota hi hai	It happens.
23.	Jaise ki ma’am poori kisi ke saath	It is like, ma’am, I am not able to
24.	ban ke nahi reh pate hai	get along with anyone.
25.	Jane kya koi kisi ke liye	I don’t know why, but time
26.	waqt khara nahi utarta hai	does not fit with anyone.
27.	Aur hum log bahut	And people like me [us] are
28.	naazuk hote hain, ma’am.	very delicate, ma’am.
29.	Ladies se bhi, ma’am.	We are more delicate than ladies.
30.	Phir meri soch hai, ladies	I think that ladies
31.	apne aap ko control kar lengi	control themselves,
32.	lekin hum log bilkul agar,	but when something happens
33.	hum log ko dhakka lage,	when we get hurt
34.	to hum to toot ke ekdum	we break apart.
35.	bilkul bikhar jaate hain	We completely come apart
36.	bilkul kamzor ho jaate hain	we become very weak.

The excerpt from Neerja that I present above is an example of an average *janana* interaction with themselves and with the world around them. Neerja’s feeling of being different from men and women that she talks about in Lines 25–36 are part of her being a *janana*. The idea that Neerja (or any other *janana*) is not a man or a woman and is emotionally weaker than women,[3] a belief that many *jananas* hold is part of the practice of being a member of the *janana* CofP. I learned from repeated interactions and time in cruising areas that *jananas* across the age spectrum hold the view of emotional weakness of *jananas* or even women. While it did not become a theme for my work, I learned that specific perceptions about being *janana* were learned and circulated among *jananas.* Ethnographic methods support finding these imperative details about any community of practice.

The second example I present is from an interview with Rajnidevi from 2004. I met Rajnidevi in 2003 and continued contact with her until her passing in 2012. Rajnidevi was a *pacci*[4] *janana* who was about 50 when I first met her and was a lower-class *janana* who spent considerable time in *hijra* households. Poverty was constant in Rajnidevi's life and defined much of her interactions. Rajnidevi did not have a regular job and her income depended on what she was able to do for *hijras* or sex work. Rajnidevi engaged in sex work and worked as an agent or pimp for other younger *jananas* who could not find clients on their own. She was also often a senior member in *janana* spaces and was given respect due to her senior status.

Excerpt 2 below is from an open-ended interview where I asked Rajnidevi questions about her interactions with younger *jananas*. Rajnidevi's response was centred on telling *jananas* not to be *janana*. She says that the first advice she gives to *jananas* was to not come into the profession, which was sex work. However, her advice was not just about sex work, it was also about being *janana* in general and bettering themselves, specifically by *not* being *janana*. Since being *janana* is not a choice for any *janana*, the response to this type of discourse from seniors is usually nothing. Young *jananas* keep coming to the areas where *jananas* congregate and keep up their interactions with other *jananas* and clients and boyfriends. *Jananas* like Rajnidevi also know this and assume that anyone who wants to be a *janana* will be one; they just give advice on the off-chance that things might change for a *janana*. For Rajnidevi, after it is established that a young *janana* wants to stay a *janana*, the learning and practice of being *janana* begins. This practice includes ways to navigate public spaces, find clients, interact with *hijras*, and other modes of good *janana* behaviour. While there are excerpts of interviews in this section that support my findings, no one interview or cruising area visit or observation led me to arrive at my conclusions about the *janana* community. An aggregate of interactions using ethnographic methods can facilitate arriving at conclusions about why a community of practice is a community of practice.

Rajnidevi also adds information that defines *janana* relationships with the *janana* community. She suggests that she does not interact too much with *kade taal jananas*. *Kade taal jananas* are *jananas* who keep their *janana* status hidden from the world as much as they can. They come to cruising areas but do not necessarily participate in hanging out with other *jananas* or any other forms of social interactions with *jananas* or *hijras*. *Kade taal jananas* do not have the same level of interactions with *jananas* like Rajnidevi. Within *janana* circles, *jananas* who are able to be *kade taal* successfully, that is, be *janana* and be a man and do both contextually and without one persona overlapping with the other, are considered to be living in the best of both worlds. While many *jananas* try to achieve this goal, it does not come easy and many fail. Rajnidevi suggests a certain level of distaste about being *janana*, shares information about what kind of knowledge she imparts to new *jananas*, and finally suggests that if someone wants to be hidden as a *kade taal janana* and does not want to proclaim a *janana* identity, she lets them be. The self-deprecation that Rajnidevi shares in this excerpt about being *janana* surfaces in many other *jananas*' stories.

Excerpt 2.

1.	I: Aap choti kotiyon ko kya salah dete hain	I: What advice do you give to younger *kotis*?
2.	R: humare paas kotiyan aati^{f} hain	R: The *kotis* that come to me,
3.	to pehle to hum kotiyon se yahi kehte^{n} hain	first I say to the *kotis*,
4.	ki beta is kooche main na aao,	'Child, don't come in this place.
5.	is kooche main kuch rakha hai nahi,	There is nothing here.
6.	ye narak ki zindigi hai.	This is the life of hell.
7.	Agar humare samjhane se maan jaye	If they understand what I say
8.	to zyada better hai,	then it is better.
9.	agar samjhane se nahi manti^{f} ho	If you don't understand,
10.	to vo tumhare upar hai.	then it is up to you.
11.	Agar ana chahti^{f} ho to aao	If you want to come,
12.	agar nahi ana chahti^{f},	if you don't want to come,
13.	sambhalna chahti^{f} ho to sambhal jao.	if you can better yourself, better yourself.'
14.	Jo nahi sambhalti^{f} hai	The ones who don't better themselves
15.	ana chahtif hain to phir	who want to come in this, then
16.	unko sari baatein batani padti hain.	we have to explain everything to them:
17.	Inko ye kehte hain,	'This is called this.
18.	inko ye kehte hain.	This is called that.
19.	Inse hoshiyar rehna,	Be careful of this,
20.	police walon se hoshiyar rehna.	be careful of the police.'
21.	Har baatein unko samjhaya jata hai	We have to explain everything to them.
22.	Bahut si kotiyan hain jo apna	There are many *kotis* who
23.	kade tal main rehti^{f} hain,	live in *kade*.
24.	jananiyan mili, unse baat kiya,	They meet *jananis*, talk to them
25.	uske bad kehti^{f} hain ki, 'kade ho jao'	then they say, 'Be *kade*.'
26.	apna…phir hum	My…then I
27.	un kotiyon se milna bhi	don't even like
28.	nahi ichchuk karate^{n}	to meet those *kotis*.
29.	hain ki bhai tum apne ko	The thing is, if you want to be
30.	band roop main rehna chah rahi^{f} ho	hidden form,
31.	to band roop main raho na khulo	then stay hidden form.
32.	to zyada achcha hain	That is better.
33.	tumhara jaise dhanda chale	However you can make your work,
34.	waise achcha hai.	that is good.

The third example is from a conversation with Imrana from 2004. I met Imrana very early on in fieldwork and continue to interact with her to this day. The last time I met and interviewed her was in 2015. Imrana is a *kade taal janana* who lived with her family which comprised of two brothers and their families, five nieces and nephews, a mother, and one sister. Imrana took on the responsibilities of a son in the household: providing financial help wherever possible and being available to take care of the needs of the family. Imrana was in her late twenties when I met her and she had a story fit for a novel. She ran away from her home when she was still a teenager and joined a *hijra* group. She danced with *hijras*, went around North India Hindu and Islamic religious sites, worked in the Middle East, and now lives a simple life as a *kade taal janana* who does not engage in sex work and mentors young entrants into the community. The conversation below was between Imrana and me in the presence of another *janana* in the non-profit office. The *janana* who was present during the conversation was Imrana's friend, and I knew her well. In many interviews I had heard *jananas* talk about '*bigadna*', a Hindi verb which means 'to go bad'/'to rot'/'to be spoiled'. It is used in reference to food that has gone rotten or people who have chosen paths that do not coincide with 'proper' behaviour. *Jananas* use '*bigadna*' to tease each other about sexual misconduct, comparing each other's degree of '*bigadna*'; they use it to describe their coming into sex work (like Imrana does below), and as a way to establish camaraderie. I was curious about why *jananas* used this word for each other because of the negative meaning associated with the word. My question for Imrana was about the choice of this particular word for specific *janana* choices. She did not answer this part of my question but did explain her own process of '*bigadna*'. She has a *janana* heart, she says, meaning desire for men and for women's work, such as cooking, cleaning, other household work, for professions like sewing, and for feminine products, such as makeup and clothing. With a *janana* heart, Imrana found a *janana* friend and explored Lucknow by roaming around and finding other *jananas* and men interested in *jananas*.

Excerpt 3.

1.	Ila: aap log jaise kehte hain na,	Ila: Like you guys say,
2.	hum tab bigde, to	'That is when I got spoiled.'
3.	bigadna kyon kehte hain?	Why do you say 'spoiled'?
4.	Imrana: bigadna ka matlab ye hua	Imrana: Being spoiled means…
5.	jaise hum apko bataien,	Now let me tell you,
6.	jaise hum chauda saal ki umar ke the^{n},	like I was^{n} 14 years old
7.	hamara dil *janana* tha.	my heart was *janana*.
8.	humne samaj main ye nahi	I had not seen
9.	dekha tha ki dhanda kahan hota hai,	where sex work is done,
10.	janane kahan baithte hain,	where *jananas* hang out.
11.	matakne chatakne wale	People who sway and move hips –
12.	kahan baithte hain.	where these people hang out.
13.	Ab ye hamare mohalla ki taraf	Now this one came to my neighbourhood,
14.	se guzre, *janana* matakta chatakta hua,	a *janana* swaying and moving hips.
15.	Humne inhe dekha,	I saw him,
16.	inse salam dua kari.	I greeted him.
17.	Humari inki dosti aa gayi,	We became friends.
18.	hamari bhi adat ban gayi	I also got into the habit of
19.	inke saath ghoomne ki.	going out and roaming about.
20.	Phir ghomte ghoomte hum bhi	After roaming about for a while.
21.	parko main jakar baithne^{n} lage^{n},	I started^{n} sitting^{n} in parks.
22.	hum inke saath ane lage jaane^{n} lage^{n}	I started^{n} coming^{n} and going^{n} with this one.
23.	baithne^{n} uthne^{n} lage^{n}.	I started^{n} hanging^{n} out with him.
24.	Humne dekha samaj.	I saw the world around me.

25. Jab yahan se dekha dhanda hota hai	I saw where sex work was done,
26. to humne bhi shuroo kar diya.	so I also started.
27. Isko kehte hain hum	This is called,
28. yahan se ab bigad gaye.	'we got spoilt from here.'

While on the face of it the three examples I present in this section are parts of larger conversations I had with Neerja, Rajnidevi, and Imrana, and do not give us a full picture into their lives, they give us relevant pieces of information about how *jananas* see the world around them. All three *jananas* in this section were *jananas* telling me about the consequences of their sexual desires. Neerja and Imrana were *kade taal jananas* while Rajnidevi was a *pacci janana*. Yet, there were other differences too. Neerja and Imrana, while they were both *kade taal*, had very different family pressures. Neerja lived alone, had lived with a boyfriend at one point and had no financial responsibility for her family. Imrana lived with her family, had contributed significantly to the well-being of her family both financially and in terms of family prestige, and had a very different outlook on what it meant to be *janana*. While Imrana, Neerja, and Rajnidevi had uneven incomes and no regular sources of money, Imrana felt financial pressures that were different from Neeraj's, and Rajnidevi was often reliant on others to provide for her food. For Imrana being a *janana* was an indulgence, for Neerja, it was a life, and for Rajnidevi it was a life choice. Neerja's example primarily points to categories of gender that Neerja has created and where she finds *jananas*. For Neerja, *jananas* do not fit the male or the female category. They are something else, even more fragile than women are. Rajnidevi's example informs us about some relevant parameters in the *janana* community of practice. We see that senior members engage new and younger members and can actively engage in teaching them about being *janana*. Imrana's example also gives us a glimpse of how exactly members of this community come to understand membership and become members. It is a matter of knowing someone who has or understands a *janana* heart and is willing to show a younger *janana* the ropes of being a *janana*.

While the primary pieces of information from these examples are easy to extract, the ethnographic task is identifying the key insights in these brief excerpts as members of the *janana* CofP. The specifics that these examples present are not easy to parse if one does not have a complete picture of the community. It is the task of the ethnographer through participant observation, interviews, and interactions to decipher these categories. The CofP framework, while based in practice and learning, cannot be utilised fully if issues of power, hierarchy, and social structure within communities of practice are not uncovered. This is why it is pertinent that an ethnographic approach be written into finding and commenting on structures of language change or variation in communities of practice.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have established what the communities of practice framework is meant to do, I have shown why ethnographic methods are central to finding meaning within communities of practice, and I have shown why the communities of practice framework is a highly appropriate tool for me to understand meaning in the *janana* community. Yet, one question that remains to be answered is, how does suggesting that meaning is created and maintained within a community of practice help us to understand why community members create the meaning that they do? Why is Neerja's response to abuse a creation of a category of gender that in her world is weaker than women in its response to abuse? Why is it that *jananas* see themselves as people who engage in '*bigadna*', a quality that is not celebrated outside the *janana* circles but can have some positive connotations for *jananas*? Why is it that Rajnidevi needs a certain amount of openness from a *janana* before she lets them into her life? Each of these boundaries that these *jananas* have created are responses to their ways of dealing with the world. These can only be understood in the context of this CofP and how it is placed in the broader context of Lucknow and in the sexuality continuum. This CofP comes into focus only by engaging with it through ethnographic methods.

Future directions

Introducing an emphasis on local realities within an understanding of community-based practices can help us flag blind spots in our interpretations of how language, gender, and sexuality can be connected. Local practices can be hard to identify. A collaboration between CofP and ethnographic methods along with an understanding of some of the challenges and their remedies that methods can pose (see Angouri 2015, 2018; Holmes 2018; King 2014 for a comment on CofPs and; Banerjea 2014; Long et.al. 2009; Nagar 2014 for a comment on ethnography) can enhance a researcher's understanding of their own data. Future directions in work on CofPs and how they influence language change should see language variation as a result of localised realities. Local realities can be situated in marginalisation and can help us understand structures within communities or structures of which communities are a part. Ethnographies conducted over periods of time are fundamental to these pursuits.

Notes

1 *Hijras* are a transgender presence in India who also have ritualistic and religious roles, for instance the blessing of newborn children. For more on *hijras* see Reddy 2005, Hall and O'Donovan 1996.

2 Hindi has grammatical gender. The verb in Hindi agrees with the nominative argument. The gender, person, and number is indicated on the verb morphologically in past and present perfect tenses, future tense, past habitual, and past, present and future continuous. In case of compound verbs, gender and number is indicated on the all delexicalised verbs in all tenses. Gender is also marked on some adjectives, pronouns, and some postpositions. *Jananas* vary gender marking as their context changes. In the examples, I use superscript m (for masculine), f (for feminine), and n (for neutral) to signify which gender marking a *janana* is using. Neutral is a dialect feature of the dialect of Hindi spoken in Lucknow where the second person plural conjugations, which are not marked for gender, are used in first person.

3 This sentiment is alien to us as a Western audience and speaks to the obvious sexism of the system of which *jananas* are a part.

4 A *pacci janana* (as opposed to a *kade taal janana*) is more open about their status as a *janana* and about their sexuality. While *pacci jananas* can live with family and support families, many of them live alone or with boyfriends and other *jananas*. *Pacci jananas* engage in sex work more openly than *kade taal jananas*.

Further reading

Eckert, P. (2012) 'Three waves of variation study: the emergence of meaning in the study of sociolinguistic variation', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 41, pp. 87–100.

Provides a history of sociolinguistic methods and explains why the third wave is important for understanding linguistic variation.

King, B. (2014) 'Tracing the emergence of a community of practice: beyond presupposition in sociolinguistic research', *Language in Society*, 43(1), pp. 61–81.

Provides an analysis of the pitfalls of using the communities of practice framework.

Related topics

Anthropological discourse analysis and the social ordering of gender ideology; gender, language and elite ethnographies in UK political institutions; interactional sociolinguistics: foundations, developments and applications to language, gender and sexuality; identity construction in gendered workplaces; gender, stance and category-work in girls' peer language practices.

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11

Digital ethnography in the study of language, gender, and sexuality

Piia Varis

Introduction

This chapter focuses on a rather recent theoretical and methodological approach: digital ethnography. The emergence of digital ethnography in sociology, media studies, and also, somewhat later, in the study of language and discourse, has to do with the development of the internet into an infrastructure for a mass form of communication, and the ensuing need for researchers to develop new ways of studying the emerging digital means of communication as well as adapt older approaches to the new digital environments. This chapter describes digital ethnography as an approach to studying language, gender, and sexuality in these new environments through a case study of a young female YouTuber described in more detail below.

With its origins in anthropology, ethnography itself is not a new approach, of course, nor is it new in the study of language and discourse; indeed, there is an extensive body of research in linguistic ethnography (see e.g. Copland and Creese 2015; Copland, Shaw, and Snell 2015). What kind of an approach exactly ethnography is, however, can sometimes be difficult to decipher, especially for those with less experience of it. This is because it appears in the literature in different guises: some define it as an approach, others as a toolbox of methods, in the latter case mainly consisting of fieldwork (observation) and interviews.

The understanding of ethnography assumed in this chapter is the former: ethnography in general, and consequently also digital ethnography, is an approach rather than a set of methods. What it aims to produce is ‘thick descriptions’ (Geertz 1973) of communicative conventions and practices: situated accounts of lived reality. This means that ethnography, including digital ethnography, ‘does not, unlike many other approaches, try to reduce complexity of social events by focusing *a priori* on a selected range of relevant features, but it tries to describe and analyse the complexity of social events *comprehensively*’ (Blommaert 2007: 682, emphasis original).

To address situated reality in all its potential complexity, ethnographic fieldwork is in essence a *learning process* where research is guided by experience gathered in the field; it is a mode of discovery and learning through which the researcher aims to familiarise themselves with the local realities and (linguistic) practices in question (Blommaert and Dong

2010; Velghe 2014) through long-term engagement in the field. In the words of Hymes (1996: 13),

> [Ethnography] is continuous with ordinary life. Much of what we seek to find out in ethnography is knowledge that others already have. Our ability to learn ethnographically is an extension of what every human being must do, that is, learn the meanings, norms, patterns of a way of life.

To this end, ethnography is methodologically flexible; it cannot be reduced to specific data collection techniques but rather responds to whatever becomes relevant in the field.

Digital ethnography

In the early 2000s, ethnographic research took on many digital forms, including in the study of language and discourse, and appeared, for instance, under the labels 'cyberethnography' (Robinson and Schulz 2009), 'Internet ethnography' (boyd 2008; Sade-Beck 2004), 'ethnography of virtual spaces' (Burrel 2009), 'ethnography on the Internet' (Beaulieu 2004), 'virtual ethnography' (Hine 2000), 'discourse-centred online ethnography' (Androutsopoulos 2008), and 'digital ethnography' (Hou 2018a; Maly 2018; Murthy 2008; Pink, Horst, Postill, et al. 2016; Varis 2016). These different types of ethnography differ from each other in certain respects. For instance, some of them focus on online data only (online ethnography), while others may include a combination of online and offline research (digital ethnography). They also differ in the extent to which they subscribe to ethnography as an approach and a specific contextualised way of producing knowledge (the stance assumed in this chapter), or simply see it as a methodological toolbox, mostly consisting of fieldwork and interviews. In any case, the emergence of these different ethnographies tells us that a distinct approach to research on digital environments, although with some variation within it, has appeared.

The reason for the appearance of these studies is the changing communication environments mentioned above. It is undeniable that the infrastructures for our lived realities – our communications and the fabric of our social lives – have changed. Miller (2011: 44, emphasis original), for instance, points to the idea that:

> digital media products are as much *process* as object. (…) So where one views a traditional media object such as a film, a book, or a painting, these objects have a finite 'object-like' quality to them. Digital media objects, more often than not, break from this and are usually in continual production, being in constant dialogue and transformation with the audience and with other digital products and technologies.

The field in digital ethnography, in other words, is potentially in a constant state of change. As it is an impossible task for the ethnographer to often be present online to witness in real time the potentially around-the-clock interactions taking place, this means that in many cases she is dealing with *products* rather than *processes*, and potentially, 'modifiable and editable as digital artefacts are, what remains visible is the end result of possibly countless edits, changes and deletions' (Varis 2016: 62). Interestingly though, for digital ethnographers this means also that time becomes compressed: it is possible to access months' and even years' worth of digital data, for instance, on social media very quickly. This potentially changes the nature of fieldwork, as the ethnographer is not necessarily present for the interactions as they unfold (cf. Varis 2016).

Apart from the processual nature of digital objects and thus also the nature of 'data', practices also change – as Jones, Chik, and Hafner (2015: 3) put it, 'digital technologies, because of the different configurations of modes and materialities they make available, both make possible new kinds of social practices and alter the way people engage in old ones'. For example, the way in which we compose and circulate self-portraits – now known as selfies – has definitely changed with the emergence of smartphones equipped with front-facing cameras, built-in filters, and social media (see e.g. Georgakopoulou 2016). At the same time, arguably, we have new types of social relationships enabled by social media practices of 'following', 'friending', and 'subscribing', as well as new forms of sociality and translocal groupness, as people from potentially all over the world come together in often loose and short-lived groups on social media and discussion forums, for instance (Varis and Blommaert 2015).

It is these kinds of new digitally mediated phenomena that digital ethnography has appeared to address. Labelling ethnography 'digital' thus has to do with the changing media and communication landscape – with new kinds of objects and practices – in which people find themselves and on which we do research.

A digital ethnographic approach to language, gender, and sexuality

Ethnography is not new in the study of language, gender, and sexuality either (e.g. Besnier and Philips 2014; Mendoza-Denton 2008), and there are also interesting ethnographic studies (touching) on gender and sexuality in different digitally mediated environments such as social media and games (e.g. boyd 2008; Senft 2008; Sundén and Sveningsson 2012). However, digital ethnographic research focusing specifically on language, gender, and sexuality is still scarce (see, however, e.g. Darwin 2017; Georgakopoulou 2016; Hou 2018a). These existing studies have contributed to research on language, gender, and sexuality by, for instance, studying otherwise hard-to-reach populations now visible through the communities they form online. Darwin's (2017) online ethnography for example focused on discussion threads and selfies in a genderqueer community on Reddit, illuminating the kinds of discursive strategies non-binary people use to construct gender. Georgakopoulou (2016), on the other hand, studied young women's self-presentation through selfies on Facebook. Through an ethnographic approach, she was able to show how young women's selfies are not expressions of narcissism or 'ideal selves' as they are commonly viewed, but context-specific and co-constructed presentations of self influenced by the affordances of social media. In Georgakopoulou's case, a digital ethnographic approach was useful as it allowed for immersion and participation through fieldwork, and thus a deeper understanding of the young women's selfie culture.

The focus in the case reported on in this chapter is on analysing digital practices, as proposed by Jones et al. (2015) as one of the new ways of addressing the types of discourse and action emerging through digitally mediated interactions. Jones et al. (2015: 3) define digital practices as:

> 'assemblages' of actions involving tools associated with digital technologies, which have come to be recognised by specific groups of people as ways of attaining particular social goals, enacting particular social identities, and reproducing particular sets of social relationships.

Their definition of 'tools associated with digital technologies' is 'not limited to software and websites, but includes hardware (physical objects) and semiotic tools (such as conventional ways of talking or writing that have grown up around digital media)' (ibid.). An advantage of focusing on digital *practices* is that it allows for a focus on social conventions as digitally mediated: that is, the practice approach enables contextualising language and communication by seeing them as embedded in an assemblage of activities and mediating tools. This is useful for a digital ethnographic study, as, unlike a more limited approach focusing on language only, it enables accounting for the ways in which specific types of communication, identities, and relationships come into being mediated through digital technologies. The discussion on digital practices here will focus on the case of the YouTube star Hannah Witton, and will highlight specific themes arising from the analysis of her YouTube channel: gender and (online) visibility, gender and intersectionality, platform literacy, and revealing (online) as a political act, in particular in relation to feminist activism.

Camgirls: history and present

The case of Hannah Witton can be placed in an established line of inquiry focusing on women streaming their lives online. This research has so far mainly taken place in media studies, with Senft's 2008 study of 'camgirls' the earliest example of ethnographic research on the topic. In her seminal book *Camgirls: Celebrity and Community in the Age of Social Networks*, Senft (2008: 1) presents a study of 'one generation of camgirls and their viewers from 2000 to 2004'. Senft's study is an explicitly feminist one, and she described herself as 'trying to examine webcamming as a form of women's expression' (Senft 2008: 78). She defines camgirls as 'women who broadcast themselves over the Web for the general public, while trying to cultivate a measure of celebrity in the process' (Senft 2008: 1).

While my case study here focuses on this very phenomenon, over the decade that has passed since Senft's research there have been changes both in the meaning of the label 'camgirl', and the practice of 'camgirling'. More or less everyone whom I have spoken to about my interest in the topic has the idea that camgirls are strictly about sexual practices. It is of course the case that the internet has become an infrastructure for new forms of sex, both for pleasure and work, offering a disembodied (in the sense of not involving physical contact) context for sexual practices. Such digital media practices have also recently come to broad mainstream attention through popular documentaries such as the Netflix series 'Hot Girls Wanted: Turned On' (2017), introducing e.g. camgirl Alice who performs sex acts online, and *Cam Girlz* (2015), a documentary film on internet sex workers 'who find economic freedom, empowerment, intimacy and creative self expression from the comfort of their own homes'.[1] One broader frame for an investigation of the camgirl phenomenon is indeed the sexual dimension; the notion 'camgirl' has become sexualised to an extent that was not the case at the time of Senft's research. Bleakley's (2014: 893) more recent work also defines 'camgirls' as 'young women that operate their own webcams to communicate with a broad audience online, often engaging with sexually explicit behaviour in real-time in return for financial compensation'. However, here I rather focus on more 'mundane' types of webcamming where young women broadcast their everyday lives and, while sexuality becomes a topic in the content, the case discussed here is not about broadcasting sexual practices per se.

Data collection and analysis

In focus here is YouTube, as that is where I found not only the most accessible material but also the most watched material, giving some indication as to what characterises (popular) camgirling at this point in time – and also the type of material that speaks most clearly to the kinds of conditions digital ethnographers work in nowadays. In practice, I have spent countless hours watching videos and channels, at the beginning simply trying to get a general idea of what was going on by typing in search words such as ‘camgirl’ on YouTube and watching whatever YouTube offered me, following suggestions to create a general overview of content. This of course also means that I found what an ordinary YouTube browser would find; the system of ‘recommendations’ effectively filters out a lot of content, which means that for ethnographers it is relatively easy to remain ignorant of what is going on elsewhere, and in other genres, unless one takes specific steps to avoid that (such as modifying search settings and preferences). My own fieldwork on camgirls has thus emulated the experience of an ‘ordinary user’ (Bleakley 2014; Hou 2018a), which is an ethnographically relevant approach as it does not prioritise specific content beforehand, and also enables finding out what ordinary audiences find, watch, and engage with online. There is of course a necessary qualification to be made to the ‘ordinary user’ experience: I am inevitably guided by my *research* interest rather than the *personal* interest of somebody who is interested in camgirls due to personal reasons. There is nothing ethnographically new about this, of course; while the networked nature of digital media introduces at least potentially the issue of scope and scale in ways that pre-digital ethnography did not have to struggle with (each site, depending on its nature, potentially points to numerous different other sites in scale that is new), the issue of boundary construction in fieldwork is not new as such (cf. boyd 2008). That is, each ethnographer will have to make choices as to where the boundaries of their field lie: in practice this means decisions regarding which issues, objects, participants, and phenomena become relevant to follow for one’s research.

In my case, observation meant resorting to the means available and used by anybody with internet access (‘anybody’ of course excluding resource-poor users, my fieldwork behaviour and probably also my findings thus resembling more the browsing behaviour of well-equipped and highly internet-literate users, with excellent internet connections). Similarly, Georgakopoulou (2016: 303) has described how ‘the researcher’s own immersion and participation in social media culture with processes of catching up, sharing, and real-time tracking and life-streaming, are recognised as a major part of the development of ethnographic understandings’. Searching, subscribing to channels, browsing, watching, and following recommendations provided by YouTube itself, are all digital ethnographic practices involved in constructing the online field. This is how fieldwork also becomes a digital practice as defined by Jones et al. (2015) above: data collection and processing is an assemblage of materials and actions, where in the case of YouTube here the medium itself contributes to the fieldwork by sorting information to the researcher. The ethnographic staple of reflexivity is useful here, as following recommendations and suggestions leads to a compilation of a particular kind of database, with one’s own actions of searching and clicking in interaction with what is offered by the medium constructing a certain viewing path and ‘field’.

In finding camgirls to follow, the affordances of YouTube thus led me from one recommendation to another, and I also did some news media searching and screening to see what kinds of young women appeared in articles about ‘most popular’ or ‘recommended’ channels to watch to supplement my idea of what kinds of content represented camgirling. In general, there seemed to be striking similarities to a lot of the content I saw. Each camgirl had her own specific way of doing things, of course, but at the same time much seemed to repeat itself to the extent of being formulaic. These linguistic and semiotic patterns in YouTube camgirling became the most interesting feature to focus on. These included aspects like apologising for not having followed the established schedule for posting, greeting one's followers at the beginning of each video, and requesting viewers to subscribe to the channel, with instructions on how to do that, at the end of each video; segmenting videos into an introductory 'this is what I am going to do today' part and a montage of moments and events later that day; specific popular subgenres appearing in different channels such as the shopping haul, product review series, etc. The most popular ones that I watched also had a striking development of professionalisation, from sometimes very poor-quality early videos to professionally shot and edited later ones, with sponsors and/or campaigns involving companies and products appearing along the way.

The case of Hannah Witton

One young female YouTuber whom I have specifically followed due to her explicit focus on gender and sexuality in some of her videos, and whose broadcasting at the same time serves as an illustration of typical broadcasting practices in the present-day mediascape, is Hannah Witton (b. 1992). Witton's channel is typical of present-day (YouTube) camgirling and 'micro-celebrity'. Marwick (2013: 114) defines micro-celebrity as 'a state of being famous to a niche group of people' online which 'requires creating a persona, producing content, and strategically appealing to online fans by being "authentic"'. Apart from being popular on YouTube, she has around 100,000 followers both on Twitter and Instagram, and her own website hannahwitton.com describes Witton as 'YouTuber, history grad, sex positive, feminist, Hufflepuff'. According to the Wikipedia page about her (with the existence of the page being a further sign of her professionalism and a certain level of celebrity), she is

> a British YouTuber, broadcaster, and author. Witton creates video blogs and informational content, mostly based around relationships, sex and sexual health, liberation and welfare issues, literature, and travel. Witton's debut book, *Doing It*, concentrating on sex and relationships, was released on 6 April 2017.

Her YouTube channel[2] has almost 400,000 subscribers, with playlists on topics ranging from 'Sex & Relationships', 'Drunk Advice', and 'Music', to one dedicated to her book (called #DoingItBook).

On 9th August 2016, Witton published the first video of the series 'The Hormone Diaries' on her YouTube channel. I found this particular series interesting to focus on due to its explicit focus on (the regulation of) female sexuality. While Jones (2016: 228) in her research on camgirls found that women's webcamming 'has the potential to subvert the hegemonic discourses of gender that constrain women's sexuality because this work allows for various forms of pleasure in the process', Witton's 'hormone diaries' offer a different perspective to the potential subversiveness of women's streaming activities regarding hegemonic discourses of gender and sexuality by critically discussing normative reproductive practices and their effects on the body.

In the first video in the series, titled 'Why I'm Coming off the Pill',[3] Witton announces that she is about to stop taking the pill. She has taken the decision after not having had her period for seven years (hence the title 'The Hormone Diaries', which also already points to a personal journaling approach to recounting personal, intimate experience), and the series will describe her experiences along the way. This first video in the series has gathered more than 200,000 views and close to 1,500 comments. In about seven minutes, in this first video, Witton explains how she feels 'like someone without a female reproductive system' and expresses anxiety over the situation, yet ends, in a typical YouTuber gesture, by enthusiastically asking for comments and 'thumbs-ups' from the viewers if they are 'excited' about the series. The most popular episodes in the series, Episode 9 'Trying a Menstrual Cup for the First Time'[4] (7th March 2017) and Episode 3 'FIRST PERIOD IN 7 YEARS'[5] (20th September 2016), have gathered more than 200,000 and around 270,000 views, respectively. All the other episodes in the series (of which there are 14; checked 18th November 2017) have gathered views at least in the tens of thousands, attesting to her popularity and visibility in general, and the fact that the series on the female body and contraception has reached quite a large audience of viewers on YouTube.

Witton's channel does not stand out as special in terms of the formulaic elements of similar YouTube channels; for instance the end screen of her videos shows a link to her website and Twitter handle, an attempt to engage more followers for all her social media channels. As for content, broadly speaking Witton's channel could be described as a form of infotainment, apparent amongst her other content in 'The Hormone Diaries' series. With a 'girl-next-door' approach, Witton seems easily relatable; she also does not shy away from blunders and seeming silly, contributing to a sense of authenticity (cf. Marwick 2013) – in the first video of 'The Hormone Diaries', for instance, the viewer sees her asking herself, 'Why am I doing this?', showing anxiety and vulnerability regarding the situation she finds herself in.

Camgirling as feminist activism

Due to the kinds of themes Witton's series addresses, it arguably does a kind of public service, and her YouTube channel together with her other activities, such as publishing a book, can be said to constitute a form of feminist activism. In 'The Hormone Diaries' series, after a doctor's appointment she, for instance, explains to her viewers the existing non-hormonal forms of contraception to inform her viewers about alternatives to the pill, and reports on research done on the kind of pill she had been taking (Episode 2[6]). She also makes the point that if there was a pill that was suspected to influence *men's* sex drive there would have been more of a reaction to the consumption of these pills – thus assuming a feminist perspective and not only giving her readers 'practical' information, but also placing her own and many of her viewers' experiences in the broader societal context (cf. Mackenzie 2017). In the fourth[7] episode she interviews her mother about her experiences with contraception, and the sixth[8] one is about period sex, also mentioning UK government plans to try and ban period sex from pornographic consumption. These videos similarly work not only as a form of entertainment due to Witton's humorous style or in perhaps establishing solidarity through shared young woman's experience of struggling with periods, hormones, and contraception and living as a young woman in today's Western society, but also enlighten the viewer with factual information.

In today's (social) media environment, the developments in Witton's YouTube channel are not exceptional. Browsing her broadcasting through the YouTube archive from the first videos to more recent ones, along the way sponsors appear, a book is launched; a brand that works in relation to other brands comes into being. For instance in the seventh[9] episode of 'The Hormone Diaries', Witton mentions that that particular video is sponsored by a LloydsPharmacy[10] online doctor; she explains that the video is, at the request of the company, about the morning-after pill, which the online doctor supplies. Witton's seemingly personal broadcasting of her life thus becomes entangled with commercial interests.

From a digital ethnographic point of view, what is important to highlight here about Witton's online presence is the kinds of infrastructures she has at her disposal for broadcasting herself. That is, the environment in which especially those of us working with social media do our research has changed quite dramatically over the past decade or two, with the commercialisation of the internet and social media such as YouTube gaining ever more prominence in everyday media consumption. Witton's activities and the development of her channel reflect general tendencies in channels competing for attention in the algorithmic sorting environment of YouTube. This means, for instance, working through the algorithmic popularity principle and monetising programmes, where, for instance, through YouTube's partnership programme and advertising practices certain broadcasters gain more prominence. In terms of video content, this means that specific formulaic, increasingly professional types of content and commercial engagement seem to be able to attract more viewers and rise to prominence (Hou 2018b). At the same time, certainly specific topics within such professionalised channels become more popular: in a video entitled 'Why Having Big Boobs Sucks'[11] (June 6, 2017) Witton discusses the changes in her breasts after her hormone diary experiment. The video has garnered more than 600,0000 views and more than 10,000 comments, several times more than the most popular videos in 'The Hormone Diaries' series itself. Judging from the comments, the video, much more than the others, seems to have attracted the attention of both female and male audiences, and there is also blatant sexualisation of the topic, as well as Witton herself, in the comments. The colloquial and explicit video title not only speaks in a relatable way to young female audiences but also clearly attracts a different and broader viewership than, for example, the hormone diaries videos addressing questions such as whether using the coil is a good form of contraception (Episode 2, 'Should I get the Coil', 6th September 2016). On her channel page, what appears under 'Popular uploads' is indeed the 'Why Having Big Boobs Sucks' video along with the titles 'NAKED IN PUBLIC!?'[12] (more than 300,0000 views) and '10 MASTURBATION HACKS'[13] (more than 200,0000 views). Titles pointing to sexualisation and apparent transgression (apparent only, to ensure not being censored by YouTube for sexual content, for instance) thus work to bring viewers to the channel. At the same time, Witton concludes the 'Why Having Big Boobs Sucks' video with 'We can't expect ourselves to be body positive all the time', framing the discussion within a feminist discourse on the body. Discursively, Witton's broadcasting is therefore a successful mix catering to different audiences.

Simultaneously, thus, while clearly shaped by the commercial environment that is YouTube, as mentioned, Witton's channel is also a form of feminist activism. As a type of discourse, her 'Hormone Diaries' series also reminds viewers of a 1970s feminist consciousness-raising group, with experiences and knowledge being shared, injustices and problems being pointed out, and solutions offered. This is also part of the broader media environment, and perhaps an interesting addition to the way in which Gill (2007: 161) described the present-day post-feminist media environment as arguably 'much of what counts as feminist debate in western countries today takes place in the media rather than outside of it'. However, in this broader context what is interesting is the 'siloing' effect of media such as YouTube: broadcasters such as Witton are popular, but on the other hand their activities are nested in a commercial environment where the regulation by the companies hosting their activities plays a role in what they are doing and how they run their broadcasting, and explicit branding and sponsoring are part of the feminist messaging. Micro-celebrity branding and conforming to certain commercial practices are part and parcel of ensuring visibility in the public sphere. As Marwick (2013: 5) also found in her more recent study on broadcasting oneself online:

> far from the revolutionary and progressive participation flaunted by entrepreneurs and pundits, social media applications encourage people to compete for social benefits by gaining visibility and attention. To boost social status, young professionals adopt self-consciously constructed personas and market themselves, like brands or celebrities, to an audience or fan base. These personas are highly edited, controlled, and monitored, conforming to commercial ideals that dictate 'safe-for-work' self-presentation. The technical mechanisms of social media reflect the values of where they were produced: a culture dominated by commercial interest.

Consequently, scholars studying language and discourse in digital environments can benefit from an engagement with approaches that focus not only exclusively on the language or discourse on display online, but also the ways in which they are mediated by online environments – mediated discourse analysis and platform studies perhaps among them (e.g. Hou 2018a, 2018b; Massanari 2015; Norris and Jones 2005; Varis 2016, 2017a). What is 'social media discourse', for instance, is, like in the case of camgirls broadcasting in commercial environments, shaped by the increased commercialisation of the internet, the nesting of the broadcasting of one's mundane everyday life into commercial practices and branding, and algorithmic sorting into popular and hence visible videos, as well as the sidelining of both controversial and not so popular content. As van Dijck (2013) points out, social media environments are not neutral intermediaries, but mediators in digital social life and relationships, shaping the way in which these materialise.

Gender and online visibility

An important dimension to consider in relation to the issue of mediation mentioned above has to do with the notion of visibility. There is a lot to investigate in terms of the visibility of Witton's as well as other young women's self-presentation through digital media. In the field of sociolinguistics, Hanell and Salö (2015) have already introduced what seems like a useful notion of 'orders of visibility' to interrogate online discourse and the kinds of discourses and practices that become visible in online environments (see also Bzura 2007 on girl cams and blogs, and Brighenti 2007). The notion of visibility seems of utmost importance for scholars working on gender and sexuality in online media, and no less for those doing that work from a linguistic or discourse studies point of view. This relates to platform policies and algorithmic regulation (e.g. Massanari 2015) that influence gender and sexuality – the point above by van Dijck (2013) regarding the role of social media as mediators, instead of 'neutral' intermediaries. Visibility of specific types of content, and camgirls, on social media has to do, first, of course, with the power of social media companies to regulate content by censoring (recall for instance the #freethenipple hashtag demanding as part of a broader campaign the end to censoring female nipples on social media and elsewhere in the public sphere as just one example of how gendered the regulation of content is). On a less immediately obvious and visible level, the fact that camgirls such as Hannah Witton are visible to ordinary users and ethnographers alike does of course have to do with the kind of content they produce and circulate; the titling practices in Witton's YouTube channel mentioned above are indicative of the kind of discursive work going on in attracting audiences and the numbers of views attest to the successfulness of this work. This kind of content makes sense in the context of being shaped by the media environment that can be characterised as an attention economy and ruled by the popularity principle, where specific formulaic camgirl discourse practices are rewarded, for instance with sponsoring and advertising partnerships (cf. Hou 2018b).

Gender, visibility, and intersectionality online

There is also another dimension related to gender and online visibility that becomes relevant in the analysis of Witton's camgirling: that of intersectionality. Keller's (2012: 444) discussion on virtual feminisms for instance reminds us that 'structural inequalities continue to prevent some girls from participating in blogging communities and other online practices'. The more privileged will have the 'material resources to blog, as well as the leisure time to do so' (ibid.), and as Keller (ibid.) points out, 'In addition to these inequalities existing on a global scale, race, class, and location inequalities continue to shape girls' access to communication technologies in Canada, the United States, and other Western countries' – and, we should add, not to mention in 'non-Western' contexts (see also Jones 2015 on sex work in a digital era for a similar conclusion regarding the importance of intersectional analysis). If we are to produce sequels to Senft's 2008 work in studying women's online voices then 'the ways in which inequalities shape the practice of feminist blogging specifically must be an important focus for future research, which will allow us to better understand whose voices come to represent contemporary feminisms' (ibid.).

It remains a question to be interrogated whether and how present-day social media due to its principles ends up highlighting certain kinds of content, and perhaps certain kinds of (branded) feminisms, or discursive mixes such as Witton's which attract large numbers of viewers with (seeming) transgression and daring, combined with informational content and feminist discourse on the body. A further interesting point to ponder for linguists and discourse analysts has to do with not necessarily focusing their analysis on the *content* of online semiotic activity; as Koskela (2004: 210, emphasis original) remarks,

> most home webcams are extremely mundane. (…) When looking at these webcams it is difficult to see a slightest sign of resistance. However, the point that I want to make is not that the actual pictures would show resistance. The question is not about political activism in traditional sense but about *revealing as a political act* – intrinsically.

We might therefore ask whether popular channels such as Hannah Witton's – as much as they present a white, middle-class, well-educated perspective on young female life and feminism in a commercial platform – have something intrinsically valuable to them in making young female experiences visible in the public sphere. As platforms such as YouTube – that filter out what they deem 'offensive' content – dominate a lot of today's online traffic and media consumption, personas that are 'are highly edited, controlled, and monitored, conforming to commercial ideals that dictate "safe-for-work" self-presentation', as described by Marwick (2013: 5) above, may continue to be the dominant type of content. What this means for representation of gender and sexuality will have to be investigated, preferably through long-term ethnographic engagement that contextualises such content with past and ongoing changes in the media environment.

Platform literacy

Finally, there is a broader issue that emerges from ethnographically analysing digital data such as Hannah Witton's YouTube channel: digital literacy, and specifically the issue of platform literacy (Varis 2017b), which is something researchers need in order to make sense of gender and sexuality in the present-day media environments. This means understanding not only individual 'micro-systems' but also the online media 'ecosystem' (van Dijck 2013); camgirls, just like other broadcasters, navigate an increasingly commercialised internet where discourse is shaped by the conditions in which users find themselves. For us researchers, it is of essence to understand how, for instance, the visibility and circulation of topics pertaining to gender and sexuality are influenced by media affordances, and how media ideologies – how people think about media and how they are designed (Gershon 2010) – influence not only the performance of gender and sexuality, but also how these are contextualised and put in further discursive trajectories. While we need to be careful in overstating digital revolutions, at the same time we need to be aware of the genres and discursive conditions of the new mediating environments. Digital ethnography is one useful approach for us in doing that, and I join Keller (2012: 444) who concludes, based on her research on girls' blogging and participation in public life, in 'advocat[ing] for an ethnographic approach to studying girls' online practices, which has the ability to uncover the complexity of blogging practices and place girls' feminist blogging as part of broader changes in technology, social activism, and feminism itself'.

Future directions

This chapter has described digital ethnography, with a specific focus on digital practices, as an approach to studying digitally mediated discourse on gender and sexuality. This meant viewing the discourse as mediated by the environments in question, helping illuminate the reasons why particular discourses appear in the form they do in social media such as YouTube. This entails attending to digital practices in which assemblages of actions, tools, and semiotic resources become the object of analysis. When it comes to digitally mediated language and discourse, research – including that focusing on gender and sexuality – so far has mainly analysed only the discourse itself, rather than examining it in the context of the mediating environments. However, researchers should look more specifically into the ways in which the material infrastructures of digital media play a role in shaping semiotic material (see also Jones 2016) as this would help further our understanding of how certain discourses on gender and sexuality become more visible than others, and how specific subjects become the ones to visibly voice them, and through which discursive means. The role of the mediating environments is crucial here, as visibility is the result of algorithmic social media systems offering content for audiences. For us interested in discourses on gender and sexuality in the public sphere this is an important line to pursue, and digital ethnography can help us understand how these new mediated realities, as assemblages of human and non-human actors, work.

Notes

1 http://camgirlzthemovie.com/home.html
2 https://www.youtube.com/user/hannahgirasol
3 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jx6sSpis9g
4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpBku_K_hzE
5 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=637hUE6H1-A
6 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3-bMOZFHUg
7 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9Af6q05Jhw
8 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ZQPBl_4vLA
9 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9IIWgH_1jg
10 LloydsPharmacy is a British pharmacy company, offering e.g. prescriptions and health advice both in-store and online.
11 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qg-yA78uke0
12 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1yDoxvipVU
13 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0gt-UaRS0U

Further reading

Boellstorff, T., Nardi, B., Pearce, C., and Taylor, C. L. (2012) *Ethnography and virtual worlds: a handbook of method*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

This book is particularly useful for those who see themselves as beginners in ethnography: it discusses myths and misunderstandings regarding ethnographic research, gives practical advice, and while focusing on virtual worlds, has wider relevance.

boyd, d. (2008) *Taken out of context: American teen sociality in networked publics*. Doctoral dissertation. University of California, Berkeley.

boyd's doctoral dissertation about American teenagers and their use of social network sites, is just one of her works that can be easily recommended as reading; while not a scholar of language or discourse, her ethnographic research on digital culture is instructive.

Hine, C. (ed.) (2013) *Virtual methods: issues in social research on the Internet*. London: Bloomsbury.

Hine's edited volume is a useful collection of case studies that serves as an introduction to different methodological and ethical issues relevant to the study of online environments.

Page, R., Barton, D., Unger, J. W., and Zappavigna, M. (2014) *Researching language and social media. A student guide*. Abingdon: Routledge.

This book is useful for students of language and social media in general, but also includes a very instructive and practical chapter on ethnographic approaches, as well as e.g. online research ethics.

Varis, P. (2016) 'Digital ethnography', in Georgakopoulou, A. and Spilioti, T. (eds) *The Routledge handbook of language and digital communication*. London: Routledge, pp. 55–68.

This handbook chapter focuses specifically on digital ethnography as an approach in the study of language.

Related topics

Analysing gendered discourses online; gender, language, and elite ethnographies in uk political institutions; using communities of practice and ethnography to answer sociolinguistic questions; multimodal constructions of feminism; doing gender and sexuality intersectionally in multimodal social media practices.

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Part III

Interactional sociolinguistic approaches

12

Interactional sociolinguistics

Foundations, developments, and applications to language, gender, and sexuality

Cynthia Gordon and Deborah Tannen (Part III leads)

Introduction

There is general agreement that the field known as 'interactional sociolinguistics' traces back to the theoretical and methodological approach developed in the late 1970s by Gumperz and laid out in his book *Discourse Strategies* (1982a). In the decade immediately following, work in this paradigm was done primarily by Gumperz and his students, or those who had been trained by, or worked directly with, him or his students. In the years since, however – a testament to the power and influence of the approach Gumperz pioneered – the term 'interactional sociolinguistics' (IS) has come to include a broad range of qualitative microanalyses of recorded, naturally occurring interactions conducted with attention to the social context in which the interaction took place. Our goal in this introduction is to provide a kind of genealogy of the field and overview of its development with brief summaries of exemplary studies. Towards that end, we recap the key terms, concepts, and methods that characterise Gumperz' foundational work as well as some of the additions and elaborations that have been adapted into the framework and have come to be associated with it.[1] We conclude with a sampling of studies that draw on Gumperz' and related approaches to examine language and gender, and the smaller number of studies examining language and sexuality, an area we hope will benefit from such investigations going forward.

John Gumperz' conception of interactional sociolinguistics

Interactional sociolinguistics (IS) is a qualitative, interpretative approach to the analysis of the language of real interaction in the context of social relationships. It is founded on the convictions that language can only be studied in context and that it is constitutive of context. In other words, context is not something pre-existing that language fits into but rather the language of interaction creates context – as well as social relationships and identities. The goal of IS, then, is no less than accounting for the communication of meaning through language use. The word 'use' is crucial. IS views meaning not as inherent in words, but rather as jointly created by speakers and listeners engaged in the act of using language to accomplish interactive goals. In order to understand and explicate this process, IS methodology involves an ethnographic component in the form of observation in naturally occurring contexts, often participant-observation; audio- or audiovisual-recording of interaction; detailed linguistic transcription of recorded conversations; microanalysis of interaction as reflected in the transcripts in light of the information gained through ethnography; and post-recording 'playback' interviews with participants and others from similar sociocultural backgrounds.

The first publication in which Gumperz laid out his approach that later became known as interactional sociolinguistics is a paper entitled 'Sociocultural knowledge in conversational inference', which he gave at the 1977 Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics (GURT) and was published in the collection of papers from that conference (Gumperz 1977). It provides a window onto the roots and foundations of IS. (This paper, in slightly adapted form, appears as Chapter 7 in *Discourse Strategies*.)[2]

It is worth noting that the term 'interactional sociolinguistics' does not appear in *Discourse Strategies*, even though that book is the first in the Cambridge series entitled 'Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics', and Gumperz was a founding co-editor of the series. Gumperz (1977, 1982a) initially referred to his approach as a 'theory of conversational inference', but he later (Gumperz 2001) uses 'interactional sociolinguistics' to identify his approach, possibly to distinguish it from Labovian variation analysis, the other dominant sociolinguistic theory and method, and from the other dominant approach to analysing recorded conversational interaction pioneered by Sacks and Schegloff that has come to be known as conversation analysis (CA).

In contrast to these approaches, IS research has long had an expansive quality to it, as Schiffrin (1994: 97) notes: 'The approach to discourse that I am calling "interactional sociolinguistics" has the most diverse disciplinary origins' among those she discusses. She traces IS to both Gumperz and Goffman, whom Gumperz frequently mentioned as one of several scholars who influenced him and whom he called a 'sociological predecessor' of his work (Gumperz 2001: 216). Goffman's many books were transformational in providing close analysis of behaviour in everyday life, beginning with his groundbreaking 1956 *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. However, it was not until his 1981 *Forms of Talk* that he turned attention to language. By the time Schiffrin wrote *Approaches to Discourse*, many of those who had adopted Gumperz' interpretive theories and methods also made ample use of Goffman's notions of footing, alignment, and other aspects of framing, as Schiffrin herself did (see for example Schiffrin 1993).

Roots and foundational concepts of Gumperz' interactional sociolinguistics

In the introduction to his 1977 essay 'Sociocultural knowledge in conversational inference', Gumperz identifies three 'major research traditions that have dealt with social factors in speech' (1977: 192), acknowledging what he sees as the contributions of each to understanding language in interaction, then pointing out shortcomings that his own approach will address. These traditions are (1) the ethnography of speaking, (2) linguistic pragmatics, and (3) ethnomethodology, or the sociology of verbal interaction. We will recap what he says about these approaches as a way of introducing and explaining aspects that Gumperz himself regarded as key to his theory of IS, and to provide insight into some of the roots of and influences on his theory. (There are others that he mentions in later essays and interviews.)

Gumperz traces the first of these three traditions, 'the ethnography of speaking', to the work of Hymes (1962), and to their own joint collection (Gumperz and Hymes 1972), whose title and subtitle, *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication*, imply that the two refer to a single field. Shortly after this volume's appearance, the two scholars seem to have divided the field between them: Hymes went on to lead the field 'ethnography of speaking' while Gumperz went in the direction of qualitative 'sociolinguistics'. Their collaboration can be traced further back, to the 1964 special issue of *American Anthropologist* they co-edited, which includes papers by many of the same scholars included in their 1972 collection. In his 1977 GURT essay, Gumperz credits 'ethnography of speaking' with using 'anthropological methods of interviewing and participant observation' to describe culturally specific speech events. (In later writing, he traces his notion of 'speech activity' to that of 'speech event'.) He argues, however, that such descriptive methods do not adequately account for 'how people integrate social knowledge in interaction' in ordinary, everyday conversations (1977: 193). That will become one of the main goals of IS.

'Linguistic pragmatics', the second research tradition that Gumperz sees as predating his own, is, in his view, 'an effort to give linguistic substance to the philosophers' notions of speech act and verbal games' and 'motivated primarily by a concern with abstract linguistic theory' (1977: 194). He cites Fillmore (1977), Gordon and Lakoff (1973), and Halliday and Hasan (1976) as linguists seeking to build on the work of philosophers such as Wittgenstein, Austin, Grice, and Searle to go beyond simple grammatical analysis to account for how speakers use words to accomplish speech acts, but concludes that this approach is limited in focusing only on the speaker, failing to account for the fact that 'conversing is rather like collaborating in the production of a play, where each person's contribution is constrained by what the others can do and what the audience will accept' (Gumperz 1977: 194). Gumperz thereby highlights another key element of IS: that meaning does not reside solely in the words spoken but is jointly created by speaker and hearer. This insight, the significance of which cannot be overstated, is inherent in Gumperz' notions of 'conversational inference' and 'thematic progression'. By using the term 'conversational inference' to refer to his own approach, Gumperz emphasised that listeners must be able not only to decode the words spoken but also to identify what the speaker intends by saying them. Even that is insufficient on its own. 'Thematic progression' refers to the need for listeners to also be able to predict what the speaker is likely to say next. Thus, for example, a native speaker, by recognising listing intonation, will know, on hearing only the first word or phrase, that it will be followed by one or more additional words or phrases – a prediction necessary to fully understand the meaning of the first words spoken.

The third research tradition Gumperz discusses, 'ethnomethodology', includes what is now commonly referred to as 'conversation analysis' or CA. He credits this approach with having 'gone a long way toward producing a theory which treats conversation as a cooperative endeavor, subject to systematic constraints' (1977: 197) and therefore sees its findings as 'basic to the study of conversational inference' (1977: 195). He cites Garfinkel (1967, 1972) for the key insight that 'social knowledge is revealed in the process of interaction itself' (1977: 195). He credits 'Harvey Sacks and his collaborators' (specifically Garfinkel, Schegloff, Jefferson, and Turner) as 'the first to focus systematically on conversation as the simplest instance of a naturally organized activity, and to the process of conversational cooperation as a thing in itself …' (1977: 195–196). He goes on to say, however, that this tradition cannot account for many of the essential elements of conversational interaction that his own approach will: 'how speakers use verbal skills to create contextual conditions that reflect particular culturally realistic scenes'; how 'speakers' grammatical and phonological knowledge' is 'employed in carrying out these strategies'; and how they are 'able to recognise culturally possible lines of reasoning' necessary to follow thematic progression

(1977: 197). Gumperz is thus emphasising the need to bring linguistic and anthropological perspectives to the work of these sociologists.

Yet another key element of IS is in focus in the first sentence of *Discourse Strategies*: ‘This book seeks to develop interpretive sociolinguistic approaches to the analysis of real time processes in face to face encounters’ (1982a: vii). Of significance here is not only the term ‘real time’ – IS always analyses naturally occurring recorded conversation – but also the term ‘interpretive’. The significance of this aspect of IS cannot be overestimated. The interpretive nature of IS analysis is essential because meaning in interaction is emergent, and listening – that is, gleaning meaning from language – is itself an interpretive process. To critics, this is the soft underbelly of IS: interpretation cannot be proved. Also problematic is the difficulty, if not impossibility, of teaching interpretation. Tannen recalls a conversation in which Labov (personal communication) remarked that anyone who learns his method can apply it successfully, but the type of analysis developed by Gumperz, like that of Goffman, depends for its insight and usefulness on the analyst’s perspicacity, which cannot be taught.

In addition to its roots in and connections to sociology, IS also sits at the intersection of linguistics and anthropology, as does its founder’s own career. Gumperz was on the faculty of the anthropology department at the University of California, Berkeley, though he received his PhD in linguistics at the University of Michigan. Many of those whose work is characterised as IS, including many who trained with Gumperz, are linguistic anthropologists. Indeed, the terms ‘linguistic anthropologist’ and ‘(interactional) sociolinguist’ are sometimes used interchangeably to refer to the same scholars, and both are used by some scholars to refer to themselves.

Social justice as an aim of interactional sociolinguistics

Like much early sociolinguistic work, Gumperz’ was founded on the conviction that uncovering the role of linguistic phenomena in face-to-face interaction would contribute to the cause of social justice. Gumperz developed his approach not only as a way of explaining the interpretive nature of talk but also to address the consequences of real-life misunderstandings and misjudgements of abilities and intentions, that can lead to injustice and discrimination, in particular against ethnic minorities. This is evident in the research sites where he developed the theories and methods that became IS, where he focused on gatekeeping encounters, a locus and concept originated by Erickson (1975). In *The Counselor as Gatekeeper*, Erickson and Shultz (1982: xi) define gatekeeping encounters as situations in which ‘two persons meet, usually as strangers, with one of them having authority to make decisions that affect the other’s future’. This dynamic, and the character of Gumperz’ research site, are illustrated by the photograph on the cover of *Language and Social Identity*, the collection of papers by Gumperz and his students and collaborators that was a companion volume to *Discourse Strategies*: a Southeast Asian woman wearing a sari sits at the end of a desk looking up at a white British man sitting behind the desk wearing suit and tie, holding a pen poised over paper in a notebook or folder. It is evident that she is applying or asking for something, and that he plays a role in determining whether or not she will get it. The scene represents the essence of the research Gumperz conducted in London on multicultural gatekeeping encounters, in which he shows that culturally influenced ways of using language to signal meaning and intentions result in Southeast Asian speakers being underestimated and misjudged by British gatekeepers, with the result that Asians often don’t get benefits they are entitled to or jobs for which they are qualified.

Gumperz (1982a: 175–179) illustrates this process in an exchange between a Pakistani teacher who has been unable to find permanent work in London and a white British counsellor whose job it is to help him. Gumperz shows that the audio-recorded interaction breaks down in part because of different expectations about what needs to be said in the interview/counselling session as well as different expectations regarding uses and interpretations of prosodic and paralinguistic features like rhythm and intonation. Such features – along with others that are linguistic (e.g. lexical choice) or extra-linguistic (e.g. eye gaze) – constitute what Gumperz calls ‘contextualization cues’. These are all the ways speakers indicate and listeners interpret how speakers mean what they say. Expectations and assumptions about how to use these signals constitute the ‘sociocultural knowledge’ of the title of Gumperz’ original essay, while listeners’ interpretations of meaning and intentions, based on their own sociocultural knowledge, are the title’s ‘conversational inference’. In the interview/counselling session, for example, after a brief discussion about audio-recording, the staff counsellor uses a rise in pitch to mark a shift in focus to the session proper, thus initiating the speech activity, providing counselling. Instead of engaging in this activity – the reason he is there – the teacher produces talk that overlaps with the counsellor’s, which suggests that he either fails to recognise, or disagrees with, the shift in speech activity, thereby missing her invitation to begin the counselling he came for. This seemingly trivial mismatch is just one of a mounting series, reflecting the inability not only to agree on how to initiate counselling but also to establish rhythmic synchrony and smooth turn-taking. The counsellor repeatedly uses indirectness to encourage the teacher to state his problem, without success. Gumperz draws on his own knowledge of Southeast Asian contextualization cues (he did fieldwork in India and co-authored a grammar of conversational Hindi–Urdu), as well as on the results of post-recording playback with other Pakistanis, to argue that the teacher’s rhythm and intonation are signalling that he is seeking the counsellor’s acknowledgement of ‘the gravity of his situation before he goes on to give more detail’ (1982a: 178). The result of these and other mismatches in uses and expectations of signalling is that the teacher does not receive needed support and the counsellor does not effectively do her job.

Such work by Gumperz, as well as by his students, starts from the belief that differences in how one uses and interprets contextualization cues contribute to, or aggravate, discrimination, social inequality, and cross-cultural stereotyping – and that by uncovering and explaining cultural differences and educating people about them, some such misunderstandings can be avoided or overcome, thereby decreasing the likelihood of unintentional discrimination or denial of resources. Of course, claiming that such differences contribute to social injustice does not imply that they are the only contributors. Clearly, discrimination, prejudice, and economic, as well as social, inequality play enormous roles. Nor does the hope that raising awareness about the role of such differences will be a starting point to overcome them and help undo the injustices to which they contribute imply that other contributing factors will thereby be miraculously erased.

Expansions and additions to interactional sociolinguistic theory

Gumperz’ emphasis on the crucial role of contextualization cues in expressing and interpreting meaning has implications for linguistic theory. By bringing them into analytic focus he shows that features of language which linguists previously dismissed as ‘marginal’ should be seen as ‘core’. Signalling how speakers mean what they say, what they think they are doing when they speak, is every bit as essential, for speakers and hearers, as knowing the grammar and lexicon of a language. In that sense, interpreting contextualization cues that signal speech activity is akin to identifying what anthropologist Bateson ([1955]1972) referred to as 'frame', so it is not surprising that one of the most significant ways in which Gumperz' IS has been expanded and enriched is the theoretical concept of framing. Just as Gumperz argued that meaning cannot be gleaned in interaction except by reference to features previously dismissed by linguists as 'marginal', in Bateson's view, no utterance or act can be understood except by reference to a 'metamessage' that identifies the frame – that is, the nature of the interaction – such as whether a monkey biting another monkey is fighting or playing. Merging Bateson's and Gumperz' terminology, one can say that contextualization cues – the way the monkey executes the bite, or the way a person utters an insult – can be understood as sending metamessages that guide interpretation of messages, so a monkey knows that another monkey is playing and a person knows that a friend is teasing. As noted above, Bateson's concept of framing was elaborated and expanded by Goffman (1974, 1981), who was on the faculty at Berkeley at the same time as Gumperz for a number of overlapping years (1960–1968). Gumperz' notion of speech activity is closely related to that of frame; in later years, Gumperz made this connection explicit: 'Contextualization cues, along with other indexical signs, serve to retrieve the frames (in Goffman's sense of the term) that channel the interpretive process' (Prevignano and di Luzio 2003: 10). Further, they send metamessages regarding the relationships between participants, which relates to Goffman's (1981) notions of footing and alignment.

A frequently cited IS application and elaboration of frames theory is Tannen and Wallat's ([1987]1993) analysis of a paediatric examination/interview. The authors introduce a distinction between two types of frame: interactive frames and knowledge schemas. The paper demonstrates the power of frames theory to account for the discourse of a paediatrician who is examining a child in the presence of the child's mother. The doctor uses three distinct registers which identify her addressees: she speaks to the child in 'baby talk' or 'motherese'; she addresses the mother in a conversational register; and she uses a monotonic 'reporting register' to narrate the findings of her examination, presumably for the benefit of paediatric residents who will later view the videotape of the interaction. Tannen and Wallat demonstrate that while the notion of register helps identify whom the doctor is addressing, the notion of 'frame' is necessary to account for and distinguish what the doctor is doing when she speaks. For example, when she asks the mother for information relevant to the child's medical condition, her discourse is part of her examination. But when she answers the mother's question about an unrelated concern, the doctor must shift frames from examining the child to consulting with the mother: a cognitive burden that disrupts the examination, as the doctor attested during playback. The concept of knowledge schema explains why one such interruption occurred: the mother misinterpreted the 'noisy' breathing the child produced during the doctor's examination as indicating difficulty breathing, and this required the doctor to put the examination on hold to explain that the breathing was normal for a child with cerebral palsy. In other words, it was the mismatch in knowledge schemas about cerebral palsy that occasioned the sudden switch in frames.

The Tannen and Wallat study is not classic IS, insofar as sociocultural differences do not figure in it: both doctor and mother are white middle-class Americans. The question of whether ways of speaking are regarded as 'sociocultural' or individual is the focus of a paper co-authored by Gumperz and Tannen (1979) entitled 'Individual and social differences in language use'. Analysing examples of interaction in which miscommunication occurs, the authors posit an implicational hierarchy of levels on which signalling differences can occur, with level-1 differences, such as confusion about the referent 'here', characterised as individual and level-4 differences characterised as social, as when an Indian English speaker using prosody and amplitude – speaking emphatically and loudly – to build up to his point is mistakenly heard by an American as having already made the point and is interrupted. Interestingly, an example of level-2 differences, uses of indirectness, in this paper illustrates individual differences, because the speakers are both white East Coast urban professional men. However, in *Conversational Style*, Tannen ([1984]2005) cites the same example in a study extending Gumperz' notion of social differences to Americans of different regional and ethnic backgrounds. She argues there that the men's contrasting uses of indirectness can be traced to their differing regional and ethnic backgrounds: one is Irish Catholic raised in Boston, the other East European Jewish raised in New York City. That a single example could in one study represent individual differences and in the other sociocultural differences highlights the difficulty of specifying the boundaries of these categories.

Tannen's notion of 'conversational style' expands on and adapts Gumperz' approach in another way, too: she folds Lakoff's (1973) notion of communicative style into Gumperz' of conversational inference, thereby accounting not only for the patterns by which speakers signal and listeners interpret how what is said is meant, but also explaining the 'logic' underlying and driving the stylistic choices associated with each style. Tannen posits, following Lakoff, that all speakers balance the needs to show involvement and to not impose, but some cultural styles place more emphasis on showing involvement (hence Tannen calls this style 'high involvement') while others place more on not imposing (hence 'high considerateness'). Seeing conversational style features as reflecting these overriding emphases – different ways of observing similar values and goals – shows that they are not random but patterned. Thus high-involvement style speakers might stand closer, speak more loudly, leave shorter pauses between turns and use 'cooperative overlap' – talking along to show enthusiastic listenership. Like Gumperz, Tannen assumes and explains the validity of differing styles. She argues that styles are influenced by a range of factors – not just broad cultural or ethnic identities but also regional background, religion, class, age, profession, gender, sexuality, and many other influences.

A liability associated with all research that addresses cultural patterns is the risk of being seen as 'stereotyping'. Does Tannen's finding that speakers of New York Jewish background were more likely to stand closer, speak more loudly, and talk along to show enthusiastic listenership amount to stereotyping New York Jews as aggressive? Our strong conviction is that the term 'stereotype' must be used with caution, and must not be confused with or applied to a pattern observed. A 'stereotype' is a pre-existing assumption based on hearsay that has been formed before encountering a person or interaction. A research finding based on observation is the opposite of a stereotype. A research finding which identifies a pattern that bears a resemblance to a stereotype is not a stereotype. The accusation that it reinforces a stereotype, on the other hand, must be taken seriously. In our view, Tannen's observations of the patterns she describes can help explain and overcome the stereotype. For example, Tannen showed that the use of cooperative overlap – speaking along to show enthusiasm – by speakers of East European Jewish background did not constitute interruption in interactions with those who shared a high-involvement style, because they did not stop if they had more to say. Cooperative overlap only led to interruption when it was mistaken as an attempt to take the floor. The interruption, in other words, was not the sole doing of the one who began speaking; rather, it was also the doing of the speaker who stopped mid-turn. This is a key point on many levels: first, the effect of a way of speaking in cross-style interaction may result not from a speaker's intention but rather from style difference between two speakers. Second, it attests to the IS principle that anything that happens in interaction always results from the interaction of all participants.

Gumperz' notion of conversational involvement is also elaborated in Tannen's *Talking Voices* ([1989]2007), where she argues that everyday conversation is made up of the same linguistic strategies that are artfully shaped and elaborated in literary discourse: repetition, dialogue, and details that create imagery. As Tannen explains in an introduction to the second edition (2007), her analysis of repetition, which makes up the first and by far the longest analytic chapter in the book, is synonymous with the phenomenon that is now routinely referred to as 'intertextuality' and is playing an increasingly central role in IS. Gordon (2009) further develops this focus by demonstrating the interrelation between intertextuality and framing in her study of the discourse of three families, each consisting of a mother, a father, and a child under age five. In this and related studies (Gordon 2004, 2006), she explores how and why family members repeat one another's words in everyday talk as well as the interactive effects of those repetitions. Importantly, Gordon (2009) demonstrates the function of repetition in creating and managing various forms of what Goffman (1974) refers to as 'laminations' of frames. In addition to showing the complex means by which speakers create different configurations of frames, she also shows how intertextuality interplays with framing to create the shared meanings that give each family its distinctive identity. For example, she demonstrates how a mother blends parenting and play frames in how she encourages her nearly three-year-old daughter to, for example, get into her car seat, speak politely, and get ready for naptime: the mother issues directives by using character names and other material from a storybook that she often reads to the little girl, thus accomplishing both parenting and play. Gordon also suggests that interactions such as these construct aspects of the family's identity (e.g. as centring around literacy). In the next section, we describe how select studies in IS have explored discourse as related to identities pertaining to gender and sexuality.

The theoretical framework of IS has thus expanded and evolved in the years since Gumperz first devised what he called his theory of conversational inference, and the approach has been applied to ever-expanding domains of interaction. With this overview of IS as a foundation, we turn now to the topic of this Handbook, describing how IS has been used to explore how identities related to gender and sexuality are represented and constructed in discourse.

Language, gender, and sexuality

Cross-gender communication as cross-cultural communication

A particularly influential as well as early application of IS to gender and discourse is the chapter by Maltz and Borker in *Language and Social Identity* (1982). Spending time with Gumperz at the University of California, Berkeley during the key years when he was developing IS, the authors, both anthropologists, concluded that Gumperz' framework of cross-cultural miscommunication could account for a range of findings in the then-nascent but about to burgeon field of gender and language. They recap patterns identified in the existing literature regarding how American girls and boys, and women and men, tend to use language. They then cite studies, such as those by Goodwin (1980) and Lever (1976), of children's play to support the view that boys and girls grow up in what can be seen as different cultures in the sense that they tend to play in sex-separate groups and to be treated differently. Maltz and Borker then suggest that the differences in how women and men use language can be traced to the gender-inflected sociolinguistic subcultures in which they are socialised. In other words, they learn to use and interpret contextualization cues differently, and differently conceptualise certain speech activities. Brief, simple examples are Hirschman's ([1973]1994) observation that women tend to use more minimal responses, especially 'mm hmm', and Fishman's (1978: 402) that women are more likely to utter such feedback throughout another's talk rather than at a turn's end. Maltz and Borker hypothesise that women often use these minimal responses to indicate that they're listening, whereas men may use them to indicate agreement, or at least, 'I follow your argument so far'. Therefore, the authors argue, women may use more of them because they are listening more often than men are agreeing. Furthermore, a man may get the impression that a woman has been agreeing when she has simply been listening, and a woman may get the impression that a man isn't listening when he has been listening but doesn't agree. They note, moreover, that these impressions fit in with the larger complaints that members of each subculture tend to make of the other: women often complain that men do not listen, and men often complain that women are unpredictable. They thus apply Gumperz' insight that ill effects in interaction may result from the differing expectations and uses of contextualization cues rather than from ill intentions. It is important to emphasise here that this does not imply that no one ever has ill intentions, only that the impression of ill intentions in some instances may be the unintended result of these differences. This brief article was significant in demonstrating the applicability of IS theory and method to contexts beyond those Gumperz addressed, and was influential in its specific extension of IS to language and gender.

Maltz and Borker's article became the basis for Tannen's application of Gumperz' framework to communication between women and men in her general-audience book *You Just Don't Understand* (1990). Around the time that Tannen was working on it, she took part in a study of children's dyadic conversations with their best friends that was spearheaded by Bruce Dorval, who video-recorded the children's conversations in his office. Tannen noticed that at every age, the girls looked directly at each other and maintained that face-to-face gaze whereas at every age the boys sat at angles or parallel and looked around the room. These observations, recapped in a chapter of *You Just Don't Understand*, correspond to Maltz and Borker's interpretation of Hirschman's and Fishman's findings: women often get the impression that men are not listening because they are not maintaining gaze, and men may feel wrongly accused of not listening when they were. (See Tannen 1994a for analyses, based on these and other findings, written for academic audiences.)

Tannen's (1994b) next book, *Talking from 9 to 5*, applies IS method as well as theory in that it is based on extended ethnographic observation and the recording of naturally occurring interaction. Tannen worked with two large corporations, one in California and one in New York State, to identify four or five managers who carried or wore audio recorders and recorded everything they felt comfortable recording at work for a week. After they had recorded, she shadowed them and interviewed their peers, superiors, and subordinates. Tannen documents how the women in her study are caught in what Lakoff (1975) identified as a 'double bind' confronting all women in positions of authority. (The concept of double bind, which traces to Bateson, is a no-win situation in which someone is faced with two requirements, but anything they do to fulfil one violates the other. For women in authority, anything they do to fulfil the expectations that a good woman is, for example, diffident and self-effacing, violates the expectations that a person in authority be confident and assertive. If they talk in ways expected of women, they are liked but seen as lacking confidence and even competence. If they talk in ways expected of people in authority, they are seen as too aggressive.) A condensation of this book appears as an article in the *Harvard Business Review* (Tannen 1995). For further discussion of this double bind see also Appleby, this volume.

Gender and talk at home and at work

As the preceding sections illustrate, there are many language and gender studies that take an IS approach to examine interactions at home and in the workplace. (Workplace studies have been particularly numerous, including those by Angouri, Marra, and Dawson, and by Schnurr and Omar, this volume, and the large body of work by Holmes and her collaborators (e.g. Holmes and Marra 2004).) A case study by Kendall (2003) is unique and particularly revealing in comparing a woman's discourse across these two domains. Using a framing approach, Kendall explores the contrasting ways that the woman, Elaine, constructs authority at home, as a parent to her ten-year old daughter, and at work, as the manager of two women subordinates, where Kendall documents how the woman manages the double bind. Drawing on Goffman's (1967: 83) notions of deference and demeanour as well as Davies and Harré's (1990) positioning theory, Kendall shows that Elaine creates a 'benevolent demeanour of authority' at work by issuing directives to her subordinates in face-saving ways, positioning them as equals who will engage in a joint activity, such as by using 'let's'. Strikingly, Kendall notes that Elaine 'draws on mitigating strategies that evoke the qualities associated with sociocultural concepts of "mother"; however, she does not use these strategies to the same extent to "do" her identity as a mother' (p. 13). At home, Elaine creates a demeanour of 'explicit authority' by, for example, issuing unmitigated directives in imperative form to her daughter during dinnertime, such as, 'Just spoon in that, and stir it around' (p. 608). In a related study, Kendall (2008) zooms in on the dinnertime interactions, demonstrating how Elaine and her husband create gendered identities through the number and kinds of positions they take up in different frames. Elaine accomplishes many tasks, such as monitoring their daughter's etiquette and behaviour, and managing dinner preparation and clean-up, while her husband mainly positions himself as family comedian. Through this unequal division of labour, as well as the gendered nature of their different tasks, the adults create gendered parental identities. Simultaneously, Kendall shows, they construct other social identities (e.g. authority on cooking, child's teacher); she thus demonstrates that gendered identities are multifaceted, and intersect with other aspects of identity.

Kendall also analysed conversations between parents as part of the larger study of family interaction of which Gordon, cited above, is also a part. (See Tannen, Kendall, and Gordon 2007 for a detailed description.) The design of this study is modelled on the one Tannen developed for the research behind *Talking from 9 to 5*. Parents in dual-income, roughly middle-class American families (all of whom were white and had opposite-sex partners) carried or wore digital audio recorders over the course of approximately one week, recording as much as they felt comfortable doing at work and at home. Post-recording, they were shadowed by a member of the research team for at least one day (Kendall and Gordon both observed), and participated in playback with the researchers. Kendall (2007) used these recordings and transcriptions to explore how members of two couples create gendered positions in conflicting discourses (or ideologies) of work and family: on one hand, the traditional ideology by which women are primary caregivers and men are breadwinners and on the other, the feminist discourse by which women and men share equally the roles of primary caregiver and breadwinner. The couples whose discourse she analysed espoused the feminist discourse: it was important to them that both worked and both spent time with their child as primary caregiver. However, their everyday interactions and conversations often positioned them within the traditional discourse. For example, one mother is positioned as primary caregiver when she overrules directives issued by her husband to their child during potty-training; elsewhere, in a conversation with her friends, she describes her work outside the home as a chance to be 'be stimulated' and her husband's as necessary for the family 'to survive', thus positioning him as breadwinner.

Gordon has also explored gender in the discourse of these families. For example, extending theorising by Ochs (1993), Gordon (2007) examines the acts and stances the same mother performs in an interaction wherein her brother (the child's uncle) explains to the couple how their daughter misbehaved while he babysat her. Gordon shows that the mother performs acts and takes up stances that are socioculturally linked to the identities of 'parent', 'woman', and particularly 'mother', by requesting details about her daughter's day; providing details about her child's life in response to the report; assessing her daughter's and her brother's depicted behaviours; and accounting for her daughter's misbehaviour.

The topic of language and gender has also been explored by scholars drawing on IS in other contexts, both personal/social and workplace/institutional, and in various cultures. We mention only a sampling here. Language and gender has been explored in such interpersonal interactions as talk among adult women friends in Greece (Georgakopoulou 2005) and Germany (Günthner 1997; Kotthoff 2000); among college fraternity men in the US (Kiesling 2001); among US American and Chinese preschool children (Kyratzis and Guo 2001); between members of a mixed-gender pair of Japanese college friends (Itakura 2015); and between a pair of preschool-aged British girls engaged in pretend play (Cook-Gumperz 1995). Workplace/institutional contexts wherein language and gender are examined include Brazilian all-female police stations and feminist crisis centres (Ostermann 2003); psychiatric interviews in Brazil (Ribeiro 2002); discourse among men and women in the US Air Force (Disler 2008); employment interviews of female engineering students in New Zealand (Reissner-Roubicek 2012); German-language counselling/advising conversations among German advisors and Chinese research scientists seeking guidance (Günthner 1992); interactions among employees at an American radio network (Kendall 2004); conversations among members of an all-women management team in the UK (Baxter 2014); everyday discourse in diverse types of New Zealand workplaces (e.g. Holmes 2006); and in multinational companies situated in Europe (Angouri 2018). Gendered styles of language use and identity construction have also been considered through the lens of IS in contexts beyond work and home, though less frequently, including in news, entertainment, and social media contexts, such as in televised debates (Kotthoff 1997), reality TV (Gordon 2015), online discussion boards (Gordon and İkizoğlu 2017), and online product reviews (Vásquez and China 2019). As indicated by these studies, as well as those briefly summarised above and many we have not specifically cited, IS has proved a frequent and fruitful source of insight into gendered patterns of interaction. Language and sexuality is a newer field and therefore includes fewer IS studies. Hence the next and last section is brief, but will give a sense of work that has been done and of work that might be done in the future.

Language and sexuality

There is a limited body of research in interactional sociolinguistics that focuses on sexuality, as compared to gender. Kiesling's (2001) work on fraternity men's discourse, and Georgakopoulou's (2005) on the discourse of women friends both address heterosexuality as relevant to the construction of gendered identities in their data. Wang (2020) draws on IS to examine the construction of racialised sexuality in online text-based communication. Seals' (this volume) analysis of a stand-up routine also addresses sexuality. To date, however, more research on language and sexuality has been conducted by scholars taking kindred context-bound approaches to the analysis of interaction, such as Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) sociocultural linguistic approach to the study of identity construction. For instance, Wagner (2010) examines the discourse of lesbian families in the US; Hall (e.g. Hall and O'Donovan 1996) explores language use by Hindi-speaking hijras (identified by anthropologists as members of a 'third gender') in northern India, and Gaudio (2009) studies the discourse of feminine men in a Hausa-speaking Islamic city of northern Nigeria. Collections have emerged that use qualitative sociolinguistic and anthropological linguistic perspectives to investigate connections between gender and sexuality in language use among people who self-identify as queer, transgender, or non-binary (e.g. Zimman, Davis, and Raclaw 2014). We look forward to future studies applying theories of conversational inference, discourse strategies, and framing and positioning, as developed in IS, to the study of language and sexuality.

Conclusion

We have tried in this essay to provide an overview of 'interactional sociolinguistics' from its inception in the pioneering work of Gumperz to the rich and expansive body of work now commonly referred to by the term, as it is now used to characterise a wide range of context-sensitive microanalysis of interaction. In revisiting the roots and development of the approach, we have highlighted not only how it has blossomed over the years, but also the potential and promise it holds for scholars who seek a qualitative, interpretive method to explore language, gender, and sexuality.

Notes

1 Each author has written a lengthy essay focusing on IS which includes information relevant to this joint essay. Gordon's (2011) is an introduction to Gumperz's academic biography, the motivations that contributed to his development of IS, and key research trajectories in the areas of his research. Tannen's (2004) introduces the terms and concepts that characterise the theories and methods of IS, then presents sample analyses to illustrate their application.

2 Tannen actually helped Gumperz write this paper, as well as two others that he drew on for *Discourse Strategies*. When she was a graduate student in linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, Tannen was hired by Gumperz full time for a term to help him write this paper and another entitled 'The conversational analysis of interethnic communication' (Gumperz 1978). She later helped him write 'The sociolinguistic basis of speech act theory' (Gumperz 1981), parts of which he adapted for inclusion in Chapter 8. Finally, Chapter 6, 'Contextualization conventions', draws heavily from the paper Gumperz and Tannen (1979) co-authored entitled 'Individual and social differences in language use'. The collaboration is acknowledged in the notes to each of these publications.

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13

Leadership and humour at work

Using interactional sociolinguistics to explore the role of gender

Stephanie Schnurr and Nor Azikin Mohd Omar

Introduction

This chapter explores language and gender in the professional domain with a focus on leadership discourse. Leadership is a particularly relevant topic for language and gender research as the notion of leadership is characterised by a male bias (e.g. Martin Rojo and Esteban 2003), and globally prevailing gender stereotypes and expectations – which assume leaders to be white, male, and handsome (e.g. Clifton et al. 2019) – continue to have real-life implications for women and men taking up leadership roles or aspiring to do so. In our analysis of leadership discourse and gender, we focus on humour, which is one of the discursive strategies frequently used by leaders to achieve their various objectives (e.g. Holmes 2007; Schnurr 2009b). As an analytical and methodological approach we employ interactional sociolinguistics (IS), which facilitates the identification of humour as part of a fine-grained analysis of authentic interactional data, while at the same time taking into account the context in which an encounter occurs. In what follows, we first briefly outline some of the recent trends in research on leadership discourse and gender with a particular emphasis on humour, before introducing IS in more detail. We discuss some of the benefits of IS for the study of leadership and humour, and we analyse several examples of authentic leadership discourse to illustrate how IS can be applied, and how it guides, supports, and facilitates our understanding of the role of gender in this context. We end the chapter with a brief discussion of our findings, some remarks for future research, and a list of recommendations for further reading.

Gender, leadership, and humour – a brief overview

Much has been written on leadership and gender, and researchers from different disciplines have repeatedly pointed out that leadership is a gendered concept and that expectations of what is considered to be a good leader and effective leadership are strongly affected by gender stereotypes (e.g. Billing and Alvesson 2000; Holmes 2006; Schnurr 2008). Not only are many of the attributes typically associated with leadership almost synonymous with stereotypical views of masculinity, such as being authoritative, decisive, competitive, goal-oriented, hard-nosed etc. (Holmes 2006: 34), but the mantra 'think leader – think male' (Koenig et al. 2011) seems to prevail despite research that celebrates other, 'more feminine' ways of doing leadership (e.g. Baxter 2010; Chesterman et al. 2005). However, these 'other' ways of doing leadership, which centre around collaboration, cooperation, empathy, and long-term thinking – attributes stereotypically associated with femininity – are often only perceived as valuable when displayed by men (Baxter 2012; Singh and Vinnicombe 2002). Yet, they tend to be overlooked or regarded as something else (and less valuable) than leadership when displayed by women (Fletcher 2001; Rutherford 2001; Sinclair 1998). Thus, although considerable evidence gathered in numerous studies on leadership and gender in different sociocultural contexts shows that no direct link exists between gender and actual leadership performance, these stereotypes prevail, and men and women tend to be perceived very differently to the extent that the same behaviour is often evaluated differently (e.g. Fletcher 2004; Holmes 2006; Schnurr 2009b). Moreover, in spite of an increase in the number of women in leadership positions worldwide (according to the latest OECD (2016) report, there is a 20% increase on average of women in leadership positions[1]), still only a very limited set of roles are available to women leaders, which heavily draw on and thus reinforce gender stereotypes by categorising women leaders as either a mother, a seductress, an iron maiden, or a pet (Baxter 2012, 2017; Kanter 1977). All these observations point to the fact that in spite of recent positive developments in terms of increasing visibility of women in more senior positions, and the often cited feminisation of leadership or 'female advantage' of doing leadership in some industries (Eagly and Carli 2003; Fletcher 2004), women remain disadvantaged – both in terms of accessing leadership positions and in terms of how they are being perceived and evaluated for their leadership work.

Leadership and humour

Among the various strategies that have been described as indexing leadership, humour is receiving a considerable amount of attention (e.g. Avolio et al. 1999; Collinson 2006; Holmes 2007; Holmes and Marra 2006; Hoption et al. 2013; Rogerson-Revell 2011; Schnurr 2009a, 2009b; Schnurr and Chan 2009, 2011, 2017). This continued interest in this discursive strategy is perhaps not surprising given its versatility and complexity. Humour has been found to be a valuable tool to assist those in leadership positions to achieve several leadership objectives, such as getting things done, motivating the team, solving conflicts and managing disagreements, creating group-cohesiveness, and making criticisms more palatable, etc. For example, conducting case studies of six leaders in three internet technology (IT) companies in New Zealand, Schnurr (2009b) illustrates how humour may assist those in leadership positions to achieve various transactional and relational objectives – sometimes even simultaneously. Similarly, Mullany (2004) explores how meeting chairs use humour when attempting to gain their subordinates' compliance in managerial business meetings recorded in two businesses in the UK. Rogerson-Revell (2011) analyses the role of humour with regard to the leadership styles displayed by chairs of meetings in international business meetings in large corporations in Hong Kong and the EU. Holmes and Marra (2006) also illustrate the multiple functions that humour may perform with regard to leadership, and discuss the ways in which the leaders' use of humour contributes to and reflects specific aspects of their leadership styles. They argue that humour is particularly useful for the performance of leadership as it enables the leaders to exercise both power and politeness – often at the same time. They provide several examples to show that '[s]killful leaders recognise the transformational potential of humour, as well as its value in helping achieve transactional objectives, and they exploit its varied functions to create team, smooth ruffled feathers and generate creative energy' (Holmes and Marra 2006: 133). They argue that the ways in which the leaders (and their subordinates) use humour is a reflection (and at the same time active contribution) to the culture of their workplaces (see also Schnurr 2009b).

Humour and gender

Humour is not only a valuable tool for leaders, but, like the concept of leadership, it is also heavily affected by gender stereotypes. Among the most common gender stereotypes are the claims that women often 'don't get a joke', that they use and appreciate humour less than men (Kotthoff 2006: 2), and that they prefer different types of humour (Tannen 1994). For example, in an early study on a group of white, middle-class American mothers who regularly meet, Jenkins (1985) claims that the humour used by these women is cooperative, supportive, inclusive, self-healing, integrated, and spontaneous, while the humour produced by men is more exclusive, challenging, pre-formulated, and self-aggrandising. Similar trends were observed by Hay (2000) who analysed the humour of men and women in informal friendship groups in New Zealand. Like Jenkins (1985), she also observed considerable gender differences and found the women to employ humour more frequently than the men to create solidarity, whereas men used it more often to 'highlight similarities or capitalise on shared experiences' (Hay 2000: 734). Interestingly, she found no noticeable differences in the extent to which the women and men in her sample used teasing. Tannen (1994: 72), drawing on various studies, also argued that '[t]he types of humor men and women tend to prefer differ'. While men predominantly use 'razzing, teasing, and mock-hostile attacks', women mainly employed self-denigrating humour (Tannen 1994: 72–73).

Research on humour and gender in the workplace is relatively recent (for an exception see Tannen 1994), and most of these more recent studies challenge the findings of earlier research on gender stereotypes regarding the use of humour in friendship groups. For example, Mullany (2004: 13) observed that in contrast to the stereotype of humourless women, the female chairs in her study frequently used repressive humour (i.e. humour through which the speaker exercises (often subtle) control) 'as a mitigation strategy to attempt to gain the compliance of their subordinates', while the male chairs did not adopt this strategy at all. Similarly, in a study of two female leaders in small factory outlets in Hong Kong, Ladegaard (2012) reports evidence of the women regularly using jocular abuse to maintain their hierarchical position in the workplace. These observations challenge earlier claims about the supportive, collaborative, self-denigrating, and inclusive nature of women's humour. For instance, Holmes (2006: 40), analysed the occurrence of humour in over 20 meetings in private and governmental organisations in New Zealand and found no evidence for gender differences. She rather observed 'that both women and men used conjoint humour supportively, to elaborate or expand a previous contribution, and contestively, to challenge another's humorous assertion'. However, despite these similarities in men's and women's use of humour, Holmes also observed that in meetings where women were present, supportive conjoint humour tended to occur more frequently, while contestive joined humour was more typically used in meetings which involved men. All these studies thus point to inconclusive evidence about gender differences, and, as Kotthoff (2006: 3) succinctly maintains, 'there are more similarities than differences in the humor of women and men'. These observations are in line with Kendall's statement that '[s]ituations in which women and men consciously choose language options to create femininity or masculinity are rare. In contrast, women and men do consciously choose language to best fulfill their roles as managers' (2004: 76). Our examples below illustrate precisely this.

Moving on from these initial studies which often compared how men and women use humour in a particular context, more recent studies focus on how the use of humour is gendered and how humour may be used by interlocutors to put gender on the agenda and to make often hidden gender stereotypes visible. For example, Schnurr and Holmes (2009) and Holmes and Schnurr (2014) investigated how masculinity and femininity are enacted, reflected, manifested, and sometimes challenged in participants' use of humour in the workplace. Rather than comparing the discursive behaviour of men and women, they explore some of 'the ways in which gender and humor intersect in workplace interaction' (Holmes and Schnurr 2014: 165) and how both men and women utilise humour to 'do gender', thereby negotiating their professional and their gender identities.

But despite these recent trends, which reject treating men and women as homogenous groups, gender stereotypes about women's use of humour, and their abilities to lead, seem to prevail in workplaces around the world (e.g. Clifton et al. 2019; Holmes 2006). This chapter explores this stereotypical perception by further discussing the complex relationship between gender, leadership, and humour. Drawing on authentic workplace interactions collected in a range of different workplaces in New Zealand, the UK and Malaysia, we analyse some of the ways in which humour is used by those in leadership positions, in order to critically explore the role of gender. However, in contrast to much previous research, our particular interest in this chapter is methodological, and we aim to illustrate some of the benefits of using IS to inquire into the complexities of leadership, humour, and gender.

Interactional sociolinguistics as an approach to analyse leadership, humour, and gender

IS is one of the major theoretical approaches to discourse analysis (Holmes 2014: 177). It was pioneered by the anthropologist Gumperz. IS is a well-established framework that is frequently used in the field of sociolinguistics for inquiries into actual language use in specific situations and sociocultural contexts. In contrast to some other discourse analytical approaches, such as conversation analysis, it pays particular attention to the ways in which societal and interactive forces merge in specific communicative practices (Clifton et al. 2019; Gumperz 2003; Vine et al. 2008: 345).

The main aim of IS is to discover how social meaning is negotiated in interactions. This is usually achieved through ethnographic observations and interviews (Gumperz 2003; Holmes 2014: 179), as well as by an analysis of audio- or video-recorded interactions (Bailey 2008). Based on the analysts' knowledge of the specific community (and its norms) in which an interaction occurs, interlocutors' relationships, and the context, analysts make informed presuppositions about meaning (Gumperz 2003; Holmes 2014; Vine et al. 2008). These interpretive assessments build on local or context-specific background knowledge, i.e. 'taken-for-granted background assumptions that underlie the negotiation of shared interpretations' (Gumperz 1999: 454).

Central to IS are the concepts of conversational inferencing and contextualisation cues (Gumperz 2003), which capture the processes through which interlocutors signal and interpret meaning in social interactions (Bailey 2008). Conversational inference refers to the interpretive procedure by which interlocutors assess what is communicatively intended at any point in an exchange, and on which they rely to plan and produce their responses (Gumperz 2003). An example of this is the sequential positioning of turns (Gumperz 1982: 131) – such as what comes before and after a humorous instance, i.e. what triggers the humour and how it is responded to, which are important for an understanding of what makes a particular utterance humorous and what functions it performs at the specific point in the interaction where it occurs. Contextualisation cues, on the other hand, are those linguistic and paralinguistic features that contribute to the signalling of contextual presuppositions. For example, in order to mark and understand a particular utterance as humorous, interlocutors draw on specific verbal and nonverbal cues, such as laughter, a smile, and a raised eyebrow, as well as a change in pitch, tone of voice, and speed of delivery (c.f. Hay 2001; Schnurr and Chan 2011).

As we demonstrate in more detail in the next section, in actual analysis, IS draws on and combines both a fine-grained analysis of interaction and the analysts' knowledge and interpretation of the specific context in which the interaction occurs. When using IS to analyse a particular excerpt of an interaction, researchers look at *what* people say but also at *how* they say it. More specifically, they note not only who makes a humorous comment, gives an instruction, or makes an apology, but they also describe the discursive processes through which these acts are realised. For example, what pronouns are used, whether laughter occurs (and where), whether there are any pauses, hesitations, restarts, and – importantly for humour – in what tone of voice a particular remark was uttered. This information about the micro-level of an interaction is then combined with the researcher's knowledge of the macro-level (e.g. about the relationship among participants, how long they have worked together, and the context in which an utterance occurs). Through this combination insights are gained into how meaning is constructed and negotiated among interlocutors as their interaction unfolds (Holmes et al. 2011: 21).

Due to its ability to combine the micro and the macro in meaningful ways, IS is an excellent framework for an analysis of gender, leadership, and humour. It provides the analysts with the discursive tools to identify and describe the specific discursive processes through which humour is produced and responded to in an interaction, while at the same time allowing the analysts to relate these micro-level observations to the macro-level concepts of gender and leadership. It thus facilitates the operationalisation of these relatively abstract concepts, and provides a frame in which they can be identified and traced throughout an interaction, as we illustrate in the next section.

Leadership, humour, and gender in action

For our analysis, we have chosen four instances of humour to illustrate some of the complexities of leadership and gender. More specifically, we look at how humour is used to display various behaviours associated with leadership, such as getting things done, criticising subordinates and telling them what to do, giving feedback, reinforcing solidarity, and building rapport. The examples come from different interactional contexts – including small and large meetings, an email, and a range of related WhatsApp messages – and different sociocultural contexts – including New Zealand, the UK, and Malaysia. This diversity is deliberate as we want to show that the use of humour, and its relationship with leadership and gender, is not a local phenomenon that is tied to a particular sociocultural context, but rather that it can be (and indeed has been) observed in many different contexts. In line with recent developments in language and gender research (see Eckert and Podesva, this volume), the starting point of our analysis is not the question of whether there are differences in the ways in which men and women use humour to do leadership, but rather whether gender is relevant to the ongoing interaction,[2] and if so, in what ways.

Getting things done

Example 1 (from Schnurr 2009b)[3]

Context: A small meeting of three colleagues in an IT department at a New Zealand organisation. All participants are IT managers on the same hierarchical level within the organisation, but Noel chairs the meeting and is in charge of this particular project.

1. *Noel: you're clearly the most important person*
2. Isabelle: oh definitely
3. Patrick: cool do I get veto rights
4. *Noel: [voc] well yes but you get to do all the work as [laughs]: well:*
5. Patrick: oh (great what a move up)

This is a good example to show how humour can assist people to get things done, which is one of the activities associated with leadership (e.g. Schnurr and Mak 2011). The relevant humour in this extract occurs in the form of two witty one-liners (lines 1 and 4) that are uttered by Noel towards his colleague Patrick to remind him of the responsibilities that come with his special role in a project that they are working on. Noel's repeated use of the second singular personal pronoun 'you' illustrates this allocation of responsibilities. There are several contextualisation cues that mark this brief exchange as humorous, including tone of voice and laughter. The first witty one-liner, in which Patrick is singled out as 'most important' (line 1), is responded to with agreement from Isabelle and is continued with a witty remark by Patrick himself (line 3), who plays along with it by tongue-in-cheek asking for 'veto rights' as a reward for his important role in the project. This humorous comment, in turn, is responded to by Noel, who teasingly reminds his colleague that his special position also comes with certain obligations and responsibilities, and that Patrick is in fact expected 'to do all the work as well' (line 4). The utterance-final laughter produced by Noel is the only laughter that occurs in this brief exchange, and it could be interpreted as an attempt to mitigate his transactional message (i.e. reminding his colleague Patrick of his duties and thereby eventually ensuring that things are getting done). Looking at the ways in which interlocutors skilfully pick up and expand the humour, we find further support in the form of conversational inferencing that they conjointly interpret this instance as humorous. The humorous sequence comes to an end with Patrick's perhaps slightly ironic remark (line 5) in which he acknowledges his additional responsibility and makes fun of it, while at the same time acknowledging that he has understood the underlying serious message.

Addressing the aim of this chapter and exploring whether gender is (or is not) explicitly relevant in the use of humour by those in leadership positions, there is no marker (or contextualisation cue) in the above excerpt that indicates that gender plays a role here. Although Noel's use of teasing could perhaps be associated with masculinity, the bonding style in which it is delivered (see also Schnurr 2009a) could in turn be associated with femininity. This example thus illustrates that while leaders often use humour, in contrast to stereotypical perceptions and expectations, gender is not necessarily an issue. Rather, there is plenty of evidence in our data from different workplaces in New Zealand, the UK, and Malaysia of witty one-liners used by those in leadership positions – both men and women – to get things done by reminding people of their responsibilities or making sure they are aware of what is expected of them (see Schnurr 2009b for more examples). Sometimes they do this by drawing on speech elements traditionally associated with masculinity – such as Noel's teasing – and at other times they display behaviours indexed for femininity –such as the overall bonding style in which the teasing is delivered. Thus, by using humour (in whatever form or style) to convey these potentially critical and possibly even face-threatening messages, while at the same time mitigating the illocutionary force of the utterance (that is, 'soften the blow') and reinforcing solidarity (e.g. Schnurr 2009b) as Noel does in the example above, the speakers primarily do leadership, and gender takes a backseat (cf. Kendall 2004).

We discuss one more example here to show how humour may be used to get things done by criticising subordinates and telling them what to do by overruling the group's previous decision. In the next example, the person in a leadership position is a woman, and some of the behaviours she displays are traditionally associated with masculinity.

Criticising subordinates and telling them what to do

Example 2[4,5,6]

Context: This exchange occurred during a WhatsApp[7] interaction among a group of academics at an institute of Higher Education in Malaysia. All members are academic colleagues and Zana is the head of department. At this point in the interaction Zana (who was absent during the previous 1,645 posts) joins the discussion which took place over approximately four hours, which is partly due to a delayed response time between posts.

1646) 14/02/2016, 10:17 pm -	Zana:	ellooo!!
1647) 14/02/2016, 10:17 pm -	Zana:	bru bole lyn wasap just got the chance to look at wasap
1648) 14/02/2016, 10:17 pm -	Zana:	140 mesej!! mmg soheh grup ni penuh kontroversi 140 messages!! it is certain that this grup is controversial
1649) 14/02/2016, 10:18 pm -	Zana:	kita x leh dgr dri stdnts jer we cannot hear from the stdnts only
1650) 14/02/2016, 10:18 pm -	Zana:	find out properly
1651) 14/02/2016, 10:19 pm -	Zana:	sometimes, thngs liketh s can be blown out of proportion!!
1652) 14/02/2016, 10:19 pm -	*Zana:*	*be rationale people!!* 😁😁
1653) 14/02/2016, 10:49 pm -	Wani:	👍👍👍
1654) 14/02/2016, 10:53 pm -	*Zana:*	*klu mmg betul citer ni, bru kita gi ganyang GB ramai2* *if this story is true, then we will 'beat up' the headmaster together*
1655) 14/02/2016, 10:54 pm -	Wani:	Dr. Eusof will investigate…
1656) 14/02/2016, 10:55 pm -	*Zana:*	*sherlock Holmes*
1657) 14/02/2016, 11:20 pm -	Eusof:	😂
1658) 15/02/2016, 6:48 am -	Sarah:	Heheheh

Like the previous example, this excerpt further illustrates how humour may be skilfully used to do power, while at the same time creating solidarity among team members. Like in the example above, gender is not explicitly made relevant here, although Zana, the female leader of the team, employs a range of discursive features associated with masculinity when doing humour.

With the rather informal greeting 'ellooo!!' (line 1646) Zana, the head of department and one of the most senior members of the team, joins the discussion of her team on WhatsApp. Her greeting resembles that between friends rather than colleagues (especially with its informal spelling (dropping of initial letter 'h' and lengthened vowels throughout) and the two exclamation marks at the end). These relatively informal and collegial behaviours could be ascribed to a feminine speech style. However, Zana then swiftly and without much ado moves on to her transactional agenda, namely to criticise the team for an unnecessarily long discussion (cf. her remarks about the number of messages followed by two utterance-final exclamation marks in line and her use of the term 'controversial' (line 1648)), and the team's one-sided gathering of information (i.e. taking students' complaints at face value without consulting the respective school for their view (line 1649)). What is noteworthy about Zana's interactional style here is its relative directness and hence potential face-threat to her subordinates, which are behaviours stereotypically associated with masculinity (e.g. Holmes 2006). This directness of her messages is reflected in several contextualisation cues, including her frequent use of exclamation marks (lines 1651 and lines 1652), the absence of a personal pronoun (line 1650), and her directive (line 1652). However, at the same time, it is somewhat mitigated by her use of the inclusive pronoun 'we' (line 1650), her non-standard spellings (lines 1650, 1651), and the use of two laughing emojis at the end of her seven consecutive messages (line 1652). The emojis could mitigate the potential face-threat of her previous utterances but also act as contextualisation cues which reframe the tone of the interaction as friendly rather than strictly professional, and which open up a humorous context (Darics 2017) and perhaps even invite the subsequent development of conjoint humour among the other team members.

In terms of conversational inferencing, it is important to note that Wani's thumbs-up emojis in line 1653 may signal not only that she has understood and taken on board Zana's criticism, but they also continue the humour, as does Zana's tongue-in-cheek reply about beating up the headmaster 'if this story is true'. Using fantasy humour here to describe the team's potential (clearly non-serious) actions, she expresses solidarity with her subordinates and bonds with them by making fun of the absent headmaster of the school that is causing the trouble (line 1654). In particular, her reference to a joint future action ('together') performs this bonding function, which – just like criticising subordinates and telling people what to do – has also been associated with leadership (e.g. Schnurr 2009b; Wodak et al. 2011). The humorous tone of her posts is then picked up and continued by other members of the team. First, Wani teases Eusof by referring to him as 'Dr Eusof' and portraying him as a detective who will 'investigate' matters (line 1655). This fantasy humour is continued by Zana who mentions the famous fictional detective 'sherlock Holmes' (line 1656) thereby implicitly making a link between Eusof and this fictional character. Although he is the butt of the humour, Eusof responds positively (with an emoji that is laughing so hard it is crying (line 1657)). This in turn is responded to by Sarah, who produces some orthographic laughter (line 1658). The humour comes to an end and people discuss more serious matters (not shown here).

Using humour in this short exchange, then, enables Zana to exercise her power and authority as the head of department and to be the one who is able to overturn a decision made by the team in a way that reinforces solidarity and contributes to bonding among interlocutors. She thereby gains her subordinates' compliance rather than threatening their faces and generating resistance. While these semiotic resources are claimed to have positive implications on the mood of a discussion, this example has shown that discursive strategies such as emoji, informal spellings ('grup' for 'group'), and abbreviation ('thngs liketh s') are also useful to attenuate the illocutionary force of potentially threatening speech acts like directives and disagreement; at the same time they act as important contextualisation cues and facilitate conversational inferencing for the researcher and participants to interpret this exchange as humorous. Moreover, these strategies also allow Zana to exercise her authority and establish a sense of solidarity with her subordinates. Thus, although IS analyses of digital communication focus on different features than IS analyses of spoken interactions, some of these semiotic resources are actually reminiscent of the characteristics of spoken interaction. For example, emojis perform similar functions to facial expressions and tone of voice, while non-standard spellings could be interpreted as non-standard pronunciation.

Looking at Example 2 in relation to Example 1, it is noteworthy that although they occurred in different sociocultural contexts, different professional industries, and were produced by different individuals in leadership positions – one male, one female – there are some remarkable similarities with regard to the use of humour. Both leaders draw on humour to combine transactional and relational behaviours, and both display behaviours indexed for masculinity (such as directness, and the exercise of power) as well as behaviours typically associated with femininity (such as bonding, creating solidarity, and mitigating negatively affective speech acts).

Giving feedback

Example 3 (from Schnurr 2009b)

Context: At an IT company in New Zealand. Gerry is the mentor to several graduates who have recently joined the company. At this meeting Gerry is giving feedback to a group of graduates who are working on a particular task with which they are experiencing some difficulties.

1.	*Gerry:*	*[teasing tone of voice] : there's a really easy answer to this*
2.		*and I'm not gonna tell you what it is :*
3.	Hank:	oh you [laughs]
4.	Magnus:	[laughs]

The relatively short humour in this example takes the form of teasing, which is a particularly ambiguous type of humour (e.g. Alberts 1992; Schnurr 2009a). The teasing tone of voice in which this short remark is uttered sets it up as playful and non-serious. This contextualisation cue is picked up by the audience as Hank's and Magnus' supportive responses indicate. Hank plays along with Gerry's teasing by pretending to be upset (line 3). He continues the playful, mocking tone and produces some utterance-final laughter, which is then mirrored by Magnus in the next utterance (line 4).

Using humour in this context enables Gerry to encourage his mentees and provide some (at this stage largely moral rather than technical) support, while at the same time also reinforcing his own status and authority as the expert. Moreover, the laughter that his humour triggers generates a welcome opportunity to release some tension and take a break – even if only momentarily – from the difficult task (Glenn 2003). Like in the examples above, however, there is no indication – in the form of a contextualisation cue or conversational inferencing – that points to the explicit relevance of gender in this exchange. Rather, the perhaps more-biting style of the teasing (compared to Noel's more bonding style (cf. Example 1)) could be explained by reference to the different workplace cultures in which these exchanges took place (see also Schnurr 2009a). Comparing Examples 1, 2, and 3 in particular further illustrates that there is considerable variation and diversity in which leaders – male or female – use humour to do leadership. But there is clearly no preferred style by either men or women. The next example further illustrates this by showcasing an example of humour that is constructed by largely drawing on linguistic features indexed for femininity. This instance of humour occurred in an email.

Reinforcing solidarity and building rapport

Example 4[8]

Context: Email between two colleagues at a higher education institution in the UK.

Hi Rebecca

Well done on getting this sorted. Can I just check that you have confirmed this allocation with all available parties, i.e. LMM! (Sure you have….)

For my part I have phoned Alma and reallocated you [name of teaching module]. And *apologies for this SNAFU. As these things come in threes […] you can expect open [i.e. 'one'] more gaffe from me before beginning next year!*

All I can say is – it's nothing personal!!!!

Cheers

Bentley

The humour in this comment arises from the use of the abbreviation 'SNAFU', which means 'situation normal all fucked up', and the subsequent self-denigrating and equally humorous comments with which Bentley apologises for his mistakes. The light-hearted tone of this apology is further intensified by his excessive use of exclamation marks and his emphasis at the end of the email, that 'it's nothing personal!!!!'. These contextualisation cues mark this exchange as humorous. This humour comes after a more serious and transactional beginning, in which he asks Rebecca to confirm that she has performed some previously discussed work ('Can I just …'), and his subsequent expectation that she has indeed done so ('Sure you have'). He follows this up by outlining his own actions ('For my part …'), and so the humour in the following apology seems more like an add-on, and not strictly speaking necessary to convey all these transactional messages. Nevertheless, the humour plays several important functions here: not only does it make Bentley's apology more acceptable, but it also creates solidarity and builds rapport between interlocutors. All these behaviours are important elements of leadership as they combine transactional and relational behaviours to ensure that things are getting done, while maintaining a positive and collegial relationship (e.g. Schnurr 2009b). These witty remarks, which are delivered in a style that has often been described as feminine (especially the self-denigrating comment and the apologetic tone) thus assist Bentley in his leadership performance. But like in the examples discussed above, there are no contextualisation cues or evidence of conversational inferencing that would mark his use of humour as explicitly gendered.

Discussion and conclusion

Our examples of authentic spoken and written interactions collected in a range of workplaces in different sociocultural contexts provide a snapshot of the wide diversity of the ways in which those in leadership positions use different types of humour to achieve their various leadership aims. Our observations largely confirm findings of previous research which shows that leaders regularly use humour to achieve their various objectives and to perform a range of transactional, as well as relational, behaviours that are associated with leadership, including getting things done, criticising subordinates and telling them what to do, as well as creating solidarity and maintaining positive relationships (e.g. Holmes et al. 2011; Schnurr 2009b). Our examples above have shown that male and female leaders in different sociocultural contexts regularly use humour to assist them in their leadership performance. They all sometimes use humour in ways that are traditionally associated with masculinity or femininity, and we have ample evidence of women displaying behaviours that are typically indexed for masculinity, and men engaging in behaviours often associated with femininity (see also Mohd Omar 2019; Schnurr 2008, 2009b). These observations about the use of humour by male and female leaders thus provide compelling evidence to challenge prevailing stereotypes about gender and leadership, and also about gender and humour. In contrast to these negative preconceptions which tend to portray women as not using or not appreciating humour as much as men, we have described several instances in which leaders – regardless of gender – skilfully use humour when performing a range of activities associated with leadership.

In addition to adding evidence to earlier studies challenging gendered stereotypes (see also Holmes 2006; Ladegaard 2012; Mullany 2007), one of the aims of this chapter was to illustrate some of the benefits of using IS to analyse leadership, humour, and gender at work. As our analyses above have illustrated, one of the advantages of such an approach is that it equips the analysts with specific tools that facilitate the identification of humorous instances and their interpretation by the immediate audience via contextualisation cues (e.g. in the form of audible or orthographic laughter, emojis, a teasing tone of voice, excessive use of punctuation devices, and non-standard spelling). Moreover, through conversational inferencing and focusing on interlocutors' reactions to the humour (i.e. what triggered the humour and how it was responded to (e.g. whether it was successfully continued, ignored or rejected) and by whom (e.g. the target of the humour, by several or only one other interlocutor)), analysts can gain insights into the interactional dynamics, and can better understand how interlocutors negotiate meaning throughout an exchange.

These observations about interlocutors' behaviours on the micro-level of an interaction (such as their use of and responses to humour) can then, in turn, be linked to macro-level categories (such as leadership and gender), which enables researchers to identify and describe some of the specific (discursive) strategies through which interlocutors do leadership. IS thereby provides the tools and practices to generate empirical evidence in support of claims made by recent constructivist conceptualisations of leadership and gender as dynamic performances that are enacted and negotiated on the micro-level of interaction (e.g. Baxter 2014).

So, returning to the role of gender in the context of leadership and humour, in the examples that we discussed in this chapter, there was very little evidence of gender being explicitly relevant. The leaders in our data all used humour to achieve similar aims, regardless of gender, position, and sociocultural context. However, this does not mean that gender is not important. In fact, as we have discussed elsewhere, gender often remains relatively hidden but may come to the fore in the form of humorous (and sometimes sarcastic) remarks to send up some of the stereotypes that exist in the work domain (such as men not being able to multi-task (Schnurr and Holmes 2009); women decorating their office to make it more 'girly' (Schnurr 2008); and women being constantly worried about their looks (Holmes and Schnurr 2014)). Thus, while gender – with a few exceptions – does not seem to be constructed as an issue per se on the micro-level of actual everyday workplace interactions, negative stereotypes about gender, leadership, and humour seem to prevail in many workplaces.

However, this persistence of gender stereotypes in the ways in which women leaders are presented in the media or are being talked about in their workplaces is rather surprising given the evidence provided in this and many other studies that challenge and reject such derogatory claims (e.g. Holmes 2006; Ladegaard 2012; Mullany 2007). It is thus clearly about time these old and inadequate stereotypes about gender, leadership, and humour are being abolished and replaced by less discriminatory views, and we hope that this study makes a small contribution to these efforts.

Future directions

As we have shown in our analyses, IS is a very useful approach to capture the complexities and dynamics of leadership, gender, and humour – both in spoken interactions as well as written digital texts. However, we believe that more could be made of this versatility of IS, and that researchers should in particular apply IS more systematically in their studies of leadership, gender, and other social phenomena in digital and multi-modal contexts, such as websites, Instagram, Snapchat etc. Applied to these complex and rapidly changing contexts, in which spoken, written, and visual texts are intricately interwoven with each other to create meaning, IS – perhaps when combined with another approach – has the potential to provide further evidence of the complex ways in which gender is constructed, enacted, and negotiated.

Transcription conventions

[laughter]	square brackets provide information about paralinguistic features
(…..)	round brackets indicate the transcriber's best guess at what was said
[teasing tone of voice] : …… :	words between colons are uttered in a teasing tone of voice

Notes

1 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2016. *Background report conference on improving women's access to leadership 2016*. https://www.oecd.org/daf/ca/OECD-Women-Leadership-2016-Report.pdf

2 In exploring the relevance of gender we look for evidence where interlocutors orient to gender in explicit or implicit ways, for example, by using specific pronouns when referring to allegedly gender-neutral terms (like 'manager' – 'he', 'nurse' – 'she') or by mobilising overtly gendered identity categories (such as 'bloke', 'girl', 'woman/female manager' (as opposed to 'manager')). For a useful discussion of the theory behind 'making gender relevant' see Stokoe and Smithson (2001).

3 We have italicised the relevant humour in all examples to facilitate an understanding and for ease of reading. The transcription conventions are included at the end of the chapter.

4 Spelling, grammar, and capitalisation have been left as in the original, and we have tried to reflect participants' practices as much as possible in our translations. Only names have been anonymised.

5 This example also appears in Mohd Omar (2019).

6 In this excerpt participants use two different codes: Malay and English. We have translated the Malay into English which appears below the original in the transcript.

7 WhatsApp is an instant messaging application that operates across most smartphones, tablets, and desktops via a connection to the internet. It is claimed to be the most well-run instant messaging

service available; it handles more instant messages in a day than the entire global short-messaging system industry (Sutling et al. 2015). Its speediness in transmitting messages has enormously facilitated the way people communicate with each other (ibid.). For the purpose of this study, we have extracted bite-sized chunks of text from a longer decision-making interaction of a committee team in Malaysia.

8 Spelling, grammar, and capitalisation were left as in the original. Only names have been anonymised.

Further reading

Baxter, J. (2014) 'Who wants to be the leader? The linguistic construction of emerging leadership in differently gendered teams', *International Journal of Business Communication*, 52(4), pp. 427–451.

This paper provides a good discussion of some of the advantages of IS for analysing and understanding leadership in action.

Holmes, J. (2006) *Gendered talk at work: constructing gender identity through workplace discourse*. Malden, MA: Wiley- Blackwell.

This research monograph contains two very good chapters on gender and leadership, and gender and humour.

Mullany, L. (2004) 'Gender, politeness and institutional power roles: humour as a tactic to gain compliance in workplace business meetings', *Multilingua*, 23, pp. 13–37.

This paper explores gender, leadership, and humour from the angle of politeness.

Rogerson-Revell, P. (2011) 'Chairing international business meetings. Investigating humour and leadership style in the workplace', in Angouri, J. and Marra, M. (eds) *Constructing identities at work*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

This paper is a very interesting study of leadership and humour. Although its main focus is not gender, it does briefly touch upon it.

Schnurr, S. (2009b) *Leadership discourse at work: interactions of humour, gender and workplace culture*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

This research monograph specifically deals with leadership and humour using an IS approach. One of the chapters is dedicated to the topic of gender.

Related topics

Interactional sociolinguistics: foundations, developments and applications to language, gender and sexuality; identity construction in gendered workplaces; leadership language of Middle Eastern women; interactional sociolinguistics in language and sexuality research: benefits and challenges; language, gender, and the discursive production of women as leaders.

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14

More than builders in pink shirts

Identity construction in gendered workplaces

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Introduction

As a theoretical stance, interactional sociolinguistics (IS) dominates research conducted under the umbrella often labeled as 'workplace discourse analysis'. Equally, research on gender within linguistics is heavily influenced by an IS approach. This chapter addresses the intersection of these two areas by outlining research and methods for investigating gender and gender identity in the workplace context. In doing so we highlight the affordances of the different datasets that are used by IS scholars, using examples from a range of workplaces by way of illustration. Recently there has been increased discussion of the relationship between agency and structure, as well as the impact of ideologies, especially the pre-existent hegemonic orders that constrain the way we use language at work (namely unquestioned power imbalances and hierarchies in society, including the 'gender order'). After working through the advancements in the field, we conclude with a discussion about how we can operationalise these recent ideas in our data analysis.

In our account of the development of the field we describe how analysis of gender has traversed from gender identity construction at work to workplaces as gendered settings, always challenging a static conceptualisation of gender in favour of a dynamic and fluid approach. We cover different industries and different professions, demonstrating through naturally occurring examples the ways in which people negotiate their identities, not just with their colleagues but also in the context of the shared workplace practices within which they are operating. We argue that all workplaces are gendered, and that gender is indexed, negotiated, and challenged in various ways according to context. We turn now to a brief description of the field and outline how IS, as the core theoretical approach used by workplace discourse analysis researchers, is adopted.

Workplace research and IS

IS is uniquely suited to capture discursive complexities. It provides the tools to access how people use language to make communicative meaning 'in the now', connecting fine-grained micro-practices to wider sociocultural contexts and social discourses (e.g. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013). This has clear implications for investigations of gender, where fixed understandings of gender roles, behaviours, and identities are extremely slow to dislodge from the collective consciousness. At the micro-level, IS allows for access to gender performativity (Butler 1990), that is to the dynamic ways in which we negotiate both our understandings and presentation of gender identities. At the same time, connections with macro-contexts encourage researchers to look beyond the 'doing' in order to 'see' wider structural forces at play. In this sense, an IS approach reveals the hidden aspects of gender identity construction and contributes to destabilising notions of a 'core' gender identity (e.g. Hall 2000).

This translation process takes place through the eyes of the researcher. IS's close relationship with ethnography and anthropology has allowed for a systematic consideration of the role of the researcher and the importance of reflexivity. The framework and associated methodology provide a voice to the researcher to systematically discuss their own role in the research process and in the framing of the findings (Angouri 2018) and a way to connect with widespread ideologies visible in the lives of the interactants.

Gender has been said to be omnirelevant (e.g. Cameron 2009; Holmes 1995), which makes it difficult to 'pin down' analytically. This is where IS is so valuable. Early investigation of gender in an IS tradition is influenced by the work of Tannen, a student herself of the originator of IS, Gumperz. Tannen (1994) addressed the workplace as a setting in *Talking from 9 to 5*, which like her most famous book (*You Just Don't Understand*, 1990) was aimed at a more general audience. In both cases she argued that just because there are recognisably gendered ways of behaving, this does not mean that any behaviour is inherently inferior or superior. Her work showed the complexities of distinguishing between gender/ed and other categories, paving the way for an emphasis on the symbols, or indexicalities, of meaning as well as the importance of intersectionality in our understanding of identity construction.

Understanding the enactment of gender identity involves a microanalytic approach and typically makes use of naturally occurring data. In line with the wider discursive trend in the social sciences, workplace discourse analysts argued for the importance of data which showed what we *actually* do in our communication at work rather than what we *think* we do. This premise motivates the research of workplace discourse scholars and means that since the earliest days of the field of workplace discourse analysis (in the early 1980s/90s) data regularly comprises recordings of authentic interactions between colleagues in workplace settings. Self-reported data widely used by other social science disciplines, and notably in business schools, has been criticised for failing to capture the nuance of identity work in situated moments.

The data-collection techniques used by all three authors follows the philosophy and flexible procedures developed by Holmes and Stubbe for the Wellington Language in the Workplace project (see description in Holmes and Stubbe 2003a). After identifying successful communicators (as judged by colleagues and industry), the process involves making contact with chosen organisations, developing mutually agreed goals, and then handing over the recording process to workplace volunteers who act as collaborators in recording an array of everyday practices and contexts ranging from core events, such as meetings, to other types of encounters, such as interviews.

To support the analysis of this material, and in line with the IS approach, we augment these recordings with ethnographic observations, debriefs, member-checking, and, increasingly, with interviews. Together this means we have an etic, analyst perspective as well as access to an emic, insider perspective, providing information that pulls together wider societal context to interpret individual behaviour and interactional negotiation (see also

Marra and Lazzaro-Salazar 2018). This approach is widely used across workplace discourse research, and although it is regularly adapted to match the logistical needs of the worksite or industry (Vine and Marra 2017), it has served the purpose of gathering high-quality data that participants are happy to provide.

Next we turn to the ways in which gender has been analysed using these datasets. We begin with the core focus, gender identity, which is as relevant to current research as it was in the earliest days of workplace discourse research some two to three decades ago.

Constructing gender identity at work

Identity is one of the main interests of the IS analyst, and gender is one of the identities that has received the most attention within workplace discourse analysis. Holmes (2006), for instance, provides a comprehensive, and intentionally non exhaustive, list of normative gendered styles at work. Traits stereotypically associated with femininity include: providing supportive feedback, being conciliatory, contributing less in public, and being person/process oriented. Amongst the features identified as normatively associated with masculinity we find competitiveness, aggressiveness, and confrontational style, alongside being task/outcome oriented. These and other gendered behaviours are not equated with biological sex; they do however reflect, and perpetuate, the wider sociopolitical and ideological context (macro-level) when they are claimed, projected, and resisted discursively in the situated moment of interaction (micro-level).

This is how and where an IS approach becomes relevant for bridging the macro- and micro-levels and unpacking gendered norms in the workplace, investigating the indexicality of meaning which considers the correlation between linguistic/discursive features and social identities. Angouri (2015: 45) argues that ‘it is through the utterances’ indexical properties that people create relationships between the identity categories [i.e. social identities] and position self and other’. This applies to the male/female dichotomy as well.

An area in which gender has been particularly highlighted in workplace talk is leadership. Building on the ‘think leader, think male’ stereotype (Marra, Schnurr, and Holmes 2006), researchers have been eager to show that femininity and leadership can be co-present identities within talk. Recent research demonstrates that leadership performances are dependent on the characteristics of the local context. For instance, Mesinioti et al. (2020) explore leadership enactment in medical emergencies, investigating how senior clinicians ‘do being’ the leader discursively. Their findings highlight the consistency of leadership claims by senior clinicians. They show that leadership in that context is signalled, projected, and resisted discursively, through directives and questions that are used in ways consistent with the role/responsibility being claimed. Although the authors are immediately concerned with the use of material space in the emergency room, their findings show the difficulty in disentangling gender from other ways of enacting self and other in any professional setting as well the importance of systematic and detailed analysis from multiple angles in a given ‘community of practice’.

Gendered communities of practice

By the 2000s, there was recognition that gender identity occurred within gendered contexts – enacting femininity in a feminine workplace was different to constructing femininity in a masculine context. An early example of this argument came from Holmes and Stubbe

(2003b) who contrasted an all-female and 'feminine' workplace in the form of a particular government department with a factory team described as masculine in which the gender identification of the team members included both women and men but where identity construction was shaped by the more masculine norms of the group.

Their arguments made use of the *Community of Practice* (CofP) framework which derives from the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998). Lave and Wenger define a CofP as 'a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice' (1991: 98). In their definition, CofPs are characterised by mutual engagement (typically enacted through regular interaction), joint negotiated enterprise (involving the complex relationships of reciprocal accountability), and a shared repertoire of negotiable resources accumulated over time. The CofP framework has been widely applied in workplace studies, as many of the ideas it employs are applicable to the workplace e.g.: the interaction among CofPs; the progression from legitimate peripheral participation towards core membership; and the ways newcomers learn from old-timers through apprenticeship schemes (Angouri 2018; King 2019).

The focus of sociolinguistic work has concentrated on the discourse practices that CofPs develop over time, as CofPs 'provide a way to study language use locally and to link the micro-context to the broader socio-cultural environment' (Angouri 2016: 314). CofPs are also gendered, operating as sites of gendered activity (Paechter 2003); being part of a CofP more often than not comes with gendered expectations. Membership is discursively claimed and negotiated through adherence to gender norms that meet these expectations. The construction of an identity in line with hegemonic gendered discourses for claiming membership in the workplace is shown in all the excerpts below which cover a range of very different kinds of workplaces.

Example 1 focuses on identity construction by a builder's apprentice, Max. In the extract we see Max enacting masculinity within a team in which normatively masculine ways of behaving form part of their shared repertoire.

Excerpt 1

Context: Max, the apprentice, talking to another tradesman on site[1]

1.	Max:	[clears throat] did you get did you watch any of the league
2.		or the highlights or anything
3.	John:	oh I've seen saw a few games eh
4.	Max:	fuck man there are some pretty decent hits man
5.	John:	yeah

This team of builders spend long hours on site working alongside each other. As John and Max cooperate on their manual task, their talk drifts to non-work-related talk. Interestingly the topic of this talk is something that we might associate with masculinity, sport, and more specifically rugby league which has intersectional indexicalities of both masculinity and class or region. As well as content (in the form of this topic), elements of masculine identity can also be seen in the discursive practices which are used. Expletive use, swearing, is a strategy overtly associated with masculine styles (Daly et al. 2004). In New Zealand where this extract was recorded, the pragmatic particle 'eh' (line 3) is also a feature which is arguably (although not exclusively) linked to masculinity (Vine and Marsden 2016).

This example also highlights the role of industry on gendered context. The men are drawing on highly stereotypical indexes of masculinity which are acceptable and appropriate in their negotiated repertoires. Arguably the embedded nature of their community within the construction sector, also stereotypically a masculinised industry, supports these behaviours. There is increasing research on sex-segregated and gendered professions (see McDowell 2021). While the building site might represent a masculinised industry within which Max is able to balance his gender and professional identities easily, what does it mean to construct a masculine identity in a stereotypically feminine context?

Gendered occupations

We now turn to eldercare as an example of an industry which is typically gendered as feminine. We choose this extract because not only do you see more evidence of the balancing of a range of identities by carer Afato, but you also see his identity being co-constructed by resident Ida for whom he is caring. Gendered norms at both a macro-societal and micro-interactional level are relevant to any workplace and are mobilised through interaction.

Excerpt 2

Context: Afato is checking on Ida as part of his duties as a carer in a residential aged-care facility. While this medicalised discussion is taking place, Ida refers back to a lamp that Afato had accidently knocked over on the previous day. Frank is another carer in the facility interacting with Ida. Like Afato, Frank identifies as Samoan, but he is 20 years his senior. Before this extract, Afato and Ida have been laughing about his involvement in the recording process for our research.

1.	Afato:	so are we going back into the wheelchair or the lazy boy love
2.	Ida:	(over there)
3.	Afato:	alright […]
4.		they want an incident form for that thing +
5.		the the lights //going off\
6.	Ida:	/okay\\ of course
7.	Afato:	yes
8.	Ida:	I didn’t even see what you do did
9.		but you were doing it rather vigorously //obvious\ly
10.	Afato:	/[laughs]\\
11.	Ida:	did you see what he’s done Frank
12.	Frank:	yeah [laughs]
13.	Ida:	Frank
14.	Afato:	not me?
15.	Ida:	crashed the light off one of them
16.	Afato:	(and this)
17.	Ida:	you just can’t let him loose
18.	Afato:	eh?
19.	Ida:	can’t let some people loose can you
20.	Afato:	yeah
21.	Ida:	they run amok
22.	Afato:	it is

23. Ida:		they run amok I love those expressions + you know what amok means
24.		[Ida explains amok to Afato who doesn't know the expression]
25. Ida:		amok //Afato\ ran amok
26. Frank:		/(no)\\
27. Afato:		what's that
28. Ida:		he's got out of control and started smashing lights
29. Afato:		it's not like I did it deliberately
30. Ida:		[laughs]
31. Afato:		it is
32. Ida:		but it happened
33. Afato:		yeah ++ okay anything else Ida you need anything else
34. Ida:		no thank you Afato

Excerpt 2 provides a useful example of how gendered norms are oriented to within a 'feminised' workplace. Throughout, there is evidence of Afato's skilful negotiation of overlapping identities, as well as co-construction in action through Ida's positioning of Afato.

Immediately of note is Afaoto's use of 'love' (line 1) as a term of endearment towards Ida. Analysis has shown that this term is commonly used by eldercare workers (Marsden and Holmes 2014), and is indexical to a professional identity in feminised care contexts. Further evidence of this attention to professional identity is seen in the collaborative, or even conspiratorial, discussion between Afato and Ida about the paperwork he has to do (lines 3–7) with a demanding and commonly understood 'they' (line 4) constructed as in opposition to Afato and Ida. Ida's teasing of Afato (lines 11–32) is revealing in that as well as being playful and relational, it draws on entrenched notions of masculinity, in this case, aggression. Positioning Afato as 'out of control' and 'smashing lights' (line 28), we see how gender identity construction is a two-way process depending on moment-by-moment linguistic negotiation (micro-level) within the sense-making frameworks of gender ideologies (macro-level). The interaction is, of course, a humorous one, with the impetus deriving from the fact that Afato has not in any way acted aggressively (in line with stereotypes of masculinity), something that all three participants are well aware of. The fluidity of these relationships is also evident in the teaching moment between Ida and Afato (lines 23–25). In negotiating gender within this context, professional and relational concerns are paramount. This unsettles the traditional assumption that maleness equates to masculine norms irrespective of context.

Normative femininities and masculinities

The examples above demonstrate that there is more than one way to do femininity and masculinity and that the narrow association with biological gender is problematic. We therefore prefer the terms 'masculinities' and 'femininities' which align with our focus on the dynamism and multiplicity of identities. Forms of femininity and masculinity also change over time and space, and certain forms of gender are traditionally accorded more societal status (i.e. the 'gender order', Connell 1987). These forms have been normalised to the extent that deviation from expected gender behaviours and identities is still seen as marked in many contexts today. The example involving Afato above shows that non alignment with gendered stereotypes is noticeable enough to create the incongruity required for humour. Yet, attention to normativity does not capture the full story of gender in the workplace. Attention to emancipatory practices which push back against restrictive understandings of femininity and masculinity afford access to the real-life sensitivities of gender identity. Understandings of gender as dynamic and fluid are increasing in many parts of the world challenging the status quo. People draw on resources to agentively, and sometimes fleetingly, perform femininities or masculinities, which may align with or contest stereotypical gender expectations, and they may do both within the context of one interaction. Workplace research offers many useful examples of this interactional intricacy.

To capture some of this nuance, Excerpt 3 includes a number of complexities. Like Excerpt 1 it comes from data collected on the building site. In this case, however, the norms of the community of practice actively challenge the stereotype of builders as hypermasculine, while in some ways also arguably reinforcing the stereotype at the same time.

Excerpt 3

Context: Rodney (the foreman) teases Darren (the client and his friend) about the pink shirt he is wearing.

1.	Rodney:	might take my t shirt off er at least my shirt off + Darren
2.	Darren:	mhm
3.	Rodney:	got that pink shirt on again //bloody me\
4.	Darren:	/I think\\ this is the same one actually
5.	Rodney:	no (it isn't) nah
6.	Darren:	I think the pink I think the sh- original pink shirt
7.		is out there
8.	Rodney:	really? still going? +++ I've got a very pink one at home
		[Darren goes to get the shirt] […]
9.	Darren:	that's the original shirt
10.	Rodney:	oh très pink très très pink mon ami [laughs]

Our title for the chapter comes from this example because of the attention to dynamism and detail which is increasingly central to the analysis undertaken by workplace discourse analysts. In this example the participants are arguably 'playing' with the stereotype when indexing their identities.

The colour pink has some societal connotations with femininity and with homosexuality, which the team seem to be referencing in their humour. The humour relies on a level of ambiguity: for these men wearing a pink t-shirt is perfectly acceptable, but they know that the stereotypical builder might think the colour choice is unacceptable. Using poorly accented French (a language associated with otherness, pretentiousness, and perhaps even femininities), the humour is made more explicit. By referencing the stereotypes of an 'unacceptable' masculinity, however, they are also validating it as having currency in their interaction. It is important to note that in our interviews with this group they actively talked about themselves as standing in contrast to the stereotype of builders – they were all university-educated and came to the industry after other professional careers. Their data includes them listening to classic rock and classical music on site, and they prioritised their children and children's events over hypermasculine stereotypes of sports and drinking which featured in the site represented by Excerpt 1.

Gendered points of reference are widely available in any societal context. Although gender researchers have been showing the complexity and coexistence of masculinities and femininities, stereotypical binaries persist in society – consider the 'pink aisles' in any toy shop. Excerpt 3 can be read as simultaneously perpetuating and questioning the gender order. Disestablishing gender dominance, however, is bigger and stronger than any one individual or work group, as the following sections will show.

Impact of structure/ideologies on agency and identity construction

Adding a critical ethnographic lens to IS allows for further subtleties. Capturing gender in interaction requires constant attention to complexity and to the multitude of ways gender can be instantiated or challenged. We take as a starting point that IS is inherently critical and political (cf. Heller 2013), reminding us to keep a constant eye on power and inequality in our data. 'Acceptable' versions of masculinity and femininity are often felt acutely by those who experience marginalisation (Dawson 2019; Holmes 2018), creating ideological constraints.

To enact this stance, we return to the methodology for data collection and analysis described at the beginning of the chapter. To move more firmly into the critical space which may have been at the heart of IS, but has often been somewhat implicit or even neglected in practice, researchers increasingly engage with questions of power and inequality, and how the sociolinguistic practices we observe have consequences for the people involved. Simultaneously, there is a recognition of the importance of reflexivity; regular and ongoing reflexivity involves analysing ourselves as researchers, our various identities, and the assumptions we may bring to our data. Explorations of workplaces are in-depth and situated and relationships are prioritised in the ongoing commitment to researching 'with' participants (Roberts 2003). We draw on our knowledge of context to strengthen interpretations and make regular field notes which describe and question the practices we witness and are part of. This critical ethnographic layer is a natural extension of IS, and allows us to move between emic and etic perspectives (see Marra and Lazzaro-Salazar 2018).

In workplace contexts, analyses of gender can be ethnographically enhanced at different levels. At a meso level, developing understandings of the particular workplace is essential. Attention to the organisational structure, goals, expectations, and norms provides valuable contextualisation, and offers insights into the wider sociocultural discourses which inform them. In the abstract, it remains imperative to engage with context at the ideological level. The gender order and heteronormativity (as ingrained and normalised ideologies) do not limit themselves to a particular time or place. The shape they take may be locally variable, but these ideologies have colonised much of the world imperialistically (cf. Kress 1989: 7). In other words, in negotiations of gender, the dominant ideological framing stays similar irrespective of place. What differs, however, is the shape and strength of the particular norms and discourses that give voice to these ideologies. As we have begun to demonstrate in the previous examples, IS provides the tools to unveil the connections from micro-linguistic features to the level of abstract ideology.

Ethnographic approaches therefore operationalise aims of calling upon wider context while also enhancing understandings of the subtleties of actual 'on the ground' interactions in which gender is salient. As with dichotomous views of gender, we see that the so-called analytical macro/micro divide is actually a false dichotomy. This leads us back to Gumperz' insight that you cannot have one without the other when investigating social life (e.g. Heller 2013), and this point gains even more traction when gender is the focus of inquiry.

IS has not traditionally been used for exploring issues of power and politics. Recent work, however, revisits its affordances and makes a case for the relevance of the framework for a critical study of professional interaction (e.g. Angouri 2018). As some workplaces are highly hierarchical (see, for instance, healthcare contexts), the IS approach becomes particularly relevant, allowing us to take into account both the institutional roles and power asymmetries at work, as well as the here-and-now interactions. In order to meet this goal, a combination of datasets such as meetings and interview interactions, and a systematic analysis of the latter, allows us to unpack different layers of context and draw robust inferences.

As noted earlier, as a field workplace discourse analysis has prioritised analysis of recordings of naturally occurring talk. It is now time that interviews are repositioned as a method and dataset. Interviews constitute co-constructions between the researcher and participants. As such they should be considered to be real-life interactions just as any other and can usefully be analysed to reflect on the negotiation of *ideals* between key stakeholders in any project, the researcher and the participants. They also provide a window for the researcher to problematise inferencing about the local context which is typically subject to less scrutiny when compared to our detailed analysis of encounters in other professional events, such as meetings or other kinds of interactions.

We show this by analysing an interview excerpt from a higher education (HE) context and a project on 'Gender and INequality in HE' (GaIN). As we turn to a more critical use of IS, it is important to recognise and acknowledge gender inequality in analysis. This societal inequality, as for example reflected in the gender pay gap, applies both horizontally as well as vertically across professional settings. Horizontal and vertical gender asymmetries make local negotiation of imbalance always subject to negotiating dominant hegemonies and parallel structures that affect individuals across domains of human activity (consider the relationship between 'home' and 'work'). GaIN brought these considerations to the forefront, aiming to provide an understanding of the dominant discourses and ideologies that circulate in one HE setting and aimed to the way for establishing the landscape of gender equality and diversity in HE. The project involved review of institutional documents and interviews with academic staff members from various levels and disciplines.

Excerpt 4

Context: Mary (the interviewer) and Lucy, the interviewee, discuss how Lucy navigates male-dominated spaces. Lucy is a junior staff member working in a quantitative field, which entails, according to her, a lack of women in academic events.

1.	Mary	you are in a very quantitative field aren't you?
2.	Lucy	yes I am + and I guess that it stands out because sometimes
3.		because sometimes I go to conferences where + I can be + like +
4.		the only woman in the room
5.	Mary	right
6.	Lucy	so it's (1.0) it does stand out sometimes
7.	Mary	was that + I suppose (1.0) how do you navigate or
8.		how do you + kind of + work around that I suppose if you are
9.		does it have an effect on you [drawls]: or: ?
10.	Lucy	I don't think it does er + no (1.0) no obviously no +
11.		yeah I think I'm +I'm quite lucky being like + a childless
12.		well not lucky + [chuckles] but I am a kind of childless woman
13.		[drawls]: so: in these circumstances I can + behave like a man
14.		[chuckles] if you know what I mean
15.		as mothers have to go home and look after their children so +
16.		I guess that gets me accepted more in these situations yeah

17.	Mary	right + what do you mean behave like a man
18.	Lucy	well I guess + these men like +
19.		if you go to events and stuff they can just stay and go for a drink
20.		or something + and there are a few women who quite often
21.		they would say + oh I have to get back to have my kids
22.		or if we are in a conference away sometimes they will say +
23.		oh I am just gonna go and skype my kids
24.		and tell them a bedtime story and things +
25.		but I don't have to do these things
26.		so you kind of (1.0) remain in the group
27.	Mary	mhm + mhm + do you find your character has changed at all?
28.		kind of like + because of that + social interaction with uh?
29.	Lucy	um + I did + one guy I do research with + he often says +
30.		oh + I'm one of the boys and that's why it works to do research
31.		with them + because they can all talk to me
32.		because I'm one of the boys
33.	Mary	right
34.	Lucy	so I don't know + I don't know what that kind of means
35.		I don't know if that's a compliment or an insult [laughs]
36.	Mary	but how does he mean it + you're one of the boys?
37.	Lucy	I think he's + he's like+ you know-
38.		they can all open the talk in the group
39.		and if I go in the group it's not like er oh + there's a woman there +
40.		it's like I'm part of the group

Excerpt 4 is a succinct illustration not only of how gendered norms are (re)produced at work, but also of the value of interview data under an IS approach. Throughout the excerpt, hegemonic gender norms are recycled and gender is foregrounded both in the interviewer's prompts and the interviewee's uptake; Mary makes an association between 'quantitative' and 'male dominated' which is consistent in the dataset. Lucy ratifies this and in the unfolding narrative, femininity is associated with childcare responsibilities (lines 11, 15, 20–24), while drinking behaviour (line 19) and lack of childcare (throughout the excerpt) are indexing biological maleness and masculinity.

The prefacing of 'quite lucky to be childless' (line 11) in the navigating of male-dominated spaces frames the narrative in hegemonic terms where femininities are associated with caring responsibilities, the same ideals we saw in Excerpt 2 earlier. Lucy's immediate *well*-prefaced self-correction followed by a short pause and a chuckle are indicators that she perceives a need for self-correction. The repair however results, again, in the reproduction of gender norms and a performance of masculinity through a Goffmanian 'passing' (Goffman 1959): 'I can behave like a man' (line 13). This presupposes success indexed by being one of 'them'. The conceptualisation of femininity as closely linked to motherhood becomes a thread throughout and is evident in the sequential order of interaction; Lucy turns from 'women' participating at conferences (lines 3–4) to 'mothers' who 'have to' go home and look after their children (line 15). The use of a modal verb of obligation ('have to') twice, in lines 15 and 21 further highlights women's obligation to take care of their children. Conforming to the dominant gendered norms, Lucy overemphasises the gendered stereotype of women as carers later in the excerpt, too, by choosing to draw on a prototypical example of maternal devotion and affection, that of reading bedtime stories to the children (line 24).

The negotiated performance between Mary and Lucy provides a rich insight into hegemonic discourses of femininity in the academic context and is very relevant to the discussion in this chapter; Lucy mobilises gendered stereotypes, associates them to a female identity in the academic sphere, and also reinforces them throughout the episode. Note that the objective of the project and this particular encounter is to shed light on the asymmetries and by extension to empower women; dominant ideologies however are apparent throughout. Whether and to what extent this challenges the status quo or reinforces it is a complex matter (consider the use of stereotypes for humour in Excerpt 3) and one our field needs to critically address. Despite the attempt to empower those marginalised or oppressed, our own agendas often reproduce dominant binaries.

Turning back to the excerpt, the equation of masculinity with gender male is quite prominent here. See, for instance, line 13, 'I can behave like a man', and line 32, 'I'm one of the boys'; the implication here is that Lucy herself identifies going out for a drink or conducting research with males as prototypical masculine behaviours; to be part of those requires suppressing her feminine identity. Although academia is a very different sector to those we have seen so far, and one in which we may expect different processes of in/equality, acceptance in work groups is subject to gendered negotiation of norms; in/exclusion in the academic context is also gendered. Lucy's 'masculine' construction (being childless; being able to go out for drinks; not standing out as a woman in a male group) enables her to claim access to the dominant professional group *for* and *with* the sympathetic interviewer who also aligns with the macro-narratives performed here. Claiming inclusion is constructed as important to Lucy, as the thread of belonging to the group is recurrent throughout the excerpt: e.g., 'that gets me accepted' (line 16); 'remain in the group' (line 26); 'I'm one of the boys' (line 32); 'I'm part of the group' (line 40). And arguably all professionals negotiate 'belonging' in their daily routines at work. Although CofPs have their own ways of negotiated gendered 'normativities' this does not suggest that societal macro-narratives are not visible. In all our examples, societal understandings are made relevant, from the swearing, league-loving builders, to the aggressive male caregiver, the linking of the colour pink to ('unacceptable') homosexuality and pretentiousness, and to childcare being a disadvantage to being a 'proper' member of the team. Putting together the discussion of the different professional encounters, we see the ways in which excerpts can feed into one another and enable the researcher to follow their own positioning as well as the ideological threads that are mobilised by the participants in different contexts.

In sum, gender, commonly seen as the very fabric of social life, operates across several levels; we cannot move forward in understandings of gender as a social process without exploring that very social process in action. An ethnographically and critically informed IS allows for a unified examination of gender, bringing together micro-linguistic practices, norms, identities, sociocultural discourses, and ideologies. It acknowledges gender as a social structure and the appearance of reality this entails, while also understanding gender as being in a state of perpetual evolution. This blurring of ontological understandings is the first step in moving towards social change. What remains to be fully developed are the concrete ways in which these insights can inform workplaces committed to principles of inclusion and social equality.

Future directions

Workplace scholars with a focus on gender have laid a robust platform from which to build. Embracing a social justice perspective and harnessing political salience are important and exciting future directions. In order to do this, we need to include more diverse workplaces in our investigations. In times where the very shape of 'work' is rapidly changing (think the 'gig economy') as part of increasing mobility and new forms of technology, we need to widen the scope of workplaces we investigate. Workplaces are increasingly intricate and complicated, not least because of the various modes of interacting which make work simultaneously virtual and face-to-face, synchronous and asynchronous, dependent on new AI technologies and on the (constrained) choices and actions of the human workforce. Even more importantly, we need more gender-diverse voices in our research (both in terms of researchers and participants). Emphasising the plurality of experience will trouble the predominant cis hetero framing of gender research in the workplace and move us further into a richer and more revealing space. Relatedly, the area of ideologies offers further possibilities for analytical expansion. A dual focus on hegemonic ideologies (and the discourses that give them voice) and budding, counter-ideologies will allow workplace scholars to engage with both existing structures and fledgling new forms which contest the status quo. Only through this shared focus will we be able to access the subtleties needed to move beyond boxes and dichotomies into more expansive and inclusive terrain. And this is exactly where we need to be.

Transcription conventions

[laughs]:	Paralinguistic features and editorial information in square brackets; colons indicate beginning and end
+	Pause of up to one second
... //......\ /.......\\ ...	Simultaneous speech
( )	Unclear utterance
?	Questioning intonation

Note

1 Names of workplace participants and workplaces are pseudonyms.

Further reading

Angouri, J. and Marra, M. (eds) (2011) *Constructing identities at work*. Houndmills: Palgrave.

This edited volume considers how interactants do identity work and how identity is indexed in workplace discourse. It brings together a range of professional and institutional contexts, from corporate workplaces, to courtrooms, classrooms, and academia, and introduces intersectionality.

Baxter, J. (2014) *Double-voicing at work: power, gender and linguistic expertise*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book explores how women leaders use double-voicing more than men as a means of gaining acceptance and approval in the workplace. The readers will benefit from Baxter's attempt to combine a nuanced and rich analysis of empirical data with a critical agenda.

Holmes, J. (2006) *Gendered talk at work*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Drawing on a rich body of workplace interactional data, Holmes provides a solid illustration of the ways in which both women and men draw on gendered discourse resources to enact a range of workplace roles.

Tannen, D. (1995) *Talking from 9 to 5: women and men in the workplace*. New York: Avon.

Tannen probes how gender roles shape the ways men and women communicate in the workplace, and the ways in which these differences can lead to misunderstandings. It is one of the first systematic attempts to investigate the workplace dynamics using an IS approach.

Vine, B. (ed) (2017) *The Routledge handbook of language in the workplace*. New York: Routledge.

Covering a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches and exploring different types of workplace settings, this handbook provides a comprehensive overview of research on language in the workplace.

Related topics

Gender and sexuality normativities; interactional sociolinguistics in language and sexuality research: benefits and challenges; the accomplishment of gender in interaction: ethnomethodological and conversation analytic approaches to gender; interactional sociolinguistics: foundations, developments and applications to language, gender and sexuality; leadership and humour at work: using interactional sociolinguistics to explore the role of gender.

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15

Interactional sociolinguistics in language and sexuality research

Benefits and challenges

Corinne A. Seals

Introduction

One of the core tenets of interactional sociolinguistics (IS) as a type of discourse analysis research is that '[L]anguage contextualises and is contextualised, such that language does not just function "in" context, language also forms and provides context' (Schiffrin 1994: 134). Taking an IS perspective, then, it is through language that sexuality becomes meaningful, and our experiences with sexuality further contribute to the development of language and how we talk about it. Therefore,

> meaning is located in the interaction between the act (text) and context. So gender and sexuality are not simply brought into being by speaking or doing, but via a process of interaction between the speech act and the grounded sociocultural and situational context in which it is produced and received.
>
> *(Sauntson and Kyratzis 2007: 3)*

This chapter focuses on IS methodology as applied to language and sexuality research. First, the foundations of IS research, along with key concepts within this method of discourse analysis, are presented. This is then followed by a discussion of the development of language and sexuality research, which necessarily begins with its historical background in language and sexuality studies. The ongoing applicability of IS to language and sexuality research is also discussed, followed by an empirical case study illustration of a lesbian comedian performing stand-up comedy in New York City. After the case study, there is a further critical examination of the benefits of using IS, as well as insights that can be gained from also adding the poststructuralist concept of intertextuality, providing readers with a better knowledge of IS and how it works in practice.

Foundations of interactional sociolinguistics

The overall goal of an IS approach to discourse analysis is to examine how people interpret discourse in interaction, including how people do this similarly and differently from each other. Furthermore, 'IS assumes that interpretive assessments always build on locally or context specific background knowledge that takes the form of presuppositions that shift in the course of an encounter' (Gumperz 1999: 458). In interpreting discursive interaction through an IS approach, sequential turns at talk are examined for literal meaning, as well as inferred meaning (e.g. through the use of presuppositions). Additionally, contextual information is drawn upon by the researcher to uncover how a particular interaction is situated within micro- and macro- community, cultural, and social norms. These social norms are used as the contextual framework through which interaction is analysed. After repeated patterns of interaction are found within the discursive data, instances of these are transcribed as evidence of the types of key interactions observed. When analysing the interactional data, research using IS encompasses a number of key concepts to enact this type of discourse analysis, including 'contextualisation cues', 'frame', 'key', 'face', 'footing', and 'politeness'. While these terms are covered across the chapters in this section, the current chapter focuses on contextualisation cues, framing, and key.

'Contextualisation cues' were famously defined by Gumperz (1982: 131) as 'any feature of linguistic form that contributes to the signalling of contextual presuppositions'. This can include intonation, gestures, facial expressions, prosody, formality of language (morphologically, lexically, and/or syntactically), and language choice, among other features. Contextualisation cues are therefore key in helping the interlocutor(s) interpret the interaction at hand, including the discourse. Furthermore, contextualisation cues in discourse function indexically (Ochs 1992). That is, through discourse and/or paralinguistic cues, contextualisation cues point to or call to mind certain concepts with which the hearers are familiar. Often, in order to interpret the indexical meaning, hearers rely upon schemata – 'frames and cultural scripts in which social expectations are viewed as the classifying device of experience' (Kuzio 2014: 2), including stereotypes and wider social discourses[1] (Gee 1996).

In order to interpret the contextualisation cues put forth by a speaker, the interlocutor presupposes certain background information about that speaker. For example, if an (assumed) woman lowers her voice while talking, and if this is interpreted by the interlocutor to mean that the person is ashamed, then the interlocutor has made several presuppositions. First, the interlocutor has presupposed that a conventional woman in this society would have a reason to be ashamed regarding the content of what was being shared. Second, there is a presupposition that a conventional woman would display shame in this society through the lowering of her voice when talking. Third, the interlocutor is presupposing that the speaker identifies as a conventional woman in this society. Fourth, the interlocutor is presupposing that the speaker shares the same indexical meaning for lowering her voice in this society. However, any one of these presuppositions could be wrong, which would then lead to a misinterpretation of the contextualisation cues, and therefore misinterpretation of the discursive interaction. In fact, investigating miscommunication is one of the foundational strengths of IS research (cf. Gumperz 1982).

In addition to Gumperz' contribution to IS of the key concept of contextualisation cues, Goffman (1974, 1983) also played a central role in the development of ideas that became adopted into IS. From Goffman, we get the concepts of 'interaction order', 'frame', and 'key', among others. In the concept of interaction order, Goffman was interested in exploring how people conduct themselves interactionally in face-to-face situations (while IS does not specify this mode of interaction). In particular, he noted that within an interaction, a person's main goal is to be heard and understood, such that a person is speaking in order to achieve this goal and to provide evidence for their position (Goffman 1974). In order to understand the interaction order, Goffman explains that we must pay attention to the context, particularly settings. We must do so in order to understand the expectations of the interaction (frame), the tone of the interaction (key), the ways that people try to maintain their presented self and to avoid being challenged (face), and how shifts in interactional events and/or participants can alter who is included or excluded (footing).

Indeed, Goffman's concepts, as listed above, work very well with Gumperz' concept of contextualisation cues to explain what happens in a number of modern-day situations, including that presented in the case study below: a stand-up performance by a lesbian comedian in New York City. For the empirical example presented later in the chapter, 'frame' and 'key' are focused on in particular, alongside 'contextualisation cues' (similar analytical approaches can also be found in Bing and Heller's (2003) study of lesbian humour, Pichler's (2017) study of couples' talk, and Warner-Garcia's (2015) study of young women's talk of spirituality and sexuality). As previously mentioned, 'frame' has to do with the context of an interaction, and is meant to be used for interpreting the expected events to take place within it. More specifically, frames are associated with the interactional 'rules' that enable or constrain specific social encounters (e.g. attending class, visiting a relative, presenting at a conference) and accompanying actions, including discursive moves. Additionally, 'key' adds to 'frame' by highlighting the tone that is given to an interaction, whether for example it is a serious, sarcastic, or humorous encounter. Furthermore, contextualisation cues (usually including intonation) help the interlocutor know how cognitively and emotionally to interpret the discourse and interaction, including how to interpret the frame. When a 'key change' is successful, the interlocutor is able to follow a shift in tone and respond accordingly (e.g. from humorous to serious).

The value of interactional sociolinguistics for language and sexuality research

Scholars who utilise the IS approach to discourse analysis view the relationship between language and society as reciprocal: 'Language, culture, and society are grounded in interaction: they stand in a reflexive relationship with the self, the other, and the self-other relationship, and it is out of these mutually constitutive relationships that discourse is created' (Schiffrin 1994: 134). This perspective of language and society contributing to each other is also a key component of research into language, gender, and sexuality. With regard to gender identity and performance, Wagner (2010: 36) explains that gender is considered by many sociolinguists to be 'a matter of identity formation which continually recurs through actions such as speaking … As a social construct rather than a biological fact, gender is renegotiated each time men and women interact in different contexts'. Wagner (2010) also connects language and gender research with language and sexuality research by exploring studies that have approached studying lesbian discourse through woman-to-woman talk in an effort to broaden our understanding of the vast range of gender identities (cf. Coates and Cameron 1989; Remlinger 1999; Spender 1985).

In order to better understand language and sexuality research, it is important to first establish how it developed in the field. In order to do so, we need to look to queer theory, which has been, and often still is, interwoven with our understandings of language and sexuality (see this volume for the history of language and gender research). Additionally, the discourse analysis studies presented below make use of IS, though, importantly, it has not always been explicitly identified as such. I have noticed that explicit reference to the IS method is more common recently, and even now it is not always found. Instead, references to 'discourse analysis' without further specification (e.g. CDA, pragmatics, etc.) have usually stood instead of an explicit mention of IS. Thus, while IS has been a very popular method of discourse analysis since its inception, it has more often than not simply been referred to in studies as 'discourse analysis' (e.g. Lopez 2014; Oute and Huniche 2017; Wagner 2010) (notable exceptions include Angouri 2018; Angouri, Marra, and Holmes 2017; and Holmes and Marra 2010, among others).

The rise of queer theory and language and sexuality research

With the rise of third-wave feminism (focused on individualism and expanding who is seen as a 'woman') (see Part VI on poststructuralism, this volume) with its interest in diversity and socially constructed identities, came the emergence of queer theory. This was connected with discourse research and linguistics through Livia and Hall's (1997) seminal work *Queerly Phrased: Language, Gender, and Sexuality*. Similar to feminist research in calling for a disruption of hegemonic discourses (i.e. a dominant societal ideology about the way things work), queer theory 'represents various approaches that are driven by a critical focus on heteronormativity' (Kendall and Tannen 2015: 649). Similarly, relating to third-wave feminism in particular, queer theory established the idea of sexuality and sexual identity as a continuum. This was made popular in particular by two key texts – Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) and Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990).

Thus, together, third-wave feminism and queer theory led to the rise of queer linguistics (cf. Leap 1995; Livia and Hall 1997; for discussions on the future of queer linguistics, see Sauntson this volume), as well as language and sexuality research (see Cameron and Kulick 2003 for a thorough overview of language and sexuality research's origins). Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that research into language and gender is different from research into language and sexuality, and both are different from research into language and sexual identity.[2] At the same time, however, these are all intertwined with each other and therefore 'push and pull' each other, such that none can be completely separated from the others in research and still be representative of real-life experience. As explained by Milani (2014: 261–262), 'despite acknowledging that sex, gender, and sexuality are separate categories, queer theory highlights that these are constructs that have been socially entwined in such a way that they have developed "a unique relationship" (Sauntson 2008: 274) with each other'.

As may be expected, these areas have been heavily influenced by poststructuralism (Bucholtz 2014), which takes as a key principle the belief that we talk reality into being, and it is through discourse that the world exists and is understood. As explained by the famous feminist philosopher de Beauvoir, a person is not born a woman; rather, a person *becomes* a woman as a result of social structures (1949: 18). It is thus through language that gender and sexuality binaries are created, and through language that these binaries are contested. This social construction of the body occurs through discourse, which contributes to and is reflective of structures of power (Foucault 1990). Therefore, we use discourse and language literally to talk the body into being (Bucholtz and Hall 2016). This process of socially constructing and conceptualising the body carries with it all of the social constraints and embedded power relations, including marginalisation, that exist within a given sociocultural context (e.g. talking about trying on dresses and how they fit, which carries assumptions that dresses are worn by certain types of people and should fit a certain way, all of which gives power to discourses of femininity, gender binaries, women's bodies as desirable commodities, etc.).

Crucially, 'social categories entail both gender and sexuality, and are socially constructed and culturally relative, changing over time' (Kendall and Tannen 2015: 649).

This has been demonstrated by means of various cross-cultural analyses of the construction of gender and sexuality, which shows that the binary treatment of gender and sexuality that exists in Anglo-dominated societies does not carry over to many other cultures, including those that have been oppressed by the former. For example, Native American Two-Spirit people (Driskill 2010; Wilson 1996), Thailand's *kathoey* (Saisuwan 2016; Totman 2004), Brazil's *travesti* (Kulick 1998), and India's hijras (Hall and O'Donovan 1996) are all well-recognised identities within their respective cultures, despite not being acknowledged by Anglo-dominated hegemonic ideas of binary gender and sexuality. Additionally, New Zealand Māori have embraced the revival of the term *takatāpui* to represent a fluid, non-binary identity that encompasses gender, sexuality, and culture, which was considered to be a normal way of identifying before English colonisation of New Zealand (Kerekere 2017; Murray 2003). Similar in meaning are the terms *fakaleiti* in Tonga and *fa'afafine* in Samoa (Farran 2010).

Socialisation into cultural expectations regarding gender, and sexuality

As evidenced through the above examples, language plays a key role in identifying the self and other because of the wealth of cultural and social information intertwined. Furthermore, any and all perceived differences in gender and sexuality from the hegemonic norm have 'essentially cultural, rather than biological bases … the sum total of the parents', the peers', and the culture's notions of what is appropriate to each temperament…' (Millett 1971: 28–31). These expectations of doing gender and sexuality are further governed within cultures and societies from the very beginning of a person's life through socialisation, in which language again plays a key role. As argued by Goodwin (1990) who focused on children's playtime (with girls playing together and boys playing together), children are socialised even at a young age into a gendered interactional order. Goodwin (1990) found that while the girls tended to structure play jointly and indirectly, the boys tended to structure play hierarchically and directly. By a young age, the children had already internalised the gender interactional order into which they had been socialised, and they continued to reinforce it through peer-to-peer socialisation during play.

Further expanding upon Gumperz' (1982) contextualisation cues and Goodwin's (1990) socialisation into interactional order, Tannen's book *You Just Don't Understand* (1990) and Holmes's book *Gendered Talk at Work: Constructing Gender Identity through Workplace Discourse* (2006) found that women and men appeared to take part in conversational rituals reflecting hegemonic role socialisation, such that women tended repeatedly to support and align with each other, while men tended repeatedly to 'one-up' each other in conversation. Holmes (2006) furthermore specifically looked at how men and women draw upon societal norms and expectations to perform gendered identity in the workplace, drawing upon contextualisation cues to make these connections. These gendered conversational rituals were also discussed in Ochs and Taylor's (1992) analysis of gendered dinner-time conversational rituals in the United States, specifically examining how and what the children said to the mothers as compared with the fathers. While enlightening from the 'gender as difference' perspective to IS language and gender research, this still focused on hegemonic conceptualisations of sexuality. However, Wagner (2010) replicated Ochs and Taylor's (1992) research, examining conversational rituals in lesbian family dinner discourse. She found that while some of the interactional norms from the original study held in the new study (such as one parent more often than not taking a dominant role), these findings also pointed to the fact that such interactional strategies and contextualisation cues are not necessarily gendered behaviour; rather, they are part of the way in which ritualised language functions within families of all types.

Furthermore, the expectations of 'doing gender' via societal gender ideologies are policed through language, such that people are expected to adhere to 'precise hegemonic notions of gender-appropriate language use' (Bucholtz and Hall 1995: 6). Here is a further case where contextualisation cues and the reciprocal relationship between language and society are still highly relevant in language and sexuality research, as there still remain stereotypes upon which people draw every day when interpreting gender performance and sexuality (e.g. voice pitch and cadence). While third-wave feminist approaches to research have done a fantastic job of 'question[ing] the assumption that gender is a simple binary opposition' (Cameron 2006: 2), there is still a strong reliance upon 'sex-class linked' associations (Goffman 1977) when it comes to how people on average interpret interactions every day. As explained by Tannen (1996: 713), Goffman's phrase 'sex-class linked' describes the regularised phenomenon by which

> certain behaviours in certain cultures are more likely to be associated with members of the "class" of females or males, but people come to regard such behaviours as associated not with the "class" but rather with each individual who is a member of it.

Benefits and limitations of using an interactional sociolinguistic approach

As previously mentioned, IS is very useful for its micro- and macro-contextually situated insights into interaction. However, there is a greater understanding now of how we can even further strengthen IS by incorporating more critical perspectives, such as those central to other types of discourse analysis (e.g. critical discourse analysis (CDA)). Acknowledging the importance of the wider roles played by macro-societal power and pressures is an important addition to IS as we grow our global awareness as researchers. Scholars such as Cetina (2009) have spoken about the need for Goffman's theory to be updated to account for changes in modern society, such as asynchronous communication (e.g. leaving a text message for someone to be read later) and human communication with computers (e.g. buying movie tickets from an automated kiosk). Importantly, at the same time, scholars such as Bullingham and Vasconcelos (2013) have argued that while not applicable in every case, Goffman's interaction order still explains much of what happens in modern-day communication, including interaction in message boards and blogs, and identity projection via avatars on internet-based platforms.

It is also important to address the misconceptions that lead to an often-found criticism of all types of discourse analysis – that it is perceived to involve 'cherry picking' examples that best fit the researcher's aims in that extracts are selected from a dataset then analysed (most notably criticised by Widdowson 2004). It is important to note that this is a possible danger with any research that relies upon illustrative examples, and this is exactly why transparency of the research process and researcher reflexivity (i.e. accounting for the researcher's own position in and influence on the data) are so crucial to validity in qualitative reliability in research. As further explained by Gumperz (2015: 317), it is not the role of IS to resolve all issues with ambiguity in interpretation. However, it *is* the role of IS to hold the researcher accountable for the interpretations made by maintaining transparency around these interpretations: 'Instead of taking interpretive processes for granted, IS analysis suggests (1) what the most likely interpretations are, (2) what the assumptions and inferential processes are by which they are achieved, and (3) how they relate to what is literally said'. Yet, this remains an area of caution because it is fully up to the researcher to ensure transparency and reflexivity in the research process in order to produce valid and trustworthy results.

Finally, IS researchers are aware of the need to curtail the heretofore reliance upon Western conceptualisations of research. This awareness is one that is continuing to rise in all areas of linguistics, as well as social science and humanities research broadly. This consideration is particularly important when working with Indigenous and minority communities because sole application of a Western methodology (i.e. with its tradition in research by traditional colonial settler countries, cf. Kurtz 2013; Tuhiwai Smith 2013) when working with Indigenous and minority communities is now understood to continue oppressive practices (Tuhiwai Smith 2013). Rather, when working with such communities, the research must be done alongside the communities and must be done for their interests. This usually involves also adopting Indigenous methodologies alongside methodologies such as IS, with the former having at its core 'an understanding of the significance of Indigenous knowledge and the ways in which Indigenous people make sense of life in today's world' (Kurtz 2013: 219; see also Ray 2012). Furthermore, the researcher cannot rely upon their own contextual interpretations alone, but must consult continually with the communities with which they are working.

Now that some of the benefits and limitations of using an IS approach have been addressed, a case study is presented below that illustrates how IS can be useful for research into language and sexuality. Following the case study, there is a further discussion of the merits of using multiple methods including IS.

Discussion through a case study illustration

In order to better illustrate the usefulness of IS in studying language and sexuality, this section looks to an example of research I conducted on a lesbian comedian's interaction with her audience (Seals 2016). This is an excerpt from comedian Julie Goldman's stand-up comedy routine in 2007 for *Comedy Central* in New York City. Julie Goldman is a Jewish, openly lesbian comedian from the East Coast of the United States who identifies as 'butch' in style and was in her mid-30s at the time of the performance. *Comedy Central* is a major network on cable television in the United States, and their stand-up specials are a feature of their programming. A key feature of their audience is that the comedian does not know in advance who will be in their audience, nor does the audience know who will be performing. The audience is recruited through hired representatives going onto the streets of Times Square and asking people if they would like to see a comedy show (Seals 2016). Consequently, the audience does not lean socially or politically one way or the other, and the comedian cannot assume that the audience would have otherwise chosen to be there had they known who the comedian would be. This unknown factor is very important to keep in mind, as it makes the comedian's interactional work even more challenging.

In the example below, Goldman tells a narrative-style joke, drawing upon her own experience as intersectionally Jewish, gay, butch, a woman, a New Yorker, and partnered. In the story below, Goldman tells of the hegemonic resistance she faced while shopping for her upcoming wedding to her partner.

Example: *Shopping in New York City*[3]

G: But you know. It's hard for the *butch lez*. We're *very shy*. *Very sensitive*.
And the butch lez shops in three places. Old Navy, The Gap, and when we
feel fancy Banana Republic. So.
(*audience laughter*)
I wanted to *extend*. Right? I live in New York City. I should be able to
find something great, right?
So I go to all these places, and it was very difficult for me. I went to
Barney's. Went to Bergdorf's. Sacks Fifth Avenue. All- Bloomingdales.
All the places. And it's very hard.
You know why? Because the same bitch works in every store.
(*quiet audience laughter*)
((grabs mic stand and drops it center-stage)) She looks like this!
(*audience laughter and applause*)
((Gestures to show off mic stand four times)).
With *blonde hair*.
(*quiet audience laughter*)
And an accent from somewhere *fabulous*.
(*quiet audience laughter*)
We don't know what country, just *fabulous*.
(*quiet audience laughter*)
And she clanked up to me with her clanky bones. Clank clank clank clank
clank clank clank clank clank clank clank clank clank clank clank clank
clank clank.
(*quiet audience laughter*)
((Impersonates store clerk)) *Can I help you:?*
(*quiet audience laughter*)
The butch is *shy*. I was like 'I'm looking for an outfit for my wedding!
Hmph!' ((kicks and acts fussy))
(*quiet audience laughter*)
And it's amazing! Even in New York City! Even in the two-thousands!
When we're supposed to be enlightened and all enlightened and our heads
are all how-a-how.
But still people put you in a- in a box. People put you in 'you're supposed
to be a label. You're supposed to be this.'
So when I said I'm looking for an outfit for my wedding, this woman saw
just a woman, which means I'm a bri:de. Which to her means I'm just a
woman, which means I'm just competi:tion.
So her whole inner monologue was *fascinating*.
(*quiet audience laughter*)
Because her whole illusion of reality just *exploded*!
(*quiet audience laughter*)

Insights gained from interactional sociolinguistics

In choosing a method of discourse analysis for the above excerpt, I chose to use IS due to its focus on interpretation through micro- and macro-contextual information. This multi-scaled contextual information proved absolutely vital to understanding the interactional choices being made by Goldman.

First, an analysis of the contextualisation cues in Goldman's stand-up performance shows how she strategically uses exaggerated intonation and gesture to signal to her audience where laughter is expected. As previously mentioned, Goldman does not know who is in her audience, nor do they know they would be listening to Goldman as the comedian of the night. Therefore, contextualisation cues marking the expected points of audience response play an important role in the success of her performance. For example, in line 1, Goldman emphasises the words 'butch lez', 'very shy', and 'very sensitive' through elongation and changes in intensity. Through doing so, she marks these concepts as being of particular salience for setting up the story in the joke she is telling. In lines 2 and 3, she then draws upon place names that she assumes are familiar to her audience so that she can also access the schemata associated with them – rising in affiliated socioeconomic status as she lists them. She then utters the word 'so' in an abrupt stopping manner as a marker of the end of a turn, signalling the audience's turn to laugh, as well as a discourse marker that she will continue her joke after their laughter.

In the lines that follow, Goldman uses the same types of contextualisation cues for her audience, in addition to rhetorical questions in an effort to keep the audience engaged and to invite them to enter the joke setting with her from her perspective (e.g. lines 5, 6, 10). Furthermore, when Goldman begins to hit crucial punch line points during her joke-telling narrative, she draws upon contextualisation cues such as gesture (e.g. lines 12 and 14), repetition (lines 21 and 22), and exaggerated intonation when voicing the other (e.g. line 25). As shown in the example above, these contextualisation cues are successful for her comedic performance, as 9 out of 11 instances of audience laughter occur immediately after Goldman uses exaggerated intonation, exaggerated repetition, or exaggerated gesture.

Furthermore, in analysing Goldman's discourse, it is immediately noticeable that she draws upon larger societal discourses and macro-contexts to present herself intersectionally (Crenshaw 1989, 1991). Not only does she provide many references to various aspects of her identity (e.g. lines 1, 2, 5, 27), but she even directly criticises the store clerk's lack of acknowledgement of intersectionality in lines 35–37. By simultaneously directly criticising heteronormative perspectives, Goldman uses her performance to resist hegemonic frames and social stereotypes, which has been found to be a feature of LGBTQ comedy in particular (Kulick 2014; Seals 2016).

However, Goldman does not simply present discourses of resistance in the example above. She also draws upon stereotypes and re-keys them, making fun of them in the form of the store clerk and therein further empowering LGBTQ communities (Bing and Heller 2003). In making fun of the store clerk's ignorance, Goldman is also able to reframe the interaction as a way to empower the self by resisting other-defining and, instead, self-defining (Willard 2010). In addition to the abundance of information gained from IS, the next section shows how we can gain even more insight by also utilising intertextuality.

Supplementary use of intertextuality

This section shows the further information that can be added to the IS analysis by also utilising a poststructuralist concept such as intertextuality (Bakhtin 1981) – 'the joining together of ideas through texts in communication, while simultaneously reacting to and reflecting primed prior texts and anticipating unrealised future texts' (Seals 2012: 233).

Intertextuality provides another look at the contextualisation cues put forth by Goldman. More specifically, intertextuality allows us to examine the underlying discursive references that Goldman draws upon for her diverse audiences and how she makes these connections more explicit for an audience of an unknown quantity (i.e. how much of the audience are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer (LGBTQ) community members). For example, she refers to herself as a ‘butch lez’ multiple times and describes (albeit ironically) traits assigned by LGBTQ communities to someone who identifies as such. For an in-group audience, this would be too much time spent on already known information, and in fact, Goldman does not do this in her comedy for LGBTQ-specific audiences (Seals 2016). Her assumption about her audience not having intertextual references for this information appears to be accurate because her audience does not laugh at this description in line 1. However, the description is humorous from an LGBTQ perspective because she has drawn upon the irony of a discourse of a ‘butch lez’ as sensitive and shy, which is the opposite of the dominant societal discourses of butch-identifying lesbians within LGBTQ communities (cf. Kulick 2014; Wagner 2010). It is at this point, having her audience assumption confirmed, that she begins drawing more heavily upon contextualisation cues in her comedy, such as exaggerated intonation and gesture.

This intertextual gamble again takes places when Goldman directly criticises the hegemonic notions of what it means to be a woman and what it means to be gay in lines 31–37. While this type of social critique is very common in lesbian comedy and would likely elicit laughter from an LGBTQ-specific audience due to shared experiences and therefore shared intertextual referents (Becker 1994; Bing and Heller 2003), the degree of presence of these referents for her current audience is unknown. In fact, her audience does not laugh, indicating the high likelihood that they do not in fact share this intertextual discourse. Consequently, Goldman returns to employing contextualisation cues in the form of exaggerated intonation and gesture in line 38, again rewarding her with audience laughter.

By drawing upon intertextuality as well as IS, we are able to uncover additional information about the very fast audience measurement and negotiation that Goldman undergoes in order to interactionally adjust her comedy to achieve a successful effect.

Concluding comment

This case study example speaks to the usefulness of employing post-structuralist intertextuality theory supplementarily to IS when analysing discourses of sexuality in order to get a more holistic understanding of the data. While IS prioritises interaction in discourse and takes account of needed contextual information, there is still more that can be added to this. Had only IS been used to analyse the example above, the degree of Goldman’s skill in adjusting her discourse for her unknown audience would have gone unnoticed. The post-structuralist concept of intertextuality added to IS allowed for a discovery of potentially unsuccessful comedy in that Goldman’s audience may have missed LGBTQ intertextual references, while also uncovering the quick recovery made by her employ of specific contextualisation cues for audience laughter. In short, while neither IS nor intertextuality would provide as complete an analysis, utilised together they provide much more insight into the inner workings of the interaction.

Future directions

All future IS work done with real people, and in particular with marginalised individuals and communities, must put intersectionality at the forefront of any interpretive analysis. This is already done in much IS research but needs to be a priority for all IS research. Furthermore, we need more future IS research focusing on all three areas of language and gender, language and sexuality, and language and sexual identity (instead of considering only one or two aspects at a time) in order to get a more holistic picture of lived human experience.

Future research in IS should also focus more on supporting the experiences of marginalised groups. However, when working with marginalised individuals and communities, it is of utmost important that IS researchers remember to research *with*, not research *on*, them. Hopefully, with increasing focus on the ethics of researching with Indigenous and minority peoples will also come increasing interest in creating a platform for often-silenced voices to be heard. This will require a deep, contextual understanding of how genders, sexualities, and sexual identities are dynamically conceptualised within local communities.

Finally, this raising of social and cultural consciousness also points to the importance of employing supplementary concepts and methods in future IS research, including Indigenous ways of understanding sexuality in and through language. As has been reiterated several times throughout this chapter, IS has much to offer the study of language and sexuality, and the benefits can be further enhanced when in conjunction with other methods.

Transcription conventions

A:	first initial of speaker's surname
?	rising final intonation
!	strong emphasis, with falling intonation
.	falling, final intonation
,	low-rising intonation suggesting continuation
te:xt	lengthening of the preceding sound
tex-	an abrupt cut-off, with level pitch
text	marked stress
((text))	non-verbal actions or researcher notes
(text)	verbal feedback from the audience

Notes

1 Dominant ideas about the way the world works that exist at a larger societal level (e.g. a 'family' consists of two heteronormative parents and their children).

2 'Sex' refers to a biological sex distinction (often societally binary) that is assigned at birth (i.e. terms like 'female', 'male', and 'intersex'). 'Gender' is the social expression of identity along a feminin e<>'nonconforming'<>masculine scale (i.e. people are often assigned (and assign) terms such as 'woman', 'man', or 'gender fluid'). 'Sexual identity' refers to *who* a person is romantically or sexually attracted to, and the ways in which a person defines themselves based on this identity. 'Sexuality' is often conflated with sexual identity, but refers to *how* and *what* a person desires and how they express that desire (such as through language).

3 Refer to transcription conventions at the end of the chapter.

Further reading

Cameron, D. and Kulick, D. (2003) *Language and sexuality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This book provides a thorough overview of the history of research into language and sexuality, including the many complexities involved.

Motschenbacher, H. (2011) 'Taking queer linguistics further: sociolinguistics and critical heteronormativity research', *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 212(212), pp. 149–179.

This article focuses specifically on queer linguistics and discusses the importance of a critical perspective in sociolinguistics research.

Wagner, S. (2010) 'Bringing sexuality to the table: language, gender and power in seven lesbian families', *Gender and Language*, 4(1), pp. 33–72.

This article revisits a classic gender and language study, replicating it with lesbian families to test the original claims made and to incorporate research into language and sexuality.

Related topics

Performance in action; applying queer theory to language, gender and sexuality research in schools; doing gender and sexuality intersectionally in multimodal social media practices; interactional sociolinguistics: foundations, developments and applications to language, gender, and sexuality; gender and sexuality in discourse: semiotic and multimodal approaches.

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Part IV

Ethnomethodological and conversation analytic approaches

16

The accomplishment of gender in interaction

Ethnomethodological and conversation analytic approaches to gender

Lorenza Mondada (Part IV lead)

Introduction

Ethnomethodology (EM) and conversation analysis (CA), together known as EMCA, constitute an interdisciplinary conceptual and methodological programme that does not have gender as its main focus, but has contributed to the issues of gender and sexuality in original ways in the last two decades (see McIlvenny 2002b; Speer and Stokoe 2011; Stokoe and Weatherall 2002). This chapter aims at characterising the specificity of the analyses of gender and sexuality that can be offered from this viewpoint. These analyses can be of interest for feminist studies, masculinities studies, queer studies, LGBTQ+ studies. They also provided arguments in favour of activist and empowering approaches to the diversity of gendered and sexual practices. This chapter does not, however, aim to discuss these connections that have largely been debated elsewhere, sometimes in controversial ways (Kitzinger 2000; see Tennent and Weatherall, this volume). Rather, this chapter reviews the principles of EMCA in order to sketch its original contributions to the study of gender as it is made relevant by and oriented to the participants within social interactions.

EM and CA are two related paradigms that emerged in the 1970s. Both appeared as distinctive approaches in the landscape of sociology and social theory for their primary focus on social action as locally situated and jointly accomplished (rather than on individual action as being governed by interiorised rules, beliefs, values, and norms). Garfinkel founded EM with a special interest in how practical activities are locally organised by members as well as in how they are produced and recognised as having a public intelligibility, that is as *accountable* (Garfinkel 1967, 2002; see Heritage 1984 for an introduction). Issues of accountability are crucial for the way in which gender and sexuality are not pre-existing essential features but practical achievements constantly scrutinised and interpreted by others.

This intellectual background is also shared by CA, originating from the thinking of Sacks (1992), who had worked closely with Garfinkel, as well as in collaboration with Schegloff and Jefferson, with whom he launched CA (Sacks et al. 1974). A basic principle of conversation analysis is that social interaction is methodically organised through the situated, and yet systematic, ordering of participants' actions in a temporal, sequential, and interactional way. This order is based on procedures for allocating turns, on the recognisable design of actions, on sequence organisation, and on practices for repairing trouble (Schegloff 2007: xiv), which are at the same time context-sensitive (that is, contingently situated) and context-free (that is, operating across contexts).

In both EM and CA, a central issue is thus how action is meaningfully formatted within the ongoing interaction; how its order, intelligibility, and normative expectations are publicly recognised and responded to by the co-participants. Accountability concerns both intelligible and normative features. It relies on what the participants make relevant and towards which they demonstrably orient in a way that matters for them and that is consequential for the further progression of the activity. In both EM and CA, these questions are fundamental for understanding the establishment, reproduction, and change in what constitutes the social order as it is achieved in and through the detailed organisation of practices within social interaction.

These principles have generated a substantial body of analytical work questioning the issue of gender in social interaction, which has contributed to gender, feminist, queer, masculinities, and LGBTQ+ studies. An important characteristic of these contributions is the focus on situated actions and their sequential environment in social interaction, documented as they temporally unfold in naturally occurring settings thanks to carefully transcribed and analysed audio/video recordings. As put by Schegloff (1997), issues of gender – like other phenomena – are discovered as endogenous phenomena that matter for members and are unpacked by rigorous analysis (rather than imposed exogenously from the perspective of the analyst). The use of naturalistic data – data that is not elicited, orchestrated, or arranged by the researcher – rather than interviews, is of great importance in EMCA because they are the materials that exhibit how members orient and treat gender categories within the local contingencies and contextures of the situated activity. For example, EMCA studies of gender have looked at very different social settings and activities, ordinary and institutional, involving adults and children, including: how presumptions of heterosexuality are manifested in calls to various institutions (Kitzinger 2005a, 2005b; Land and Kitzinger 2005); how gender issues permeate divorce mediation sessions (Garcia and Fisher 2011) and marriage guidance counselling (Edwards 1998); how gays and lesbians engage in subtle forms of coming out (Kitzinger 2000); how heterosexuals mimic the practice of coming out (Mondada and Oloff 2015); how transsexual women organise passing in the identity clinic (Speer 2009); how children make relevant their distinct gender culture in the playground (Goodwin 1990, 2006); how children playing engage in passing (Bulter and Weatherall 2011); how victims of violence establish themselves as such in calls for help (Tennent and Weatherall, this volume); how the heteronormative image of the family is reproduced in everyday activities (Ericcson, this volume); how gendered identities are performed in girls' gossip disputes (Evaldsson, this volume; see also Goodwin 1990); and how drag kings perform walking in a masculine way (Greco, this volume).

This chapter reviews some EMCA work on gender. It begins with Garfinkel's pioneering study of Agnes (1967), a case that has been consequential for uncovering gender as a social accomplishment. Next, it analyses gender as a category in reference to Sacks' membership categorisation analysis (1972). Finally, the importance of the sequential organisation of talk for how gender is made locally relevant by the participants is discussed on the basis of empirical analyses.

Gender as a situated practical accomplishment

The case of Agnes, an intersexed person who had requested sex-reassignment surgery, is exemplary for Garfinkel's conceptualisation of how accountability is constantly achieved within the situated and methodical organisation of practical actions. In this sense, the case of Agnes is both a key contribution to the overall conceptual framework of EM, and a foundational contribution to the understanding of how members treat gender as both naturally evident and constantly practically managed.

Garfinkel met Agnes (a pseudonym) at the Department of Psychiatry at the University of California at Los Angeles in 1958. Since she had a female body shape with male genitals, she was diagnosed as having a testicular feminisation syndrome and was asserting the right to surgery. Garfinkel recorded 35 hours of conversation with her. He was fascinated by the fact that Agnes was reproducing the 'natural attitude' towards gender and sex – an unproblematic binary vision of sexes and a heterosexual vision of gender – although she had a body that did not correspond to these 'facts'. Agnes thus became a perspicuous case for understanding at the same time the natural attitude adhering to sex as a taken-for-granted biological 'fact', and the social achievement of sex status (the term used by Garfinkel for gender) through repeated, ordinary, and situated practices. In her everyday life, Agnes would constantly learn how to be a female by observing other women in their ordinary affairs and listening to their female autobiographies, immediately integrating these features in her own displays. She would engage in passing as a woman, behaving like a woman, managing an appropriate and accountable feminine behaviour, talking, sitting, walking, going to the beach as a woman, carefully avoiding contingencies that could disclose her genitalia. In front of Garfinkel and the doctors of the Department of Psychiatry, Agnes was claiming her moral right to have a surgical operation, defining herself as a normal natural female, despite the incongruous anatomical factuality of her genitalia. The operation was for her a 'correction' of an 'original error', a necessary remedy of her condition in the direction of that 'intended by nature'.

In sum:

> We learned from Agnes, who treated sexed persons as cultural events that members make happen, that members' practises alone produce the observable-tellable normal sexuality of persons, and do so only, entirely, exclusively in actual, singular, particular occasions through actual witnessed displays of common talk and conduct.
>
> *(Garfinkel 1967: 181)*

Agnes produced and reproduced her sex status as an institutional fact, showed how the 'natural attitude' was a practical and continuous accomplishment, and demonstrated the reflexive relationship between social practices and accounts of those practices.

Garfinkel's contribution has been influential for further ethnomethodological explorations of gender (Kessler and McKenna 1978) and studies of passing (Butler and Weatherall 2011; Speer 2009), as well as for understanding gender as a 'practical accomplishment' in relation to wider discussions about gender as 'social construction' and gender 'performativity' and their conceptual differences (Bucholtz and Hall 2004; Butler 1990; McIlvenny 2002a; Speer 2005; West and Zimmerman 1987).

Garfinkel's exemplary analysis opened up important avenues for the study not only of the achievement/performance of gender, but also of the way in which sexuality is actually achieved in institutional and other settings. Further studies of how sexuality is discovered remain few. A few examples are studies of parents inspecting the sex of newborns (Lindström, Näslund, and Rubertsson 2015), deciding the sex of infants born intersexed (Kessler 1998), and transformed, for example, in surgical operations (Hirschauer 1991) or studies of drag-king make-up sessions (Greco, this volume).

Gender and membership categorisation devices

Sacks' membership categorisation analysis (1972, 1992) provides another way of reflecting upon the accountability of social conduct. Inspired by his fieldwork in a suicide prevention call centre, Sacks described the search of suicidal persons for help as a methodical inspection of their close social environment, identifying and categorising who could become an incumbent of the category 'helper'. A 'helper' is not only somebody who is available to give help, but also somebody who accepts to enter into a 'helper'/'helped' standardised pair relationship, characterised by rights and obligations to ask and receive help (Sacks 1966, 1972). Sacks showed that the trajectory of the suicide ends when the conclusion of this search is, 'I have no one to turn to' (1966). On the basis of this categorical description of the actions crucially defining the life of the suicidal, Sacks defined membership categorisation devices as constituted by a collection of categories (such as age, nationality, profession, gender), each of which contained a set of categories that could be applied to a population. He also defined a set of application rules, including the economy rule (one category is generally enough) and the consistency rule (in order to categorise a population, the categories of the same collection might be used), as well as a series of maxims that defined how the categories can be heard and seen by the co-participants (1972). Sacks also highlighted that explicit categories are not always used. Instead, categorisation practices are tacitly recognisable in relation to category-bound activities; that is, actions that are typically attributed to a category. In this case, the action enables participants to infer the category (e.g. Sacks 1992, vol. I: 46). Another way actions can be associated to categories is through the accountable conduct that can be identified as 'doing being' a given category, such as 'doing being ordinary' (Sacks 1992, vol. I: 215) or 'doing gender' (Kitzinger 2009; West and Fenstermaker 1995; West and Zimmerman 1987). These latter points show that categorisation is not only built upon the naming of the category in lexical items but is also (mostly) inferred.

Sacks insisted on the endogenous attribution of categories and categorisation work: categories are made relevant by and for members in the accountable organisation of their affairs; not all categories that could be *referentially* valid are *relevantly* oriented (Sacks 1963). The relevance of categories is thus the analytic central focus. This relevance is established in and through actual instances of social interactions, and possibly evolves dynamically as the activity unfolds.

In this sense, membership categorisation analysis and sequential analysis are deeply interconnected, even if these two approaches within EMCA have sometimes been separated. They are closely related in Sacks' own work, This is shown, for example, by his analysis of a recurrent sequential pattern noticed in the suicidal calls in which callers reported that when they announced their suicide tendency (as in, 'I'm going to kill myself'), they were often met with laughter (Sacks 1992, vol. I: 14–16). Laughter is an action that treats the second position within this sequence as a locus for aligning and affiliating to the search for help – or not. Laughter is a response that fills this slot. It treats the first turn as a joke, thereby rejecting the action initiated in the first position, also rejecting the rights and obligations that go with it. This shows how a category, and the moral duties associated with it, can be negotiated within the turn-by-turn sequential organisation of the interaction.

In this sense, categorisation practices and sequential organisation of action are deeply intertwined. This is demonstrated by a simple example commented on by Sacks:

Extract 1 (from Sacks 1992, vol. I: 774)

Passenger:	Do you have a cigarette?
Stewardess:	No we don't. They don't provide that service anymore.

The example is not from a recorded corpus, but from a personal experience of Sacks himself on a flight (at a time in which people were still smoking on flights). Sacks explained that the passenger action – a request – is very different if addressed to the stewardess or to another passenger. The response indeed displays that the request is heard as an institutional action, made by a client to a service provider, and not, for example, by a man to a woman:

> She is talking "as a stewardess", the question is not whether *she* has a cigarette, but whether, as a stewardess she has a cigarette, which stands altogether independent of whether she has cigarettes in her purse. The issue is whether, as a stewardess, she provides cigarettes.
>
> *(Sacks 1992: 774)*

The use of pronouns in the response is significantly oriented to that: the stewardess responds first with the first-person plural ('we don't') and then adds an account in which she uses the third-person plural ('they don't provide that service anymore'), further pointing at a responsibility that falls neither on her nor the crew. Both pronouns index that she responds as a member of an organisation and not as a private person. This is very different than if the passenger had asked for a cigarette from a woman sitting next to him, using that action as a legitimate procedure for engaging with her, in particular. It is striking that the relevant categories are explicitly inscribed in the identification of the participants in the transcripts: the result of the analysis is incorporated in the presentation of the data itself (for a discussion, see Mondada 2002).

This example shows the importance of the sequential organisation of talk, in which the relevance of a category is projected and negotiated turn-by-turn. This dimension has been repeatedly emphasised by Schegloff (1987, 1991, 1997), who relates the issue of relevance to the notion of procedural consequentiality:

> the problem of showing from the details of the talk or other conduct in the materials that we are analysing that those aspects of the scene are what the parties are oriented to. For that is to show how the parties are embodying for one another the relevancies of the interaction and are thereby producing the social structure.
>
> *(Schegloff 1991: 51)*

This issue has generated discussions concerning gender, its relevance in social interaction, and the way members' orientations can be demonstrated on the basis of the details of their talk and embodied actions. This also touches upon the notion of the 'omni-relevance' of the category of gender. Sacks spoke of categories belonging to an 'omni-relevant device' (1992: 313) in referring to collections of categories characterising certain settings in which they are always potentially relevant for organising and interpreting the activities taking place in these settings. Although Garfinkel (1967: 118) refers to the omni-relevance of gender in

Agnes' case, in relation to the constant passing work she does in order to accomplish the naturality of her feminine category, the omni-relevance of the category of gender cannot *a priori* be decided in general but has to be analytically demonstrated in each empirical case (Schegloff 1997). This has generated heated debates, namely about the relation between CA and feminism (Kitzinger 2000; Kitzinger and Frith 1999; Stokoe and Smithson 2001; Tennent and Weatherall, this volume; Weatherall 2002a, 2002b; Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2003). Nevertheless, linking the relevance of a category to its sequential consequentiality does not mean *a priori* that gender is not omni-relevant. This just has to be demonstrated, and the demonstration is far from limited to the explicit lexical mention of the category (the lexical item itself is not always a warrant for the relevance of the category; see Kitzinger 2007), but includes a large variety of ways of 'doing being' the category (Kitzinger 2009; West and Zimmerman 1987).

The use of and orientation to gender categories in social interaction has produced fruitful analyses of the normative evidence of the heterosexual matrix (Kitzinger 2005b) as well as of the gendered vision of professional activities (Ekberg and Ekberg 2017). For instance, Kitzinger (2005a, 2009) showed how the mention of the category 'my wife' or 'my husband' in an emergency call to a doctor not only provided for the intelligibility of the situation and engaged in 'doing heteronormativity' (Kitzinger 2009: 96), but also impacted the smooth progressivity of the call and, in some cases, its outcome. For example, requests for the patient's address routinely treated the addresses of the caller and the patient as the same, supposing a common residence for them as a couple. Significantly, when the caller referred to 'my baby/wife/husband', the question about the address was formulated as, 'Where do you live?' When the caller referred to the patient as 'my friend', the question was rather, 'Where does she (or he) live?' (Kitzinger 2009: 97). Likewise, it was possible for the doctor to infer from the mention of 'my baby' that there might be other incumbents of the family. This kind of heteronormative inference works *ex negativo* also when there is no evidence of a heterosexual family. For instance, when the person calling is not a member of the family, the reference to the family as a normative framework still holds and the caller has to account for deviating from it:

Extract 2 (from Kitzinger 2005a: 489)

01	Clr:	I've got u:m .h my next door neighbor's baby's
02		not very well.<She keeps losin' 'er breath an' .hh
03		um (.) bringin' up sick and everything an' she
04		keeps cryin'. <She's been cryin' for about four
05		hours,.hhh They don't know what's wrong with 'er.

((15 lines of diagnostic questioning omitted))

21	Doc:	Are you the mother.
22	Clr:	No, I'm the next door neighbor.h .h
23	Doc:	Right.
24	Clr:	The mother's lookin' after the baby at the
25		moment. hh .hh
26	Doc:	An' she's- I see. Okay doke.

The caller is phoning on behalf of a neighbour, and although she discloses this early on in the call (1), the doctor does not consider it when he checks a few seconds later if the caller is the mother (21), thus orienting to the normative standardised pair of 'baby' and 'mother'.

This generates not only a reminder of the category by the caller (22) but also, after a minimal response of the doctor, not progressing in the call (23), an explicit account about the whereabouts of the baby's mother (24–25), orienting to the possible moral implications of the fact that it is not the mother who calls. The doctor's final response (26) treats that explanation as providing for the necessary accountability of the circumstances of the call. On the basis of such cases, Kitzinger (2005a: 495) highlighted the fact that the normative orientation to heterosexuality and family generates 'interactional trouble' when it is breached, causing hitches, repairs, and inserted sequences that make the call more complex and delay its progressivity. This is particularly striking in cases in which a gay person or a lesbian calls on behalf of their partner (Land and Kitzinger 2005).

Heterosexual normativity can surface in multiple ways, inclusive when the category of 'heterosexual' is explicitly addressed. In a study of survey questions made at the end of calls to a health information public service, Ostermann (2017) pointed at the difficulty raised by explicit questions about the heterosexuality of the caller, originally designed by the institution as a Wh-question, 'What is your sexual orientation?', but most frequently transformed by the person doing the survey into a polar question, 'Are you heterosexual?'. The yes/no interrogative is clearly biased towards heterosexuality as being the norm and projects a preferred positive answer. Nonetheless, the callers' responses showed a variety of troubles. Whereas a few answers are straightforwardly positive and are not problematised, leading to closing, the responses most frequently showed delays, hesitations, and in-breaths. In these cases, even when the caller responded, it occasioned the initiation of a repair by the call-taker:

Extract 3 (from Ostermann 2017: 357)

1	CT:	ce::rto (.) .h e: po- en↓t~ao senhora- (.) a senhora
		oka::y (.) .h ah: you so- ↓okay mam- (.) do you
2		se considera heteressexu↑al
		consider yourself heterosexu↑al
3		(1.4)
4	CR:	n~a:o
		no:
5		(0.6)
6	CT:	heterossexual senhora e a pessoa que tem afinidade pelo
		heterosexual mam is a person who has affinity with the
7		sexo o↑posto >ou seja a mulher ter afinidade
		opposite ↑sex. >in other words< the woman who has affinity
8		por um homem<
		with a ↑man.
9	CR:	a: ent~ao sim (hh) eu n~ao entendi muito bem
		oh: then yes (hh) I hadn't understood it very well
10		(.)
11	CT:	oque:i senhora ent~ao o ministerio da saude agra↑dece
		oka:y mam then the ministry of health thanks you

The question (1–2) is answered after a delay (3) by the caller with a stretched negative particle (4). After a gap (5), instead of accepting the answer, the call-taker provides an explanation of the meaning of 'heterosexual', which is first defined using a generic term ('pessoa'/'person') and then exemplified from the perspective of a woman ('mulher') as being attracted by a man, which is recipient oriented towards the gender attributed to the caller. The explanation is responded to by a change-of-state token ('a:'/'oh:' 9) and an account. This is treated by the call-taker as operating a repair of the initial response and is followed by a close of the sequence and of the call.

In these calls, the category 'heterosexual' is often misunderstood, and most often rejected; moreover, negative answers are not taken seriously by the call-taker, who often initiates repair, finally leading to a revision of the initial answer (Ostermann 2017). These cases reveal that the use of an explicit category for referring to the taken-for-granted norm generates interactional trouble, showing that naming the norm is not a straightforward matter (a number of callers actually understood the category as referring to homosexuality).

Descriptions of conduct in institutional settings also show normative orientations to gender categories, which are alluded to and inferred rather than explicitly used. This is the case with trials and police interrogations, where the choice of words for describing victims and offenders matters for their intelligibility and morality. For instance, Wowk (1984) showed how a murderer describing the victim's behaviour as 'sexual propositioning' produced moral inferences about 'what kind of girl' she was, thus shifting blame onto her. Likewise, Drew (1992) showed how an attorney (A) interrogating a victim of an alleged rape (W) used descriptions of what happened that were biased towards blameable conduct:

Extract 4 (From Drew 1992: 489/ex. 12)

1	A:	it's where uh (.) uh <u>g</u>i:rls and fe<u>ll</u>a:s <u>meet</u> isn't it?
2		(0.9)
3	W:	people go: there.

Extract 5 (From Drew 1992: 489/ex. 13)

1	A:	an' d<u>u</u>ring that eve:<u>ning:</u> (0.6 s) uh: didn't Mistuh ((name))
2		come over tuh <u>sit</u> with <u>y</u>ou
3		(0.8)
4	W:	sat at our <u>t</u>able.

Drew commented that, although all of the questions were designed to elicit a yes/no answer, the victim neither confirmed nor disconfirmed, but instead provided for an alternative description. These descriptions resisted the inferences that characterised the first formulations, which were hinting at portraying the bar where the fact happened as a place for sexual encounters (extract 12, l.1) and the relation with the offender as established and consented (extract 13, l.1–2), Instead, the revised version by W provided for a more neutral and less morally loaded version.

A similar case was evoked by Edwards (1998: 29) showing how gendered inferences are mobilised in marriage guidance counselling, where the wife explains in front of her jealous husband what a 'girls night out' is, describing it as 'it's all married women talking about our kids'; that is, a non-sexualised event, involving category-bound activities related to 'married women' and 'family' (see also Stokoe and Edward 2011 about similar gendered inferences in complaints about problematic neighbour behaviour).

In sum, categorisation practices are made relevant in specific sequential environments in doing certain types of actions, and the sequential organisation further confirms their establishment or their rejection, as well as their accountability relative to the issues at stake. Participant orientations to the relevance of a category are visible in the way they produce a next turn or action that might align or disalign with the previous and display acceptance or resistance towards the inferences and consequences of the categories used. In this sense, categorisation analysis fundamentally relies on sequential analysis.

Sequential organisation and the relevance of gender

Categories are sequentially relevant (Schegloff 1991): the details of sequential organisation manifest convergent or divergent categorical orientations of the participants. CA's vision of situated actions in interaction is based on the principle of sequentiality, which refers to the moment-by-moment stepwise emergent organisation of turns-at-talk and actions through which a speaker or a doer not only formats their actions, but also locally and reflexively adjusts to possible incipient responses of the co-participants (Goodwin 1979). In this sense, 'why that now?' and 'what next?' are questions through which participants monitor the progression of an ongoing action as well as the provision of a response (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973; Schegloff 2007). Reponses display alignment or disalignment, affiliation or disaffiliation, and exhibit retrospectively their interpretation of the previous turn. The progressivity of the encounter can be delayed and stopped at any moment to address troubles of hearing, of understanding, or of acceptability, thanks to the practices of repair and correction (Schegloff et al. 1977; Schegloff 1992).

Interactional troubles are often related to gender categorisations and descriptions. These troubles are handled by practices of repair and correction, which are pervasive phenomena that significantly reveal participant orientations to gender relevance and norms, displayed in their use and repair of pronouns, lexical items, and categories. Given that a rich array of CA studies deals with repair as revealing normative orientations to gender (e.g. Land and Kitzinger 2005; Stokoe 2011; Weatherell 2002b about children's disputes concerning the gender of a doll; Weatherall 2015), this section exemplifies a few issues on the basis of this literature.

Jefferson's distinction (1983) between 'embedded' and 'exposed' correction has been fruitful to show how (hetero)sexist presumptions are handled by co-participants. In the former, the problematic item simply gets subsequently replaced and therefore minimised, while in the latter, the correction becomes the main business of the ongoing turn. For instance, Ekberg and Ekberg (2017) showed how patients sometimes challenged sexist presumptions of healthcare professionals, such as by correcting a reference to an unknown doctor referred to as 'he' or an unknown nurse referred to as 'she'. An example of embedded correction is given here:

Extract 6 (from Ekberg and Ekberg 2017, from ex. 7)

17	CLI:	I've been seeing **my doctor** about them
18		for years and was reluctant to
19		believe that there was no physical
20		cause, but eventually relented.
21	The:	So **he** has suggested you speak to
22		someone to try and get to the bottom
23		of whether there is an anxiety link?
24	Cli:	Yes, **she** thinks I'm suffering from

25 anxiety and depression. I think
26 **she**'s probably right, although I
27 feel the anxiety probably started first...

The client used the category ‘the doctor’ (17) without disclosing her gender, but the therapist supposed that the doctor was a man (21) in the next question. The patient first responded to the question (‘yes’ 24) and then elaborated on it while providing an embedded correction of the therapist’s gender presumption, referring to ‘the doctor’ with the pronoun ’she’ (24). The use of the embedded correction did not disrupt the ongoing action; indeed, the correction was not responded to by the therapist.

Likewise, Stringer and Hopper (1998) identified the use of ‘pseudo-generics’, routinely assuming that the referent is male, although they could be female. Some of these default assumptions are simply ignored; that is, not treated as a source of trouble and not repaired. Others are corrected, as in the following case:

Extract 7 (abbreviated from Stringer and Hopper, 1998: 214)

1 AVA: Well- what’d HE say
2 BEV: He is a she- and everything’s fine

Ava uses the pronoun ‘he’ to refer to the doctor. Bev’s response orients and first treats this assumption with an exposed correction (‘he is a she’ 2) and only then answers the question. Bev still minimises the disruption of the activity, by immediately continuing her turn with an answer to the prior question. From this, we get a sense of the work participants do in order to both correct erroneous assumptions and maintain the progressivity of the activity.

Land and Kitzinger (2005), studying phone calls made by lesbians to institutions, showed that in calls to unknown persons they referred to their partners by routinely selecting gender-neutral terms (‘partner’, ’spouse’) rather than the gender-specific ones selected by heterosexuals. This often occasions later repairs when the call-taker interprets the ‘spouse’ within a heteronormative conception of the couple, as in this case:

Extract 8 (Land and Kitzinger, 2005: 396–397)

13 (10.5)
14 Jan: .hhh I’m wanting insurance fo:r uhm: (.) ,
15 two named drivers self and **spous:e.=**
16 Clt: Yeah< ‘v cou:rse.
17 (13.0)
18 Clt: (Right) I’ve got you down as a doctor. Do
19 you have the use of any other vehicle
20 within the househo:ld.
21 Jan: Yes I do.
22 (0.8)
23 Clt: An: (.) you said you’d like to insure
24 **your husband** to drive the car.
25 Jan: mcht Uh:::m **It’s not my husband it’s my**
26 **wi:fe** and yes I would l[ike t-]
27 Clt: [Oh I do] beg your pardon.
28 Jan: I would like to insure her.

29 Clt: Yep >thank you<
30 (11.5)
31 Clt: ('Kay) Could I take **your wife's** name please.

Janice had requested an insurance for 'self and spouse' (15), which is a formulation that does not give any explicit information about the gender of the spouse. Later on, the salesperson referred to 'your husband' (24) in a quotative turn referring back to what Janice just said, interpreting and transforming it, assuming Janice's spouse was male and presuming her heterosexuality. Janice proceeded to an exposed correction (25–26), with the effect that the negotiation of the insurance – for which the salesperson turn was a preliminary – was momentarily suspended: the sequence was now devoted to the correction. Janice's turn beginning ('mcht Uh:::m' 25) displayed that a problem was surfacing. She initiated repair by naming the repairable ('it's not my husband' 25) and then correcting the category ('it's my wife' 25–26). Then she immediately moved on with the response to the previous question ('and yes I would like' 26), with an and-prefaced continuation (see the same practice in extract 7, l. 2). So even if Janice operated an exposed correction, she minimised the sequential consequences by resuming and progressing in the activity. But the salesperson in overlap responded to the correction – possibly treating it as complainable – and apologised (27). We notice that again Janice did not respond to the apology and came back to business. The salesperson displayed realignment by using the category 'your wife' in the subsequent management of the request (31).

Not only other-corrections, but also self-repairs and corrections, are significant displays of normative orientations to gender, revealing ongoing possible inferential processes to which the speakers orient. For example, Stokoe (2011) discussed 'marked self-repairs' that showed how the speaker realised, as the production of their turn was in progress, that improper inferences were possibly produced by the initial choice of a category ('girl'), occasioning a self-repair into another category ('woman'), accompanied by an apology ('sorry'). This exhibits the speaker becoming locally 'gender aware' in the course of his action, orienting to the possible offensive character of 'girl' vs. 'woman' (Stokoe 2011: 99). Interestingly, if this is the case of marked self-repairs (as in 'you didn't– (0.2) y'didn't admit. to this girl then. (.) °that-° this woman >sorry< that uh:: you punched 'er door.'), alternative formulations ('girl or woman') display lower commitment and minimal orientation to the difference between the two categories (Stokoe 2011: 105).

Describing the emergent process through which 'gender creeps into talk', Hopper and LeBaron (1998) also showed how speakers might suddenly notice the relevance of gender and focus on it, as in the following example:

Extract 9 (from Hopper and LeBaron, 1998: 69)

1 Jill: I've signed up for one of those informal classes about
2 car maintenance and repair.
3 Pip: That's a good idea. A lot of women can really learn a
4 lot from these classes
5 ((short pause))
6 Pip: Well, I guess there's a lot of guys who can learn from
7 'em too.

As Hopper and LeBaron noticed, Jill's announcement contained a possible 'implicit indexing of gender' (1998: 69). Pip's response established a categorical link between the kind of class mentioned by Jill and a gender category (‘women’ 3). But the pause in which Jill did not respond and did not align with it occasioned Pip’s reselection, in which she revised her previous stereotypical gender association (6–7).

A final instance of self-repair is observable in the next extract:

Extract 10 (from Ekberg and Ekberg 2017, ex.8)

01	Aud:	I said the ↑only other thing I
02		wanted to do:: was <write a letter>
03		to **the gee pee**:,
04	Cli:	Yeah
05	Aud:	just for **him** to sign **>him or her<** to sign,
06	Cli:	Yeah

As commented on by Ekberg and Ekberg (2017), the audiologist first referred to the client’s doctor with the gender-neutral ‘GP’ (3) and then continued with a pronoun. He used the masculine form first, continuing to progress into his turn, but then quickly suspended the turn and inserted a retrospective self-repair (‘>him or her<’ 5) before resuming it. The client here minimally acknowledged the turn (6).

> With this repair, the audiologist retrospectively displays that she is unaware of the gender of the client’s GP. In addition, she displays recognition of the gender presumption she has just made, and an intention to correct it. This conduct establishes the audiologist as someone who is sufficiently “gender aware” (Stokoe 2011) to realise that she has made a presumption and is able to correct it.
>
> *(Ekberg and Ekberg 2017: 11)*

Repairs and corrections are practices that have been largely studied in CA approaches of gender because they index in exemplary ways how participants orient to categories and manifest normative gender assumptions. The way in which these practices are formatted and sequentially positioned show how speakers not only minimise or exhibit gender inappropriateness, but also how they embed these concerns in the ongoing activity in ways that occasion disruptures and suspensions or, quite the opposite, minimise them. This, in turn, maximises or limits the possibility for the co-participant to respond, in some cases minimising the slot for doing so. The detailed organisation of sequentiality shows here again the subtle and differentiated orientations that participants can display to gender issues.

Conclusion

The chapter has reviewed the original contributions EMCA offered to gender, insisting on the lessons gathered in the field from the perspective on action and interaction as a continuous practical accomplishment, on social interaction as making locally relevant specific categorisation devices, and on interaction as sequentially organised in detailed ways.

Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis have introduced a perspective in social sciences, anthropology, communication, and linguistics that is radically focused on the situated activities of the participants. This emphasis on the centrality of action, on its detailed organisation, its systematicity as well as its situatedness, provides for a specific perspective on gender. It highlights how gender creeps into the smaller details of talk and how this is accountable and recognisable by the way participants orient and respond to it. It also highlights the options co-participants have to respond to these relevancies, assumptions, categories, and to do so in minimal or exhibited ways, aligning or disaligning, affiliating or disaffiliating with the previous action and its presuppositions. This shows how social order in general, and gender normativity in particular, are both reproduced and challenged or reinvented in a diversity of settings, being constantly built, reproduced, subverted, and transformed through micro-sequential accomplishments.

Conventions

The transcription conventions adopted here are those provided by Gail Jefferson for talk (2004).

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17

Feminist conversation analysis

Examining violence against women

Emma Tennent and Ann Weatherall

Introduction

Conversation analysis is a rigorous methodology for feminist analyses of gender, language, and sexuality. Its focus on the accomplishment of actions in naturally occurring social interaction is different from other approaches to gender and language. Aspects of a conversation analytic mentality have been critiqued by both feminists and language scholars for constraining the study of gender and communication. Nevertheless, we show that a sustained focus on the minutiae of social interaction and close attention to what people say and how they say it in the service of action can further advance knowledge about key feminist concerns including gender, power, identity, and oppression.

Conversation analysis influenced some of the earliest research on gender and language. For example, by analysing patterns of turn-taking in couples' talk, Zimmerman and West (1975) reported that men interrupted women more frequently than the inverse. However, 'feminist conversation analysis' was only coined at the turn of the century by Kitzinger (2000), who promoted it for feminist research. For some critics, conversation analysis' objective empirical approach is ill-fitted for investigations with a political, feminist stance (Speer 1999; Whelan 2012). Yet using conversation analysis need not preclude political views. We share Kitzinger's position on the value of bringing feminism and conversation analysis together. It is our view that feminist conversation analysis offers a productive methodology for the field of gender and language research.

The research we present in this chapter demonstrates a conversation analytic approach to the study of violence against women. As feminist scholars, we are concerned with the gendered meanings of victimhood, and the difficulties women face in disclosing violence and seeking support from institutions. As conversation analysts, we examine these questions using recorded data from real-life interactions where women seek help from a victim support helpline. A focus on the details of interaction can yield novel insights into how the meanings of victimhood are negotiated when the relevant actions are callers seeking help and call-takers delivering services. Empirical findings can then be applied to improve services, thereby making a practical difference for women seeking support from violence.

Conversation analysis and participants' orientations

Conversation analysis is an empirical, observational method that examines how social life is organised to produce shared meaning and accomplish coordinated action. Despite its name, conversation analysis examines more than just talk. Data are recordings and transcripts of 'talk-in-interaction' which includes what people do and say, movements of the body, and interaction with the environment. A foundational assumption is that people are competent 'members of a culture' (that is, parties or participants) who go about their daily lives with an understanding of how the social world works. The aim of conversation analysis is to explain *how* members build and recognise actions that result in a remarkable coordination in the accomplishment of everyday activities. To that end, analytic observations are grounded in the detail of actual social interactions, with a focus on what participants do and how they do it. As feminist scholars using conversation analysis, one key interest is in how sex, gender, and identity are accomplished through the practices of everyday life.

Conversation analysis is concerned with people's own understandings of what they and others are doing in social interaction. In technical terms, this is referred to as 'participants' orientations'. What participants treat as relevant is precisely (in fact, only) what conversation analysts attend to when analysing the interaction. For example, whether talking at the same time as someone else is an interruption is not for analysts to decide, but something participants display – on the spot – as part of the ongoing interaction (Weatherall and Edmonds 2018).

One way to determine participants' orientations is through the 'next turn proof procedure'. This procedure is based on the principle that the way someone responds in a next turn of talk displays their understanding of what was happening in the previous turn. In the extracts presented below, we show how call-takers' turns display an understanding of callers' turns which preceded them. We also present a case where the next-turn proof procedure is not available as an analytic tool (when the recipient does not take a next turn of talk). Nonetheless, we show how callers' actions are built in ways that demonstrate their orientations to how their turns will be understood and responded to by others.

Focusing on participants' own words and what they are demonstrably doing is one way to conduct feminist research that examines people's lived experiences in their own terms (Kitzinger 2000), but the analytic focus of participants' orientations has been controversial for feminist conversation analysis. One critique is that examining participants' orientations cannot speak to the sociopolitical, cultural, and historical contexts of gender and power (Whelan 2012). However, Schegloff (1997: 167) argued that analysts who treat their concerns as more important than participants' are engaged in 'theoretical imperialism'. He was responding directly to feminist language research that presupposed the relevance of gender or sexuality when analysing speakers' ways of talking and behaving. Just because participants *can* be categorised as men or women doesn't mean these are legitimate analytic categories to make sense of how they act. The very same participants could just as easily be categorised based on their age, occupations, food preferences, hair styles, and so on. Schegloff argued that it is not legitimate to pick out gender identities from this list, just because the analyst happens to be interested in gender. Instead, conversation analysts examine the identities that *participants* treat as important, and demonstrate how these identities are used by the participants to make sense of the interaction they're involved in.

Examining participants' orientations does not, as some critics might have it, limit analysis to apolitical descriptions of technical phenomena. Nor does a political feminist analysis necessarily compromise conversation analysis' theoretical roots (see Wowk 2007 for a critique). Instead, feminist conversation analysis can provide a disciplined approach for investigating how sociocultural matters such as gender, sexuality, identity, and power are visibly relevant as participants build and interpret their social worlds and progress daily activities. A feminist interest in gender and power can be valid if analysts do not assume how or where this will become manifest in the data, but instead undertake to demonstrate *that* and *how* their feminist interests are noticed and used by participants (Speer 2012). The following section presents some illustrative examples of the emerging field of work at the intersection of feminism and conversation analysis.

A brief review of feminist conversation analytic research

A conversation analytic approach has been used productively by feminist scholars to examine a variety of issues. Below we present three strands of research that utilise conversation analytic methodology to examine feminist concerns. First, feminist conversation analysis has demonstrated how gender and sexuality operate as normative, ordinary parts of social life and how everyday oppression works by sanctioning certain identities and behaviours as non-normative. Second, conversation analysis can be used to examine participants' orientations to common-sense cultural knowledge about the gendered social and moral world. Finally, grounded insights about the workings of the social word have been used to consider effective interventions for social change, and develop services to provide practical help for people in need.

Analysing everyday oppression

A key aim of conversation analysis is to understand the methods members use in 'being an ordinary person' (Sacks 1984: 415); in other words, how people as culturally competent members of society go about their everyday lives accomplishing actions with others and interacting with the physical and social world. Conversation analysts examine the resources used by participants to build and interpret in/equality in diverse settings. For example, analysts have documented how turn-taking is organised in large political meetings to support democratic participation (Mondada 2012).

Building on foundational ethnomethodological approaches to gender (e.g. Kessler and McKenna 1978), feminist conversation analysis has demonstrated how gender and sexuality are part and parcel of common-sense knowledge. Certain ways of being in the social world are treated as ordinary and unremarkable, while others can be subject to scrutiny. For example, from a young age, children use the notion of gender differences to assess whether others' behaviours are acceptable or not (Weatherall 2002).

One notable programme of research has demonstrated how heterosexuality manifests in interaction as ordinary and unremarkable, while homosexuality is treated as non-normative. For example, a heterosexual person may mention in passing a 'wife' or a 'husband', making their sexuality available to listeners while engaged in another activity entirely (Kitzinger 2005). When lesbian women do the same thing, their recipients treat them as 'displaying' their sexuality and may apologise for assuming they were heterosexual (Land and Kitzinger 2005). It is through these everyday practices, Kitzinger argued, that oppression is built, maintained, or potentially challenged.

Conversation analysis can document the linguistic practices that underlie structures of inequality, and how these can be challenged or undermined. One way to observe challenges to widespread understandings about gender and sexuality is through the technical practice of repair, where participants correct their own or others' talk. Simply shifting pronouns can work to undermine sexist presumptions, such as doctors being male (Ekberg and Ekberg 2017). Speakers can interrupt their own turn or others' to change an exclusive masculine reference term, 'he', to more gender-inclusive references (Weatherall 2015). Correcting sexist assumptions or orienting to gender-exclusive language are members' practices for challenging what counts as normal.

Culture and the gendered social-moral order

Feminist conversation analysis can study the gendered social-moral order by demonstrating how participants understand sex, gender, and sexuality in diverse but ordinary settings. Examples include the way a cross-gender identity can be accomplished by children when playing during school break-time (Butler and Weatherall 2011) and identifying the interactional organisation of sex categorisation of a child soon after they have been born (Lindström, Näslund, and Rubertsson 2015).

Analytically, gender as a social construction can be studied through participants' actual use of description and categorisation in talk, two practices linked to common-sense knowledge and moral beliefs. Any person, object, or event can be described and categorised in an almost infinite number of ways. This means that any actual description or categorisation will be selective. Category terms are a store of common-sense knowledge (Schegloff 2007), and a way participants make moral judgements, of which gendered expectations can play a large part (Stokoe 2006, 2010). Examining how participants describe people and events, and the categories they choose, effectively provides a window into the working of gendered culture in action.

The link between categories, activities, and inferences is a key way participants manage gender and morality in practice. The same people can be categorised in different ways, depending on which aspects the speaker highlights or downplays. For example, a husband's description of his wife's 'girls' night out' invoked the activities of heavy drinking and flirting with men, while she described the same people as 'married women' who merely talked about their children in order to defend against his accusation (Edwards 1998). Certain activities are culturally understood as 'proper' for some category members, but not for others. For example, complaining neighbours described 'improper' activities for a mother as staying out late and leaving children alone, invoking normative gender expectations and moral judgements (Stokoe and Edwards 2012). Perpetrators of domestic violence used the same category-based moral logic, such as describing partners as unfaithful or untidy to implicitly justify their violence (Le Couteur and Oxlad 2011). Even without naming a category directly, participants can use the link between activities and categories to let others infer moral judgements. For example, a man confessing to murder described how his victim had propositioned him for sex, letting his listeners make judgements about 'what kind of girl' she was based on the unspoken category of 'prostitute' (Wowk 1984).

Interventions and social change

According to Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2014: 154), an 'essential prerequisite' for feminists advocating social change 'is an accurate understanding of how the world is now', and conversation analysis provides an empirical basis of knowledge about the social world and how participants understand it. A grounded focus on interaction can avoid many of the pitfalls of other language-based intervention programmes. For example, Kitzinger and Frith (1999) critiqued the feminist consent slogan 'just say no' as based on a mistaken belief about how talk works. Conversation analysis has shown that refusals overwhelmingly occur without the word 'no' at all, and regularly include features such as accounts, delays, and mitigations. Although well-intentioned, date-rape prevention programmes that advise women not to hesitate, make excuses, or give explanations require women to violate culturally shared norms for doing refusals, making these campaigns arguably misguided.

Support services can also be improved through a detailed analysis of how they operate by examining audio, or if possible, video recordings of what they do in practice. Concepts like 'empathy' and 'empowerment' that are often central to feminist support services can be better understood by grounding what they mean in actual practices. For example, research on the UK Birth Crisis Helpline has documented how feminist principles of women-to-women support, advocacy, and empathy are accomplished through talk-in-interaction. Well-established findings show that finishing someone else's turn of talk can be used to show shared understanding (Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2014) and assessments of a caller's situation can demonstrate empathy (Kitzinger and Kitzinger 2007). In our own research, we intend to adapt our research findings into evidence-based training to help the organisation better respond to the needs of women who have experienced violence. A turn-by-turn analysis of *how* women ask for help in this context not only contributes to scholarly examination of the difficulty of disclosing violence (see Jordan 2004) but has practical applications. Training programmes such as the conversation analytic role-play method (CARM) have been developed to translate analytic findings to improve service-delivery across institutions (Stokoe 2014). In our own work we assume a sound first step to develop processes that effectively meet the needs of victims of violence is to examine what actually happens when they attempt to secure support.

Using conversation analysis to study violence against women

Violence against women is an issue of long-standing feminist concern, and has been approached from a number of academic and activist perspectives. Using a conversation analytic approach, we examine real-life interactions in which women turn to a victim support agency for help. Our analysis of calls to this service reveals *how* women disclose violence and negotiate the meanings of victimhood, while shedding light on the actual practices involved in women's engagement with support services and the justice system. With a focus on participants' descriptions and categorisations, we demonstrate how they invoke common-sense knowledge about victims of violence. Our findings broadly align with other feminist research that points to a set of cultural beliefs about violence which structure and maintain a gendered social-moral order that functions to disadvantage women.

Our data are calls to a New Zealand community organisation which offers practical advice and emotional support to victims of crime and trauma. A call-centre is the first point of contact and operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call-takers connect callers to support workers or transfer them to alternative agencies. Calls are routinely recorded for training purposes, and the organisation amended their pre-recorded message and online privacy statement for us to inform callers that recordings could be used for university research purposes. To ensure confidentiality, identifying information such as names and addresses have been edited from the sound-files and replaced with pseudonyms on the transcripts.

The organisation initially provided us with a sample of 48 calls, and we subsequently collected a purposive sample of all calls across a seven-day period. In total, our sample consists of 396 calls and over 23 hours of recordings. We listened to each call and catalogued them with a unique identifying number, brief summary, and keywords. Calls were indexed based on details like length, gender of caller, reason for the call, and call outcome to create a searchable database. Calls were transcribed following conversation analytic conventions that capture the details of interaction such as silences, overlapping talk, intonation, and speed (Hepburn 2004; Jefferson 2004). A transcription key is provided at the end of the chapter.

Listening to recordings and examining transcripts, we familiarised ourselves with the data in a process called unmotivated looking. Rather than beginning with a hypothesis, searching for a specific phenomenon, or presupposing gender underpins what people are saying, we approached the data with an open – albeit feminist – stance. Although we were interested in women and victimhood, we did not presuppose its relevance for callers seeking help.

An initial observation was that callers contacted the service for many different reasons and presented their problems in different ways. From this observation, we set out to collect instances where callers identified themselves and presented their problems. This can occur in many places, but in the cases below we focus on the opening moments of the call. We were interested in the different ways callers presented themselves as victims of gendered violence, and so narrowed our focus to cases regarding sexual or domestic violence. The organisation is a generic victim support service, and so only 57 calls concern sexual or domestic violence, which formed our subset for analysis. For each case, we examined how caller and call-taker reached a joint understanding of caller as a victim of violence. We found that callers regularly used description and categorisation to identify themselves and present their problem, and that common-sense cultural knowledge was a resource for call-takers to make inferences about callers and their circumstances. Below we present three cases that show different ways callers described themselves and their problems.

The opening of a call is an important moment where participants identify themselves and establish the reason for the call. It is also the first opportunity for callers to describe their experiences and ask for help. Extract 1 shows the routine opening contact service workers (CONTCT) are trained to use,[1] and the way the caller responds.

Extract 1

01	CONTCT:	kia ora victim support this is Claire
02		(1.4)
03	CALLER:	.hh oh hi um my name's Leanne Alweather .hh um (0.2)
04		I: had s- (0.6) dealt with you guys befo:re um with
05		problems at ho:me .hh and um (0.8) the: lady that
06		I did deal with and I can't remember her name she did
07		put me on to .hh a (.) um lawyer? .hh (0.8) and (0.8)
08		yeah I was just w- (0.2) wanting to find out inf- (0.2)
09		the lawyer's name again hh
10		(0.8)
11	CONTCT:	o:h okay (0.8) o:h (0.6) what- what's your name please?

The caller first provides her name (a pseudonym) and then categorises herself as a client of the service. She does this by describing that she has 'dealt with you guys befo:re' (line 4), which identifies herself as someone who has previously used victim support services.

The caller also provides the reason for her prior contact with the description of ‘problems at ho:me’ (line 5). Already, just a few moments into the interaction, the caller’s description of herself as a client who has problems at home provides resources for the contact service worker to understand her circumstances. In the context of this victim support service, someone who is a client is a victim of either crime or trauma. This means the contact service worker can understand ‘problems at home’ as a description of victimisation. There are a range of possible crimes and trauma that could occur at home, such as burglary, fire, or death of a loved one, but the caller’s word selection ‘problems’ could suggest an ongoing situation.

The contact service worker asks for the caller’s name (line 11) to retrieve her casefile from the database. This next turn ratifies the caller’s identity as a client of the service. The contact service worker thus displays an understanding that the caller’s ‘problems’ constitute victimisation. Common-sense cultural knowledge about the kind of problems that occur at home, coupled with the caller’s request for a lawyer, makes inferences available about the nature of the caller’s problem. These inferences are confirmed later in the call, when the caller explains that the call may be possibly cut off (Extract 1a).

Extract 1a

21	CONTCT:	°okay thank [you°]
22	CALLER:	[and if] I if I hang up on ya it’s cos my
23		husband’s come home .HH HHUH .hhh
24	CONTCT:	°oh(h) right°

The category term ‘husband’ (line 23) displays that the caller is in a married relationship, and invokes her paired identity as a wife (Sacks 1972). Category terms act as a store of cultural common-sense knowledge, in this case allowing the contact service worker to make inferences about the caller and her circumstances. Both descriptions (of ‘problems’ and the consequences of her husband’s return) are linked to the location ‘home’ (line 5; 23). Note also the breathiness (marked by capital ‘h’ line at 23) that represents the callers’ loud exhale of breath, a nonverbal way of displaying emotional stance (Potter and Hepburn 2010).

Common-sense knowledge about married couples is that they live together in a shared family home. Generally, home is understood as a place ‘where one belongs, whose presence there is not accountable’ (Schegloff 1972: 98). Yet for this caller, home is where her problems (i.e. victimisation) occur, and she *does* account for her husband coming home and the consequences that would entail. The two activities (a husband returning home and a wife hanging up the phone) are not conventionally linked together, but if the categories are morally qualified (Cuff 1993), for example into ‘abusive husband’ and ‘victimised wife’, then the caller’s description makes sense. Although she never says the words ‘victim’ or ‘violence’ directly, the categories she uses and the activities she describes allows the inference that she is a victim of domestic violence perpetrated by her husband. By responding with ‘oh right’ (line 24) in the next turn, the contact service worker displays an understanding of this as an account (rather than asking why or querying the caller’s explanation).

In the following extract, another caller describes her experiences in quite a different way. In contrast to Extract 1 and 1a, this caller refers to herself using the category ‘victim’. Nevertheless, her first description of how she came to contact the service also provides inferences about her identity and the nature of her experiences.

Extract 2

CONTCT:	kia ora victim support Molly speaking
	(0.6)
CALLER:	.hh hey Molly: um: it’s Mara here I’m just
	ringing up um (0.6) hey: u:h look I’ve just got
	one of these um pamphlets from the: Taura drive
	police station?
CONTCT:	mhm?=
CALLER:	=Ngawhare? ((place name))
	(1.0)
CALLER:	and um I was just reading <through it> u:m (0.8)
	y’know for victim information,
	(0.2)
CALLER:	if um: (0.4) if I feel that (.) myself an:d (1.0)
	my son are victims of psychological abuse o:r
	(0.6) some sort of you know (0.4) um (1.0) >how do
	you say it< um (1.0) u-uh::h: abuse (.) (of/or) (.)
	like THREAt,
	(0.4)
CONTCT:	mhm
CALLER:	you know like um (1.4) you know like I’m being
	threatened that (0.2) you know like (0.6) I’m not
	allowed to: (0.8) leave with my so:n from the address?

Like the caller in Extract 1, this caller returns the contact service worker’s greeting and introduces herself by name. She begins to describe what it is she is ‘just ringing up’ for (lines 3–4), but abandons this turn-in-progress to instead describe how she found out about the service. In contrast to the caller in Extract 1 who described her prior dealings with the organisation to identify herself as a client, the caller here presents herself as a first-time service-seeker by describing how she found out about the service.

Yet even in her description of how she came to call the organisation, the caller presents herself as a potential client, which in this case means a victim. She refers to the place she found a pamphlet about victim support as the ‘police station’ (line 6). Like ‘home’ in Extract 1, this description of place invokes inferences that the contact service worker can use to make sense of the caller’s identity and the nature of her problem. Police stations are places associated with certain activities (e.g. reporting a crime) and certain categories of people such as police officers, suspects, witnesses, and victims (Dingemanse, Rossi, and Floyd 2017; Schegloff 1972). That the caller is looking for ‘victim information’ (line 11) implies she is a victim, and that she is doing so in such a place suggests police involvement, lending her the legitimacy of being recognised by a criminal justice institution.

The caller’s description of looking for victim information implicitly categorises her as a victim. The caller goes on to to explicitly categorise herself and her son as ‘victims’ (line 14) but pauses throughout her turn (line 13) to display some difficulty in formulating her experiences. By describing someone as ‘my son’ (line 14), the caller categorises herself as a mother. These two categories are paired together, but can also be grouped in the wider collection of categories, ‘family’. Following the consistency rule of categorisation (Sacks 1972), if two members of a family are victims, it is consistent to categorise the perpetrator within this same collection. In other words, the perpetrator of violence against mother and son is also a family member. The caller invokes the common-sense knowledge that family members live together in a shared home when she describes her problem as being unable to leave with her son (line 21–22). As with Extract 1, the location of the caller's problems and the categories of people involved make inferentially available that the problem is about domestic or family violence. The contact service worker provides only minimal responses (lines 7, 19), rather than taking a full turn of talk which would display her understanding of the caller's description. Nonetheless, the caller describes her situation in ways that makes domestic violence inferentially available, displaying her understanding of a relevant reason to seek help from the victim support service.

In the third extract, a caller specifies that she is ringing about a 'court appearance' (line 4–5). Courts (like police stations) are settings that allow recipients to infer certain people and activities (Dingemanse, Rossi, and Floyd 2017) such as lawyers, judges, offenders, and so on. In the context of seeking court information from a victim support agency, this description identifies the caller as a victim in the criminal justice system, a societal institution that has been the target of considerable feminist critique for re-victimising women (see Jordan 2004).

Extract 3

01	CONTCT:	kia ora victim support Molly speaking
02		(0.6)
03	CALLER:	.hh hullo Molly it's Taydi Letonen speaking, .hh
04		Molly I'm ringing with regard to um tch a court
05		appearance .hhh of Dayton Matthew Fenterwild
06		today in relation to a breach of protection order?
07		(0.2)
08	CALLER:	.hhh um it's got to: hh. now and I- .hh there was
09		a note to be made on the file by uhm (.) Stephen,
10		from the Norswith police .hhh uh rather than the
11		co:urts ring me they were going to ring me. hh
12		(0.2) uhm (.) >immediately as soon as he'd< been
13		dealt with (.) as far as l-like whether he was
14		released or in fact there were bail conditions!
15	CONTCT:	mh[m,]
16	CALLER:	[.h]hh
17		(0.4)
18	CALLER:	and I haven't (0.4) ah heard anything yet and I'm
19		just starting >to get a little bit< (0.2)
20		[worried (about) where I'll] stay
21	CONTCT:	[yeah no that's all good]
22		(0.2)
23	CALLER:	[plan]
24	CONTCT:	[so what I-] d- what I will do: is I'll pop you
25		↑↑through to the police non emergency number,

By naming the person involved (line 5), the caller identifies the referent without making explicit her relationship with him (contrast this with Extract 1a's use of 'husband').

Nevertheless, her description of a ‘breach of protection order’ (line 6) provides inferences about the named person and the nature of her victimisation. Protection orders are granted by the New Zealand family court in cases of domestic or family violence. Thus, the recipient (and analysts) can infer that the named man breached a protection order *against the caller* and appeared in court *on that charge.* Common-sense knowledge about when protection orders are given allows the inference that the named man is either a family member or (ex-) partner of the caller; and the perpetrator of violence against her.

The caller’s reference to time is an important way that she presents the urgency of her problem. The court appearance was ‘today’ (line 6), but at the time of the call, she is yet to receive the information she was promised. Note the sound-stretch and exhalation on line 8 before the caller describes the present time, ‘now’, and the way she cuts off (‘I-’) to describe the prior arrangement that has not yet been met. She specifies that the police were to contact her ‘immediately as soon as he’d been dealt with’ (lines 12–13), making the fact she hasn’t ‘heard anything yet’ (line 18) a cause of worry. Here we see the caller’s displayed orientation to the urgency of her circumstance – whether the perpetrator of violence has been released, or the nature of his bail conditions are serious matters that have practical ramifications of where she will stay (line 20) as well as her emotional state.

The caller’s report of events that should have happened can be understood as a complaint. However, the contact service worker responds by offering to connect the caller to the police (lines 24–25). This offer ratifies the caller’s identity as a victim entitled to help. However, the contact service worker displays her understanding that the appropriate agency to help the caller is police, rather than victim support. Thus, in the next turn, the contact service worker displays her understanding of the caller’s problem as a situation that somebody else can resolve rather than as a complaint she can directly respond to. Here, the next-turn proof demonstrates participants’ orientations to the relevant action, showing the different ways participants can seek and provide help.

Concluding comments

Conversation analysis can provide new insights into long-standing feminist questions. Detailed analysis can reveal the workings of issues such as women’s experiences with the justice system, the difficulty of disclosing violence to institutions, and the practicalities of help-seeking or service-provision. By focusing on participants’ orientations we can also demonstrate how people make sense of shared cultural meanings about violence and victimhood.

We set out to investigate how callers and contact service workers come to a joint understanding of the caller’s circumstances. We found that callers presented themselves and their experiences in a range of ways. Descriptions of people, activities, and places are everyday ways that participants invoke common-sense cultural knowledge about the gendered social-moral world. In this way, we can examine how participants themselves orient to cultural beliefs about violence (such as who is involved and where it occurs) and use them for practical activities like seeking support. Calls to a victim helpline are a consequential site in which shared beliefs about gendered violence are built, reinforced, or potentially challenged in ways that can impact the provision of support.

Feminist scholars have long documented the struggles women face in having their experiences recognised as victimisation and securing help through the institutions of criminal justice (Jordan 2004). Our research speaks to these issues by examining real-life cases where women turn to a support service for help. In Extract 1, the caller references the difficulty of seeking support over the phone when her home is not safe. In Extract 2, the caller identifies as both a victim and a mother, identities which can lead to contradictory expectations of protecting children and upholding the nuclear family (Powell and Murray 2008). In Extract 3 the caller describes how miscommunication between police and courts has left her in fear for her safety.

Empirical findings grounded in detailed analysis of recordings that show how women understand their experiences and explain it in their own terms can be used to design practical applications to improve support services. One internationally recognised programme is the conversation analytic role-play method (CARM) which develops research findings into evidence-based training (Stokoe 2014). In this way, a focus on what participants actually say and do as they seek support can inform the delivery of service, making a practical difference to the lives of women in need.

Future directions

For feminist conversation analysis to become widespread, more opportunities are needed for scholars to learn about the methodological approach. Conversation analysis, including the study of membership categorisation practices, is a highly technical discipline, and can appear intimidating for a novice. Yet as we have shown, attention to the fine level of detail can yield important insights into the operation of the gendered social moral order, and the way participants invoke, reproduce, or challenge shared common-sense knowledge. An area of exciting potential for feminist research is the analysis of embodied interaction, where the tools of conversation analysis are used to examine how participants use gaze, gesture, touch, movement, and interact with features of the physical environment as they go about their daily lives.

The sharing of data corpora within the conversation analytic research community has fruitful potential for collaborative feminist scholarship. Different researchers can reanalyse the same data to analyse different practices. For example, in our analysis above we focused on description and categorisation, but the same data could be analysed in terms of the sequential unfolding of the interaction, the way participants repair their talk, and so on. We hope that the growth of feminist conversation analysis is accompanied by a spirit of collaborative endeavour, so that shared corpora become a valued resource for future feminist research.

There are controversies regarding feminist conversation analysis. Yet to move beyond these debates, we offer the parallel with feminist psychology. Once considered a contradiction in terms (see Fine and Gordon 1992), feminist psychology is now accepted as a legitimate field of enquiry. Conversation analysis is a rigorous empirical methodology that grounds claims about the social world in the observable conduct of participants. Feminist conversation analysis provides a powerful tool to demonstrate *that* and *how* the gendered social-moral order is understood by participants, and used to practical ends. We encourage students and scholars of language, gender, and sexuality to take up conversation analysis as a research approach. As we have demonstrated, grounded observations of recordings of naturalistic data, and a deep engagement with participants' own understandings holds remarkable potential for feminist work that remains largely untapped.

Transcription conventions

Symbol	*Description*
(0.2)	Numbers in brackets represent silences in seconds
(.)	Silence less than one-tenth of a second
[word]	Square brackets represent overlapping talk – talk by different speakers
[word]	that occurs at the same time
word=	Equals signs represent ‘latched’ talk. This can be a continuation of talk
=word	within a turn or across different lines on the transcript
wo:::rd	Colons indicate a sound-stretch; more colons represent a longer stretch
>word<	Arrows surrounding talk indicate faster speech
WORD	Capitalisation indicates greater volume
°word°	Speech between degree signs is quieter relative to the rest of talk
word	Underlining represents emphasis
~word~	Words within tildes represent ‘wobbly voice’
.	Full-stop indicates falling intonation at the end of a unit of talk
,	Comma indicates continuing intonation at the end of a unit of talk
?	Question mark indicates rising intonation at the end of a unit of talk
↑word	Upward arrows before talk indicate a sharply increased pitch
wo:rd	Underlining and colons represent intonation contours within words
.hh hhh	Breathiness is represented with the letter ‘h.’ The length indicates the relative length of breathiness. Preceded by a full-stop indicates an in-breath; without a full stop indicates an out-breath
wo(h)rd	‘h’ within words represents breathiness (often laughter or crying) within a spoken utterance
.snih Huhh	These represent sniffing and sobbing respectively
( )	Empty brackets represent spoken words unable to be transcribed
(word)	Words in brackets represent uncertain hearings
((ring))	Double brackets represent transcriber comments

Note

1 ‘kia ora’ (line 1) is a Māori greeting used in New Zealand English.

Further reading

Kitzinger, C. (2000) ‘Doing feminist conversation analysis’, *Feminism & Psychology*, 10(2), pp. 163–193.

Kitzinger’s article coined the term ‘feminist conversation analysis’ and argued for the compatibility of feminism and conversation analysis. This work became the target of debates about the legitimacy of feminist conversation analysis.

Speer, S. A. and Stokoe, E. (2011) *Conversation and gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This edited collection was the first book to bring together studies of gender using a conversation analytic approach. Studies in a range of settings including children’s play, mediation, psychiatric assessments, and helpline calls provide clear demonstrations of conversation analysis in use.

Stokoe, E. (2006) ‘On ethnomethodology, feminism and the analysis of categorial reference to gender in talk-in-interaction’, *The Sociological Review*, 54(3), pp. 467–494.

Conversation analysis is committed to an ethnomethodoligcal mentality, and Stokoe's article demonstrates how gender can be studied using those perspectives. She draws particular attention to the way gender can be studied sequentially and categorially.

Weatherall, A., Stubbe, M., Sunderland, J., and Baxter, J. (2010) 'Conversation analysis and critical discourse analysis in language and gender research: approaches in dialogue', in Holmes, J. and Marra, M. (eds) *Femininity, feminism and gendered discourse*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 213–243.

In this compartive chapter, four renowned feminist language researchers analyse the same piece of data with different methodological approaches. This provides a valuable consideration of the strengths and limitations of various discursive approaches, including conversation analysis.

Related topics

The accomplishment of gender in interaction: ethnomethodological and conversation analytic approaches to gender; gender and sexuality normativities; gender, stance, and category work in girls' peer language practices; feminist poststructuralism – discourse, subjectivity, the body, and power; semiotic representations of women criminals.

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18

Performance in action

Walking as gendered construction practice in drag king workshops

Luca Greco

Introduction

Since the publication in 1990 of Butler's groundbreaking book *Gender Trouble*, the concept of performance as a synonym of action and impersonation has become a cornerstone concept in gender studies and social sciences, and a key word to understand how people act and account for their gender in their everyday lives. The concept of performance contributes to renewing a focus on action in social sciences as an interactive, multimodal, and historical phenomenon (Goodwin 2017). It also contributes to refreshing what the anthropologist Conquergood (1989) calls the 'performative turn': a heterogeneous yet powerful paradigmatic shift in social sciences and humanities, in which performance is mobilised as a metaphor to explain social life as theatre (Goffman 1959).

This chapter deals with gender as performance as illustrated by walking in drag king workshops. By focusing on gender as an embodied performance, I will demonstrate why an integrated approach between social sciences and artistic perspectives (Sormani, Carbone, and Gisler 2018) on performance is necessary. Such an approach resituates the emergence of gender as performance in contemporary arts, and in social sciences, it underscores performance rather than performativity and it considers the domain of artistic performance as a theoretical resource for language, gender, and sexuality studies (LGSS).

This chapter combines ethnographic methods, sequential, and multimodal approaches. The use of ethnography in conversation analysis has sparked a very intense debate in the EM/CA community (Clemente 2013; Hopper 1990; Moerman 1988). It focused around the methodological relevance of recruiting larger social structures in order to account for the functioning of conversational structures, the perimeters of context and the 'free-context' nature of conversation (Maynard 2003; Schegloff 1997; Wetherell 1998). Nowadays, an important analytical shift on multimodality, on interactions unfolding in complex semiotic settings, and a focus on non-human agency have provoked what we can call an 'ethnographical turn' in multimodal and ethnomethodological oriented conversation analysis, as the work of the Goodwins has demonstrated throughout their career.

After a presentation of the heuristic power of the concept of performance for LGSS and the value of studying walking in drag king workshops, I will analyse walking practices in drag king workshops through the analysis of three types of walking observed in this context: *in vitro* walking, liminal walking, and *in vivo* walking. I will conclude with some propositions for a closer dialogue between queer and gender studies, contemporary art, and interactional perspectives.

Performance: a historical and theoretical overview

In this section, performance is first defined in relation to two very close concepts, which are performativity and performative. I then present two ways through which performance has been approached in literature: as a metaphorical and theoretical device, and as a distinctive discursive and artistic genre.

Performance, performativity, and performative: some methodological and theoretical issues

Performance, performative, and performativity are inextricably intertwined and must be defined clearly. 'Performance' refers to action and impersonation – something that is achieved step-by-step in the temporality of action for, with, and towards a real or imagined audience. 'Performative' designates a type of verb (vs. constative) and can be used to refer to gender as performative; i.e. gender as constructed by discursive actions. 'Performativity' refers to a complex process through which gender is iteratively constructed through a citational process (Butler 1990, 1993) and a normative horizon in which gender is achieved and accounted for as a performance (Butler 2005).

Butler first refers to 'performance' in the preface of *Gender Trouble* (1990) to designate the ways in which the actor and performer Divine accounts for their feminine gender in John Waters' movies. She notes three important aspects of gender performance in Divine's play: the questioning of dichotomies used to talk about and to explain gender, such as or through natural/artificial, depth/surface, inner/outer dichotomies; the parody of the naturalness of gender as part of the action repertoire of lesbian and gay cultures; and the naturalness of gender as constructed through performative discursive acts (Butler 1990: xxvii).

What is at stake in Butler's work is less performance than performativity. The concept of the performative act, a cognate concept of performance in Butler's paradigm, came from speech act theory and philosophy of language (Austin 1962). A performative (vs. constative) utterance has the power to realise what is said by the speaker by proffering phrases such as 'I promise', 'I declare you married partners', etc. Curiously, Austin considers the language spoken in a theatrical context as 'not serious', 'parasitic upon its normal use', and he excluded it from the class of performatives (Austin 1962: 22).

'Performative' in the Butler framework is extended to all types of action, not only to those relating to speech and not only referring to sentences with performative verbs such as 'declare', 'promise', etc. The Butlerian view of performatives comes from an interpretation the philosopher made of the concept of iterability (Derrida 1984). In this framework, the realisation of what is said is guaranteed by the repetition (i.e. iterability) of the speech act over time. In this conception, the realisation of an act depends less on the status (or the authority; cf. Bourdieu 1991) of the speakers or on the type of institution in which the speech act is accomplished (cf. the felicity conditions; Austin 1962) than on its repetition. In this theoretical framework, language becomes a central feature in gender construction processes as they are realised by participants through daily and routine actions (Butler 1997). It is through repetition of gendered social acts that gender is constructed, stabilised, and acknowledged by co-participants in a number of very different contexts: in family interactions, conversations among pairs, interactions at work, etc. (Speer and Stokoe 2011).

The distinction between performance and performativity has political, theoretical, and methodological implications because gender is not just action. Gender is intertwined in a web of power and normative relations which make gender performance possible (Butler 1993). This framework is quite far from a common-sense vision of gender as entirely a matter of free will, in which everyone can change one's gender as one can change one's clothes. Even the more subversive modes of gendered self-construction and presentation practices are subjected to power or to what Butler calls 'the heterosexual matrix' (Butler 1993). If action and resistance to norms are never completely disanchored from power, a resistance to these same norms, allowing the possibility of action and contributing to shape it, is nonetheless possible. Methodologically and theoretically speaking, this view entails a dialectical and dynamic view of action as a contextually shaped and renewing act (Heritage 1984) and situated in two different levels of analysis: the 'there' of literal performances (what people do in social exchanges) and the 'not there' (something that ethnographers must elicit using rich and dense ethnographies in order to unveil the 'unsaid traces'; Kulick 2005: 616).

Performance as a metaphorical and theoretical device

A focus on gender as practice, action, or doing is deeply connected with at least two different research strands: research into feminist and gender studies 'before Butler', and interactional approaches.

A vision of gender as performance (i.e. as doing) was developed by scholars such as the British psychoanalyst Riviere (1929) with the concept of 'masquerade' – actions women intentionally perform to be identified as submissive in relation to authoritarian men. The French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir (1972), who coined the famous saying 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman', contributed to shedding light on the historical context and on the socialising practices which shaped women as a 'second sex'. Finally, thanks to the pioneering work of anthropologist Newton on female impersonators (1972), a view of gender as a relational and bodily practice embedded in everyday activities becomes obvious within the constructionist approach, i.e. a theoretical framework in which the forms of knowledge to reality are constructed by participants in the course of their repeated and daily social practices (Berger and Luckman 1966).

Research in the fields of micro-sociology (Goffman 1959, 1976) and ethnomethodology conceives gender as a practical accomplishment (Garfinkel 1967), a social process (Kessler and McKenna 1978), and a process of attribution through which social actors interpret gender cues presented by participants in interaction. Gender in this framework is treated as something that is finely orchestrated by participants in front of an audience (i.e. co-participants in daily interactions), an activity labelled by Goffman as performance: 'the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants' (1959: 8). The 'Agnes case' in Garfinkel's survey (1967) is an excellent example of gender as the work (or as the performance) accomplished by Agnes, a transsexual woman, in order to be interpreted as an ordinary woman (Mondada, *infra*). Gender transformation is presented through the lens of socialisation practices accomplished in every moment of life, learned by participants in the course of their actions, and constructed through a multiplicity of semiotic resources such as speech, vocal, visual, kinesic, and material resources.

Performance as a discursive and artistic genre

Performance is not only a descriptive resource mobilised by scholars to understand how people interact in the world. It is also an object of inquiry in social sciences. In linguistic anthropology, performance is a mode of spoken verbal communication consisting of the assumption of the responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence (Bauman 1975). This focuses attention on social interaction, the aesthetic and evaluative dimension of social life, and presents three important characteristics: to be interpretable, reportable, and repeatable (Hymes 1981).

Performance is a particular way of speaking in which social actors evaluate the discourse of participants in specific social contexts such as the management of gossip disputes and confrontation-report-offence among girls through conversation (Goodwin 1990). This concept allows scholars to focus their attention on the multimodal dimension of social encounters and on a dynamic and culturally anchored conception of the backstage/frontstage dichotomy in speech events (Finnegan 1998). Gender can be a relevant social category used to explain the diversity of speech styles in performance. In her study on forms of speech use in a Malagasy speech community, Keenan-Ochs (1974) remarks on a type of social gendered division of performance labour: men use a *kabary* speech form, a form privileging more indirect style forms, whereas women mobilise more often direct speech forms known as *resaka*. Finally, sexuality, gender, and race can be finely intertwined in verbal performances. In African American drag queen speech in gay bars, Barrett (2017) identifies a discursive genre typical of performance. This is speech designed for an audience composed of gay males sharing an important number of values and features of gay subculture with drag queens; this includes many allusions to sexual activities and the intertwining of some discursive features typical of Black and white bourgeois women. Barrett presents drag queen performances as irreducibly multi-voiced (Backhtin 1973) in that participants index a multi-layered identity which crosses different social categories: Black woman, white Christian woman, gay men, drag queens, etc. Contrary to the Butlerian approach, which views drag queen performances as symbols of subversion of gender norms, Barrett's analysis sheds light on a misogynistic potential in drag queen speech practices and offers an interesting intersectional (Crenshaw 1991) analysis of drag queen practices in which gender, race, class, and sexuality are intertwined.

All of these works confirm that performance is not constituted solely by texts; it is bodily constructed[1] and it creates a multiplicity of audiences and participation frameworks. These points are shared by a corpus of artistic works and reflections on performance as an artistic genre in the framework of performance studies (Schechner 2006; Schneider 1997).

In contemporary art, performance disrupts a classical view of theatrical representation based on text, the linearity of narrative, the presence of a character, and a dichotomic vision of space which includes a performer on stage in front of a comfortably seated audience. Within this framework, we can define performance as an action accomplished once, across from, or oriented towards a physically present, absent, imagined, or technologically mediated participant. The distinctive features of performance are *inter alia* a focus on a racialised, gendered, and sexualised body; the primacy of experience lived by the social actors; and the processual dimension of action.

Since the 1960s at the latest, many contemporary artists and feminist activists have contributed to nourishing an idea of gender as a routine through their performances, which can be considered to be embodied processes, and ideological and artificial constructs (Jones 1998). Some of the ideas emerging in their work echoes some of the points underlined in gender and queer studies, and in social sciences in general, as central features for a vision of gender as performance: the relation between body and language, the body as a process (vs. result), and the power of bodily transformation.

Sprinkle, a post-porn activist and feminist, contributes to conceiving the body as a process through her performances. In *Anatomy of a Pin-Up* (1980) she shows, through an image of her body, the procedures mobilised by the artist to construct a perfect pin-up body. To this end, each body part is related through an arrow to an inscription in which the artist explains how she achieves the result of the pin-up forms. In this way, Sprinkle transforms her body into an accountable one through which the spectators can approach the pin-up forms more as a *process* than as a *result*.

The theme of bodily transformations through makeup activities has attracted many performers since the sixties. Eleanor Antin, a visual artist, performer, and feminist, is a pioneering figure in this field. In *The King*, a 1972 video-recorded performance, the artist shows her transformation into a male persona – a king. We can see the artist facing the mirror while constructing a beard and a moustache. She wears a hat and applies some facial hair, anticipating what a group of drag kings would do in the 1980s and 1990s in the United States and Europe (Greco 2018; Halberstam 1998). The theme of *The King* persistently dominated her performances between 1972 and 1978. In this period, she embodied the King of Solana Beach, who walked and met his subjects in areas of southern California. In these performances she embodied a male character, while at the same time maintaining some feminine attributes, such as breasts. She contributed to the emergence of a new type of performance, anticipating some of the drag king performances under scrutiny in the next sections.

Summary

In contemporary art and performance studies, performance has a specific meaning referring to an artistic genre whose roots are clearly situated in the modernist avant-garde, especially Futurism and Dadaism, and in the 1950s and 1960s with the performances of artists such as John Cage, Vito Acconci, Yoko Ono, Martha Rosler, etc. (Goldberg 1979). The way in which performance is approached in social sciences is quite different. Performance is either related to theatre or to a common-sense vocabulary in which performance is a synonym of a theatrical, artistic show, or refers to specific discursive genres in different cultures. Inspired by the works of performers and social scientists presented in this section, I will consider walking practices as performances and a gender (de)construction device. My analysis focuses on the experiential, bodily transformation, and processual dimensions of walking practices.

Presentation of the setting and methods

A drag king is generally a female-assigned person at birth, who, through the mobilisation of a multi-semiotic repertoire – verbal, visual, tactile, material (makeup, prosthesis, clothing, glue) and bodily resources (they use hair cut and glued on the face to make a beard) – embodies several types of masculinities. The embodiment of masculinities is achieved in the pursuit of at least three objectives: a personal aim, which is the desire to experience gender and its plasticity; an artistic desire to be on stage and create from and through gender; and a political agenda, in that the embodiment of masculinities highlights gender's fictional character and helps to destabilise gender categories.

Drag king workshops are social occasions in which people take time to construct a male body, together with the help of some experts – people knowledgeable in gender transformation and who perform on stage as drag kings – through the choice of a character to embody, makeup, and some exercises in which walking constitutes a distinctive locomotive feature and a topic of conversation.

The workshops are held once a month in the Rainbow House building, an LGBTQIA+[2] socialisation space based in Brussels; it is an architectural setting within which drag kings circulate and interact. At the entrance of the Rainbow House there is a bar, which is on the ground floor. There are meeting rooms on the upper floors. The workshop takes place on the second floor and, once it is finished, drag kings usually go down to the bar to drink with the public. From there, they can visit the most famous square of Brussels, the Grand-Place, which is two minutes' walk from the workshop site.

In drag king workshops, once makeup is complete, walking is performed by participants in the workshop space and outside on the street. In both cases, participants create an experience *with* and *on* their gender-transforming bodies and in the ways they approach space, movement, and gender. Walking can also become a topic mobilised by participants after or before the exercises, while standing in a fixed position. It is interesting to focus analytical attention on an activity such as walking because it grasps gender in its locomotive and discursive dimensions, i.e. how gender and bodily transformations are experienced through walking itself and discourse on walking. Through an ethnographic and interactional approach, we can look at practices in their temporal unfolding and have access to social norms about walking, gender, and space as they emerge in the discourses of the social actors.

Several methodological devices were used in this study. These include interviews with the participants, video recording of several activities (dressing and makeup sessions, visits to public places, performances, interviews), and gathering written and visual documents about the group's activities. This methodology has the advantage of considering walking as a *practice* per se, in its corporeal and locomotive dimensions, and as a *topic* mobilised by participants in the workshop. Moreover, it gives the possibility of grasping the duality of gender as *performance*, a practice achieved by participants in the course of their routines, and as a reminder of *performativity*; i.e. related to social norms concerning the relations participants establish between gender, walking, and space. A long-term ethnography focusing on a longitudinal vision of the activities of participants from the moment they arrive to the moment they leave is necessary to grasp the complexity of the spatio-temporal webs in which the activities are situated and intertwined. This presupposes rethinking the methods scholars use to identify temporal and spatial boundaries of activities, to follow participants in the course of their activity, and to question the participation of the ethnographer in the activities they observe.

Three types of spaces and walking can be found in the workshops.

A first type of walk takes place in the makeup space (Figure 18.1), which is transformed into a space of locomotion and experimentation (Figure 18.2) after the makeup activity. This is what I call an '*in vitro* walk': a type of walking experienced, accomplished, and lived, but also thematised and theorised with the help of an expert, Max, the leader of drag king workshops in Brussels.

A second type of walk, a 'liminal walk', takes place in the space of the staircase – a border space, which allows the transition from the experimental space of the '*in vitro* walk' and space (second floor), to the bar, located on the ground floor, where masculinity is lived with the public of the Rainbow House bar.

A third type of walk, the '*in vivo* walk', takes place outside on the path between the Rainbow House and the Grand-Place. This is a space in which participants test their new identities in silence, focusing on their own feelings, and testing and being attentive to the reactions of pedestrians.

Figure 18.1 The makeup space.

Figure 18.2 The makeup space transformed into a walking space.

The temporality which unites these three types of space and walk makes possible a transition from what I call, following the dramaturgic vocabulary of the sociologist Goffman (1959), the 'backstage' of gender, situated in the *in vitro* space and in the liminal space, to the 'stage' of gender, located in the *in vivo* space. This transition from one type of space (*in vitro*) to another (*in vivo*) constitutes new embodied and gendered subjectivities in the practices observed in the workshop.

In a theoretical framework inspired by queer linguistics (Barrett 1997; Milani 2013) and multimodal analysis (Goodwin 2006; Mondada 2016), I conceive walking as a social device producing gender and subjectivities, and as something inseparable from the spaces in which the walking is deployed. Thus, walking is not just a practice taking place in a spatial setting or just a topic. Walking constructs and deconstructs gender; it builds the space while, at the same time, it is shaped by the plastic materiality of the space.

Walking in drag king workshops

Walking is an irreducible interdisciplinary object of study, which traverses the social sciences, humanities, and arts (Lorimer 2011). As an *interactional* resource and a *multimodal* resource, walking is finely orchestrated (Goffman 1972), intertwined with talking, and produces unexpected participation frameworks (Mondada 2014). As a *social* resource, walking is a body technique through which class, geographical origins, and gender are indexed (Mauss 1973).

In this section, walking is approached as a gendered practice through which participants experience gender and construct articulations between gender, movement, and space in three different cases: *in vitro* walking, liminal walking, and *in vivo* walking. As an experiential practice, walking will be conceived as a performance – a privileged arena for the transformation and the discovery of self.

Articulating gender, space, and walking in in vitro *walking*

It is in the context of *in vitro* walking that walking itself becomes a topic in Max's speeches and it is conceived as a place of experimentation of the self in quite a didactic register. The male gendered transformation of the participants is achieved and Max takes the floor to deliver some remarks about gender and walking.[3]

Extract 1 – Socialised as masculine or feminine

M: Max (#)

1	M	la majorité euh qu'on catégorise au
		the majority (of people) that we categorize
2		niveau masculin/ #les hommes/# <u>ont</u> gardé/ la
		as masculine men have kept the
		#makes a step#
3		démarche d'enfant/ enfin pas d'enfant mais la
		child's gait well not exactly but the
4		démarche normale du pied #(—fin) on a un pied/#
		usual move of the foot (well) we have a foot
		#lift their tools #
5		#et alors on met le talon# d'abord et comment
		and then we put the heel first and how
		#bring the heel on the floor#
6		la : #comment on appelle ça ah en kiné / c'est
		now how do you call this in physiotherapy/ it's
		#reproduces with the hand foot movement-→
7		d'abord le talon fin c'est vraiment la les trues de
		first the heel well it's really the stuff of
8		la marche enfin la la logique de la marche en fait#
		-----→#
		the walking well the the logic of the walking like

9 tandis que: on apprend aux filles justement/ à
while we teach girls precisely/ how to
10 contrecarrer vraiment à faire tout le
oppose really to do all the
11 contraire de ce que : le pied est prévu pour/ donc
opposite of what the foot is intended for/ so
12 euh avec les hauts talons alors là j’ai absolument pas
uh with high heels then I absolutely don’t have
13 le choix parce qu’elles doivent poser d’abord
the choice because they (girls) must first put
14 l’avant du pied et pas du tout dans le sens de la
the tip of the foot (on the ground) and not at all in direction of
15 marche (2) et done /là on peut aussi directement/
walking (2) and so/ then we can also directly/
16 uniquement par par le balayage et comme les
just through watching people and how
17 personnes se se s- déplacent et comment elles posent
people are moving and how they put
18 le pied et ben on peut voir si c’est masculin/ ou si
the foot on the ground and well we can see if it’s masculine/ or if
19 c’est féminin/ socialisé socialisé masculine
it’s feminine/ male socialized

In this excerpt we can observe a thematisation and a theorisation of the articulations between space, walk, and gender. These are accomplished by a focus on the movement of the foot on the ground, a naturalisation of the male step, and a denaturalisation of the female step.

The walk of those who are categorised as men is presented as a normal process (l. 2–4) – an evidence or a general truth which mobilises a noun group (‘les hommes’ l. 2) metonymically represented by the foot step (l. 2) whose walking is characterised as ‘usual’ (l. 4). After this preface in which Max presents the terms of the problem, they continue to speak, giving some examples in an assertive mode – ‘we have a foot’ (l. 4) – and focusing their speech on the foot’s movements in male walking. Within this logic, Max lifts their[4] foot and, then, they bring the heel onto the floor, reproducing, in a mechanical way, ‘male walking’ (l. 4–5).

If the male walk is presented as natural, the female walk is presented as a cultural and learned practice, which is carried out by first laying the toes and then the rest of the foot (l. 9–15). This practice – the initial placement of the front of the foot – is presented as an injunctive one which goes against the natural functionality of the foot in walking; i.e. ‘what the foot is intended for’ (l. 11).

This walking theorisation practice about gendered walking produces gender generalisations such as ‘one can see by walking whether it is masculine or feminine’ (l. 17–19) and it is accompanied by a subsequent degree of abstraction.

Walking is no longer a spoken practice, exemplified and reified through steps on the ground by placing the heel first if masculine or the toe if feminine. Max gestures with their hand, reproducing the movement of the foot (l. 6–8); this gives a para-medical framing to the walking practice, highlighting the scientific, naturalistic, and objectifying dimensions of his description.

Walking can also be an opportunity to find new trajectories, feel new bodily sensations, and discover some characteristics which are not necessarily planned, but which emerge as evidence. It is in this context that Alexandre expressed a desire to discover a faster walk, as demonstrated in the next excerpt:

Extract 2 – A faster walk

M: Max
A: Alexandre (£)

1	M	mais testez un peu les les même c'est un personnage
		but test a little bit the the same it's a male
	a	»fixed position---→
2		masculin d'ailleurs hein/ c'est arléquin/ il est fort/
		character by the way right/ it's Harlequin/ he's strong/
3		aérien/£
		aerial
		---→£
4	A	£ouais °xxx°
		yeah°xxx°
		£they walk--→
5	M	et/ so:n caractère cha::nge£/£donc on voit que même
		and/ his character changes/ so we see that even
	a	---→£ £fixed position---→
6		dans le théâtre/ classique\ on va dire que [ce soit
		in classical/ theatre\ we can say that it is
7	A	[(ss ss)
8	M	ben y a eu pense a [plein
		well there was think a lot of
9	A	[xx là j'ai envie d'aller plus vite
		xx now I want to go faster
10		££(1)
		--→££they walk--→>
11	M	Ah
12		(1)
13	A	ouais\ quand je fais comme ça
		yeah\ when I do like that
14		they accelerate their walking-→>

While all the participants walk in the space of the workshop, Max invites them to search for new ways to embody masculinities through the figure of Harlequin, a central character of the *commedia dell'arte*, mixing features of strength and softness (l. 1–8). Alexandre, a male-to-female trans person who participates in drag king workshops, takes the floor at line 9 to express their desire to engage in a faster walk. A careful look at their actions shows a complex multimodal trajectory accounting for their turn-taking. Starting from a fixed position (l. 1–3), they react to the first part of Max's turn by producing an affirmative particle (l. 4) and by engaging in a walking practice (l. 4) just in time to come back to a fixed position in the middle of Max's turn (l. 5). This return to a fixed position allows Alexandre to show signs of incipient speakership, as in line 7, and to announce a new way of walking (l. 9) which will be achieved in line 14. This announcement (l. 9) projects several actions: a motion state change (a return to walking, l. 10), ratification from Max (l. 11), the construction of a complex sentence through the temporal conjunction '*quand*' (when) (l. 13) relating and adding to their previous turn (l. 9), and an acceleration of their walking (l. 14).

The walking practices, as we can see in these examples, are both decontextualised, naturalised, or decomposed into micro-movements, objectified, and connected to gender norms by an expert participant, Max, standing in motionless position (Excerpt 1). Alternatively, they are experienced as an opportunity to research, improvise, and discover unplanned spatial trajectories (Excerpt 2) by novice participants in mobile configurations.

The focus on experience, creativity, and improvisation, (to find new ways to walk and to feel their body) and the 'rehearsal aspect' of the walking (one should test their body through walking in an ad hoc situation) are typical features of performance. In this context, the use of a video-recording device is particularly relevant as it allows the scholar to grasp the bodily and temporal dimension of gender construction practices.

Articulating gender, space, and walking in liminal walking

Following the temporality of the activities planned in the workshop, once the exercises have been achieved, drag kings can decide to go downstairs into the bar space located on the ground floor of the Rainbow House.

This is a very important moment because this transition towards the bar marks two types of border crossings. First, there is a movement away from a more intimate space of work and experimentation, which has taken place only with the members of the workshop and which involves a form of non-mixed participation. Second, there is movement towards a mixed participative space where one has to interact with unknown people or with known people maybe seeing them in drag for the first time.

In the next excerpt, one of the participants of the workshop gives an account of the transition from the *in vitro* space of walking to the *in vivo* space of the bar:

Extract 3 – Going down

B: Béatrice

1	B	je pense que si le fait de descendre\ personnellement
		I think that yes going dovm\ personally

((several lines omitted))

13	B	ça débloque vraiment les les escaliers étaient un peu
		It unlocks really the the stairs were a little bit
14		euh ((rire)) qu'est ce que je vais dire qu'est ce que
		euh ((laughing)) what I'm going to say what
15		je vais faire et puis du moment où tu es là ben tu
		I'm going to do and then since you are there well you
16		oublies en fait c'est là que tu re- rentres un peu
		forget in fact it's there that you get back into
17		dans ton personnage vraiment tu te dis c'est le
		your character really you say to yourself it's the

18 fait d'être face à des gens parce que si non autrement
fact to be face to people because otherwise
19 ça reste un jeu —fin
it's like a game/play right

In this excerpt, Béatrice gives an account of descending the staircase as a constitutive moment of the drag king experience.

In this liminal space, participants cross a border between two different types of space (the space of makeup and locomotion, and the space of the bar) and prepare a gradual entry into character.

The entry into the bar, the *in vivo* space, is a crucial moment through which participants leave the 'backstage' of gender (marked by rehearsals in which people use make up, try to walk in different ways, etc.) towards the 'stage' of gender (a scene in which one gives a presentation of themselves facing an audience).

The gradual entry into character and the passage through the liminal space of the stairs does not allow time for reflexive activity. During this space and gender transition, Béatrice doesn't stop to ask themselves questions such as 'what I can do?' or 'what I can say?' (l. 14–15) once they arrive in the bar.

A focus on moments other than the exercises – occasions in which participants talk in a spontaneous way among themselves and with me, the ethnographer – gives access to unexpected revelations about their experiences and helps to (re)construct the temporality of the gender transformation.

Articulating gender, space, and in vivo *walking*

In this last section dedicated to *in vivo* walking and space, we consider a moment in which walking is practiced in a public space – in the open air or in the bar. This is an important and quite mysterious phase. The moments spent at the bar are the only ones I did not record with my camera for a number of reasons.

First, I thought that because the workshops had come to an end, I no longer needed to film and to have exploitable video-recorded data. Second, it would have been very complicated to obtain consent forms from everyone present in the bar. Third, these moments of descent, both into the bar and the exit into the big square, allowed me to leave my position as researcher and change my observational status in my ethnographic encounters with the drag kings. I also wanted to experience with them the meaning of the walk; thus, I decided to dress in drag and enter the space of the bar and the big square with them.

The absence of video recordings of the practices outside of the workshop could be interpreted as an important limitation of the methodology; however, I think that all types of data gathered by observation, participation, and, of course, recording activities are equally relevant to the analysis. They nourish what the anthropologist Geertz (1973) call a 'thick description' and they open unexpected analytical spaces for the researcher. In the case of walking, I realised how walking in public spaces is a very interactional activity, because we are constantly faced with possible contact with the people we meet in the course of walking. It gives us an opportunity to modify some features of our walking and posture, to adapt our way of walking to the contingencies of the situation, and to discover the desire to walk in a certain (gendered) way. A sustained practice of the drag king workshops allows (expert) participants to develop a political consciousness of the space, of the way it is approached by men and women, and of the gendered nature of movements, gestures, and gazes deployed there. In the case of walking drag king practices, we can say that the action of walking does not exclude a theorisation – a representation of walking as a purely corporal or political practice. Moreover, a mechanical and an anatomical vision of the body does not exclude a political consciousness of gendered issues in walking in a public space. Walking practices, just as all social practices in everyday life, are agentive.

On the one hand, walking is determined by a binary gendered conception of the world – men and women do not walk in the same way – and there is indeed a gendered socialisation in walking practices, forbidding and/or favouring certain types of walk in persons assigned as ‘boys’ or ‘girls’ at birth. On the other hand, walking offers favourable grounds for the discovery of new sensations and subjectivities, of political awareness of the space and political occupation of the streets, such as in the example of drag marches.

Conclusions

This chapter focuses on performance as a theoretical device, an analytical object, and an artistic genre in social sciences and contemporary arts. I show its historical and theoretical background and its relevance for LGSS through the case of walking practices in drag king workshops.

Inspired by an approach mobilising queer linguistics, multimodal analysis, and performance studies, I focused on walking practices as a gender (de)construction device underlying bodily transformation, and the experiential and processual dimensions.

Focusing my attention on the temporality and spatiality of walking activities, I have shown the necessity for an ethnographic approach. Within this perspective, I have identified three moments and three spaces through which drag kings act during the workshop, after makeup:

- An *in vitro* space, in which walking is experienced in two different ways. As a *topic*, walking is decomposed, decontextualised, and articulated in terms of gender and space. As a *practice,* walking is lived by participants as a medium for the discovery of new types of bodily consciousness, spatial trajectories, and new, unexpected identities;
- A liminal space in which the descent of the stairs allows one to cross the threshold of a public space and to plunge into character; and
- An *in vivo* space in which participants experience through walking a new body in contact with pedestrians and a gendered consciousness of the space.

If the walk in these three spaces is not separable from a reflexive posture, then, we must specify that the levels of reflexivity at work are not the same. In the *in vitro* and liminal spaces, which I also call ‘the backstage of gender’, we are faced with a *self-centred* reflexivity, which is very focused on one’s own body and on one’s own transformation. In the *in vivo* space, which I call the ‘stage of gender’, we have a rather *relational* reflexivity, interactionally anchored, and much more oriented towards a possible encounter.

This pervasive reflexive dimension in walking practices, combined with decontextualisation, decomposition, introspection, discovery, and research operations, transforms the participants of drag king workshops into real explorers of gender and space, and theoreticians of walking practices. The focus on experimentation, experience, and the discovery of new and unexpected trajectories and selves make walking practices performances in the artistic sense of the term.

The intertwining of stage and backstage, action and representation, permanent adjustments and abstraction/decomposition of practices, self-oriented reflexivity and relational reflexivity makes walking practices close to scientific experiments, which are observable, accountable, and objective, and to artistic processes, because they are open to improvisation, experimentation, and creation. The ethnographic and analytical focus on waking practices as a gender (de)construction device allows me to consider gender through its corporeal and locomotive dimensions, as it is experienced and thematised by participants, and to consider bodies as powerful instruments which can experience new gendered personas and exciting lives.

Future directions

Several issues arise from the analysis and the methodologies proposed in this chapter.

- A *theoretical* issue: the study of performance and performativity in LGSS needs to be nourished by the important contributions feminist contemporary artists gave to a vision of gender as a performance. Performance is not just a theoretical device, a discursive genre; it is also an artistic genre raised in contemporary arts in the 1960s and 1970s in concomitance with political activism for gender equality and sexual freedom. In this perspective, we could consider artistic works as analytical material, theoretical devices social scientists could integrate in their methodological toolkit in order to give a 'thick' description of how gender performance works in everyday activities;
- A *methodological* issue: the combination of ethnographic methods – interviews, participant observation, audio/video recording, and collection of textual materials concerning the community under the scrutiny – multimodal approaches, and sequential analysis is something scholars could benefit from in their analysis if they want to grasp the multilayered nature of context and of social actions. In this framework, it is possible to account for different levels of analysis description: intra-turn (turn design), inter-turn (sequential level from adjacency pairs to complex sequences), speech event (a combination of sequences constituting the speech event), multimodal configurations of the action; and extra-interactional level: background knowledge relevant for the understanding of interaction and pertaining to the life of institutions in which interactions occur and to the life of participants under scrutiny;
- A *political* issue: the analysis of gender as a performance cannot be detached from political and social contexts in which actions occur. The necessity to integrate into our toolkit ethnographic approaches has been demonstrated in this chapter. This approach calls for a *Critical* EM/CA perspectives in which the political and existential issues at work in gender construction process are arising by a combination of ethnographical, multimodal and interactional approaches.

Notes

1 A focus on body as a gender (de)construction device is curiously still neglected in LGSS, and in multimodality research, with some worthy exceptions (Goffman 1976; Goodwin 2006, 2015; Mondada 2011).

2 Each of the letters included in the acronym LGBTQIA+ refers to gender minority groups: Lesbian, Gay, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual … It designates the plurality and the diversity of the political

activism focused on gender and sexuality identities. The symbol '+' signifies that the coalition buildings between gender minorities and their allies (sometimes, we found another 'A': allies) are a historical construction, a working progress construct.
3 Transcription conventions in this chapter are inspired by those proposed by Mondada: https://franz.unibas.ch/fileadmin/franz/user_upload/redaktion/Mondada_conv_multimodality.pdf.
4 Concerning the participants in the drag king workshops, we use the neutral gendered form 'they'.

Further reading

Birdwhistell, R. (1970) *Kinesics and context: Essays on body motion communication.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

In this book, readers can find some interesting and pioneering remarks on bodily resources as a gender display and recognition device.

Goffman, E. (1976) *Gender advertisements*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

In this paper, Goffman proposes a praxelogical and a multimodal vision of gender: the social asymmetry between men and women is constructed through corporeal resources depicting women as fragile and subordinate subjects.

Goodwin, H. M. (2006) *The hidden life of girls: games of stance, status, and exclusion*. Oxford: Blackwell.

In this book, Goodwin focuses on multimodal resources through which participants construct gender, power, and race in interaction.

Moerman, M. (1988) *Talking culture: Ethnography and conversation analysis*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

In this book, Moerman proposed a culturally contexted conversation analysis: a theoretical and an analytical framework in which sequential approach is combined with ethnographic perspective and cultural analysis.

Related topics

Gender diversity and the voice; gender and sexuality in discourse: semiotic and multimodal approaches; the accomplishment of gender in interaction: ethnomethodological and conversation analytic approaches to gender; multimodal constructions of feminism; feminist poststructuralism – discourse, subjectivity, the body and power.

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19

Gender and sexuality normativities

Using conversation analysis to investigate heteronormativity and cisnormativity in interaction

Stina Ericsson

Introduction

Research informed by queer theory assumes 'normality' as the object of investigation, taking a critical approach to gender and sexuality normativities (e.g. Milani 2014: 261). Thus, rather than seeing gender and sexuality as involving distinctions between 'femininity' and 'masculinity', or 'homosexuality' and 'heterosexuality', a queer theoretical stance sees the very creation of such binaries and dichotomies, and the different values and connotations being attached to various genders and sexualities, as that which is to be explained. Taking a queer approach, this chapter explores the use of conversation analysis (CA) for investigating the (re)production of normative sexualities and genders in everyday spoken interactions. Everyday interactions are interesting in this regard because they concern both individual actions and societal discourses, and everyday norms may be conveyed in such unremarkable ways that they are almost invisible – turning research into exciting detective work.

CA is informed by Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodological approach, where the focus is participants' own understandings, that is, how participants themselves make sense of their worlds, through social actions. Theoretically, the chapter takes a queer critical approach through the notions of 'heteronormativity' and 'cisnormativity'. Heteronormativity refers to the 'defining, normalising power of the heterosexual assumption, which marginalises other sexualities at best, and invalidates them at worse' (Weeks 2010: 92). Heterosexuality is here taken as a sexuality which is specific to a particular time and place. Cisnormativity concerns the normalising power of the cisgender assumption, that is, the idea that gender is coherent over time, in perception, and through actions and identities. Just as for heterosexuality, I take cisgender to be temporally and spatially specific, and as a notion that needs to be examined critically, rather than taken for granted or essentialised.

I begin this chapter by outlining the theoretical framework that underpins the approach taken here – a framework which includes heteronormativity and cisnormativity, and which places these two notions in relation to each other and to other normativities. Next, I introduce relevant methodological tools and assumptions that underpin CA. I then illustrate the theory and methodology by applying them to empirical examples of heteronormativity and cisnormativity in a case study of recorded interactions, where children and parents talk about families and relationships. The chapter ends with a concluding discussion, together with future directions and further reading.

Theoretical framework: intersecting normativities

As a way of specifying a queer critical approach to binaries and gender and sexuality normativities, this chapter adopts the genderism model of Hornscheidt (2012, 2015). This is a framework that outlines different discriminatory structures which are related to gender, including how they interact with and depend on each other. In the version of the model that I adopt here, genderism has six different realisations: categorical gendering, binary gendering, cisgendering, androgendering, heterogendering, and reprogendering. Of these, I will focus on heterogendering and cisgendering in the case study below.

'Categorical gendering' is the idea that all human beings are gendered. All of the other realisations of genderism are based on this idea, and it represents a powerful imperative of seeing people, properties, behaviour, etc. as gendered. Assumptions of more genders than two, or a gender system that incorporates genders that are not 'female' and 'male', all rely on the idea that gender exists as a category. 'Binary gendering' means the assumption of two, and only two, mutually exclusive gender categories – 'female' and 'male'. This idea permeates dominant thinking in many contemporary societies around the globe, but balanced against both historical and contemporary non-binary gendering, a critical stance towards binaries is necessary in language, gender, and sexuality research. 'Cisgendering' corresponds to the notion of cisnormativity that I introduced above, and it 'constructs women and men as coherent, natural genderings which are given at birth and which remain constant throughout a person's life' (Hornscheidt 2015: 37). The coherence and consistency constraints involved in cisgendering marginalise certain trans bodies and experiences, and by presupposing binary gendering, and thereby 'continuously affirming it' (Hornscheidt 2015: 37), cisgendering marginalises intersex and various non-binary identities and experiences.

'Androgendering' is the 'universalisation and the norm-setting of men/a male norm' (Hornscheidt 2015: 32), that is, it corresponds to the notion of 'sexism'. 'Heterogendering' is Hornscheidt's term for 'heteronormativity', which renders heterosexuality as the norm, marginalising other sexualities. A powerful strategy of heterogendering is couple normativity, which is 'the normalisation of a couple as the standard and desired form of living in Western societies' (Hornscheidt 2015: 34–35). Finally, 'reprogendering' means that reproduction is viewed as an essential part of a heterosexual couple's experience.

These different realisations of genderism interact in different ways. For instance, reprogendering has different effects depending on whether someone is privileged or discriminated against by androgendering. This may mean that people presenting as female are assumed to be '(potential) mothers and/or daughters' (Hornscheidt 2015: 35) in a way that people presenting as male are not correspondingly assumed to be (potential) fathers or sons.

Having briefly introduced this theoretical framework of genderism, I next turn to the CA method employed in this chapter.

Method: conversation analysis

Queer investigations of normativities can be approached using different kinds of material and methods. The focus in this chapter is on social actions in everyday settings – how people produce, reproduce, and transform gender and sexuality normativities through mundane actions. That is, how people through the routine and unremarkable things that they do in their everyday lives, also create, adhere to, or change norms that govern gender and sexuality. For instance, referring to one's partner while booking a dentist's appointment may challenge or reinforce heteronormativity.

For the analysis of such social actions in everyday settings, CA proves a highly valuable tool, providing methods for both data collection and data analysis, enabling fine-grained investigation of human actions at the micro level. While the focus of this chapter is on methods for analysis, data collection methods are vital to any CA enterprise. In brief, CA scholars use audio and video recordings of actual situated activities – which contrast with data collection methods such as interviews and experiments – to gain insight into how participants themselves make sense of their social worlds. As part of this enterprise, CA methodology involves the transcription of recorded audio or video data in ways that capture sufficient information regarding the temporal and sequential unfolding of the interaction. However, it is important to remember that the primary data are always the recordings, not the transcriptions, and the researcher should always return to the primary data. CA involves listening to or watching recorded data in tandem with transcriptions several times, giving an increasing understanding of the interaction, leading to the identification of interesting phenomena and patterns.

CA methodology has been developed in tandem with theoretical assumptions about the organisation of human interaction and social life. In fact, the approach takes *social action* as fundamental, rather than *language*. A central concern is sequential organisation, referring to the way in which social actions are always carried out in the context of preceding actions or turns of talk. This means, for instance, that the meaning of a piece of talk can only be recognised through its sequential position, and not by looking at that piece of talk in isolation. Relatedly, CA work has shown how meaning in interaction is co-constructed, incrementally, by participants. Thus, any analysis of gender and sexuality norms in interaction will need to consider the actions that the expression of these norms perform, in specific contexts of other speakers and preceding talk.

One analytical consequence of CA's ethnomethodological basis, is the requirement that the analysis always be grounded in what occurs in the interaction. That is, in terms of gender and sexuality studies, the analysis cannot freely use gender and sexuality categories to interpret the interaction, but instead has to show how participants themselves make gender and sexuality relevant. For instance, knowing that a participant self-identifies as 'asexual' is not enough to infer that the participant makes use of 'asexual speech'. At a general level, this is the issue of just what counts as context (Schegloff 1992), which has been seen as both a strength and a weakness of CA. As a strength, it means that CA observations have a solid scientific basis in the data at hand, staying clear of unwarranted speculations. As a weakness, critics argue that relevant observations may be overlooked because wider contextual knowledge is not made use of. This issue also turns on the CA notion of 'relevance for participants' or 'participants' orientations', that is, the analytical imperative of demonstrating what participants themselves make relevant in interaction. These issues of context and participants' orientations have generated productive methodological debates in language, gender, and sexuality research (e.g. Kitzinger 2008; Stokoe and Smithson 2001. See also Schegloff's debates with Billig in 1999 – all contributions from both Schegloff and Billig are freely available from the Schegloff Publications Archive online – and the chapter on feminist conversation analysis in this volume).

Two methodological points will be made here regarding the use of ethnomethodologically grounded CA for the analysis of gender and sexuality. First, the analysis must indeed always be grounded in participants' own actions and interpretations. Without this, analysis runs the risk of 'start[ing] out by "knowing" the [sexual] identities whose very constitution ought to have been precisely the issue under investigation' (Kulick 2000: 265) or of, for instance, reinforcing gender dichotomies. That is, the analysis runs the risk of yielding uninteresting results or of misinterpreting or giving a skewed picture of the data.

Second, making sense of just what participants achieve in any given interaction may involve making use of different kinds of analytical resources. One way of doing this is by seeing wider knowledge of gender and sexuality as another layer that is added to the analysis, such as the 'post-analytic' application of the term 'heteronormativity' to interactional patterns found in data (Kitzinger 2008: 202–203). The argument here is that to say something that is more specific and interesting from a gender and sexuality point of view, 'one must [sometimes] go beyond describing data in participants' own terms' (Stokoe and Smithson 2001: 232). It should be noted in this regard that while language, gender, and sexuality studies, including queer theoretically informed studies, may use CA in combination with various other methods and theories, other CA scholars may not take favourably to this (e.g. Kitzinger's 2008 debate with Wowk and the Schegloff–Billig 1999 debate in the Schegloff Publications Archive). In the case study below, I will make use of Hornscheidt's (2012, 2015) theoretical model of genderism as a way of adding another layer to the analysis, thus going beyond describing data in participants' own terms, in order to further show how the data is interesting from a gender and sexuality perspective.

A second way of making use of different kinds of analytical resources in order to make sense of what participants do in interaction, is by considering the multiple things to which participants may be orienting (Kitzinger 2008), and calling for more precision regarding just what is an orientation and what is not (Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2014: 156). For instance, participants in a medical help-line conversation orienting to requesting a home visit by the doctor, may also be shown to be orienting to a cultural understanding of couples living together, e.g. through a doctor asking a husband who's calling on behalf of his wife, 'where do you live?' and not 'where does she live?' (Kitzinger 2008: 200). When it comes to the queer enterprise of investigating normativities, this issue of context and participants' orientations is highly pertinent, since norms in many ways are 'invisible' and may therefore, at first glance, be expected to be something to which participants do not orient. However, in the analysis of empirical examples below, we will see just how an ethnomethodological approach can reveal participants' orientations to normativities.

Given that gender and sexuality research brings certain theoretical perspectives to the analysis, an important critique of CA's tenet of approaching data without any preconceptions, concerns the background knowledge that analysts nevertheless bring to the analysis. For instance, Stokoe and Smithson (2001: 200) argue that 'culture and common-sense knowledge, of both members and analysts, are largely unacknowledged and unexplicated resources in CA'. Thus, for language and gender scholars using CA methodology, it is pivotal to be explicit about background assumptions and theoretical knowledge. In this, self-reflexivity is an important tool, just as a critical stance and self-reflexivity in relation to theory is important for any language and gender research. In practice, the gender and sexuality scholar that uses CA can employ such techniques as being open to what data shows and collecting also cases that are troubling for one's theoretical perspectives, perhaps even specifically looking for such cases; working with one's data in data sessions with different groups of people, both within and outside of academia (the latter may require less technical transcriptions); spelling out and critically examining one's own assumptions and how one is variously privileged or discriminated by different power structures.

Turning now more concretely to the methodology of CA, this basically involves identifying and describing patterns in participants' actions in interaction. In accordance with ethnomethodology, analytical proof is found in the data itself: evidence for identified patterns and what participants' actions do, is located in what participants themselves do and how they respond to each other's actions. From this, two kinds of scientific proof method can be formulated: the identification of cases that follow the pattern and cases that deviate (Sidnell 2013). For instance, say that we wish to establish whether a question followed by an answer constitutes an 'adjacency pair', that is, whether an answer is in general interactionally expected subsequent to a question. Evidence indicating that a question–answer is indeed an adjacency pair, can be found in 'the great many cases' (Sidnell 2013: 80) of question–answer examples in data (cases that follow the pattern). Evidence can also be found in examples where a question is not followed by an answer, but where either the questioner or the non-answerer shows that an answer should have followed (deviant cases). Examples of the latter that Sidnell mentions include the recipient of the question apologising for not giving an answer, or the questioner asking a follow-up question. Sidnell (2013: 80) argues that deviant cases 'often provide the strongest evidence for the analysis because it is here that we see participants' own orientations to the normative structures most clearly'.

Concluding from the above, the method to be illustrated in this chapter involves CA-informed ethnomethodological analysis of interactional data, to identify what sequentiality and participants' orientations reveal about normative structures, where these normative structures here concern genders and sexualities. The next sections are concerned with a case study of gender and sexuality normativities in a data set of child-parent conversations.

Case study: normativities in interaction

The data that I use to illustrate the theory and method in this chapter, are drawn from the research project 'Daddy, daddy, child: linguistic negotiation of family, parenthood and relations in conversations between children and adults' (Boyd and Ericsson 2017; Ericsson 2018). This Swedish project investigated children's and parents' conversations about families, living arrangements, love, and marriage, specifically focusing on gender and sexuality normativities. 24 children, mainly aged 5 to 8 years, participated in the project together with their parents. Participating families included single mothers by choice through insemination/IVF (in vitro fertilisation), same-gender and different-gender parental couples, binary and non-binary gender presentations and identities, parents cohabiting or not, as well as urban–rural and geographical variation across Sweden.

Data were collected using a purpose-designed tablet application ('app'), which was developed as part of the project. With the help of an interactive character called Moi, who speaks using utterances recorded by a human child, the app asks questions of the children which they are then required to think about and discuss with a parent. The app records the child–parent conversations, both in the form of audio and through logging screen events, such as what images the users select. The app was designed using a norm-critical perspective, which involves taking a critical stance to norms in the sense of explicitly showing or challenging norms which may otherwise typically remain hidden and taken for granted. In the app such an approach was used to probe and challenge children's views of gender and sexuality, for instance through app characters with ambiguous gender presentations. The families used the app in their homes whenever they wanted, without the presence of a researcher.

Traditional CA research places great emphasis on the recording of naturally occurring activities, that is, activities that would have occurred even without the recording or the research study. This is motivated by CA's interest in people's ordinary lives and actions. CA studies of naturally occurring activities have been successfully used for language, gender, and sexuality research (e.g. Kitzinger 2005; Speer and Stokoe 2011). The use of the app for generating the data in the present chapter meant stepping away from the requirement of naturally occurring activities, in that these interactions only occurred because of the research project. However, in several important ways, the participants in these interactions draw on the same resources as in any other conversational setting, such as turn-taking. They also access discourses on normative genders and sexualities. As Cameron et al. (1993) argue, research data – in their case interaction between researcher and researched – constitute one form of '*normal* communication' that 'provide[s] important insights into the way social relations and identities are constructed through interaction' (1993: 87, emphasis in original). As a general remark, it is important to be aware of the specific conditions of one's data collection, and to critically examine the consequences of data collection methods for the data at hand, and for the analysis. With regard to the data used for the case study in this chapter, it may for instance be important to investigate how parents and children carry out their conversations for an audience (the researcher) rather than as part of their own daily activities. It is also important to carefully consider one's research design before the collection of any data, in light of the kinds of research questions one wishes to address. Here, the present research project had a focus on ideological norms rather than naturally occurring social actions, which helped motivate the research design using the app.

All child–parent interactions with the app were transcribed in full in the project, but using a rough transcription mainly aimed at capturing the content of participants' contributions. Parts of the data were then transcribed in more detail, for specific studies and publications. In practice, the transcription of one's recorded material is a matter of resources, as transcription is highly time-consuming. All families spoke Swedish with the app, with the exception of one family who mainly used English.

I will now turn to a 'hands-on' illustration of the use of CA, first analysing sexuality normativities in the data, and then cisgender normativities. These two sections are structured in the same way: I first consider evidence from cases that follow the pattern, then evidence from deviant cases, and finally cases that challenge the normativities. This is typically not the way such an analysis would be presented in a research paper, but it is used here to explicate the method as clearly as possible. I also want to emphasise that it is not a matter of a complete analysis, but rather intended to illustrate the application of theory and method. Names of all participants and the people they talk about, as well as some other personal details, have been anonymised in the transcriptions.

Analysing sexuality normativities

This section investigates sexuality normativities in the data, addressing the overarching questions of which sexuality norms are produced by the participants, and how these norms are interactionally achieved. The analysis of sexuality normativities will here focus on participants' replies to Moi's question 'Do you know someone who's in love?', where Moi is the fictional app character. An inductive, bottom-up analysis is used to make claims about the particular data at hand.

Translations into English are provided on a separate line, and a transcription key can be found at the end of the chapter.

Evidence from cases following the pattern

Consider the following example, where Oskar and his parent talk to Moi:

Example 1. 'Henry and Edith'

593	Moi:	vet du nån som e kär
		do you know someone who's in love
594	Osk:	jao ((smackljud)) Henry och Edith dom e kära
		yieah ((lip smack)) Henry and Edith they're in love
595	Par:	m hm:: ha dom sagt de eller
		m hm:: have they said so or
596	Osk:	Henry ha sagt de ti mej
		Henry has said so to me
597	Par:	m hm::

In this example, Oskar answers the yes/no question of whether he knows someone who's in love – the Swedish *nån* ('someone', line 593) formally requesting just one person – by giving an example of two people he knows, 'Henry and Edith' (line 594). We learn elsewhere in the conversation that they are friends of Oskar's from school.

In his reply, Oskar describes a couple: Henry and Edith. The mention of a couple indicates an understanding of being in love as a relation that takes an object (cf. if Oskar had replied 'yieah Henry he's in love'), and only one object (cf. 'yieah Henry, Edith, and Fred they're in love'). Further, the couple that Oskar names is a different-gender couple. What Oskar does, then, I argue, can be seen as an instance of what Kitzinger (2005) describes as the production of heterosexual couples, or as an example of Hornscheidt's (2015) couple normativity as a strategy of heterogendering.

In line 595, the parent acknowledges Oskar's reply through 'm hm::,' and then poses a question. The question concerns the type of evidence that Oskar has for his claim, but does not question the idea of Henry and Edith as a couple, or of different-gender couples, as such.

As another example, consider Stella's reply:

Example 2. 'You and mummy'

052	Moi:	vet du nån som e kär
		do you know someone who's in love
053	Ste:	många ☺du å mamma☺ o::ch asså de=e så många
		many ☺you 'n' mummy'☺ a::nd well it's so many
054	Par:	okej
		okay
055	Ste:	Jessica å Davi:::d o::ch
		Jessica 'n' Davi:::d a::nd

[removed talk about how Stella sits on her chair]

058	Ste:	(å sen) Emmas mamma å pappa å Susans mamma å pappa
		('n' then) Emma's mum 'n' dad 'n' Susan's mum 'n' dad
059	Par:	e de bara mammor å pappor som e kära
		is it just mummies 'n' daddies who're in love

060 Ste: och barn kan me vara kära
and children can also be in love
061 Par: okej
okay

Stella gives several different couples as part of her response (lines 53, 55, 58). Her response is acknowledged by the parent, explicitly through ‘okay’ (line 54), and implicitly through a follow-up question (line 59). All couples are different-gender couples (the ‘you’ in line 53 referring to Stella’s *pappa* (daddy)).

The parent’s question in line 59 concerns whether anyone else can be in love, apart from ‘mummies ’n’ daddies’. Stella understands this as a generational issue, and states that children can also be in love, which the father agrees to, possibly indicating that Stella gave an expected reply (lines 60–61).

Regarding participants’ orientations, as Kitzinger’s (2008) analysis of orientation to cultural norms shows, such an analysis relies on inferences and requires careful and critical analysis of just what it is that participants treat as common knowledge. For the two brief examples considered here, it can be argued that Oskar, Stella, and their parents orient to a cultural norm of different-gender couples as part of their understanding of being in love. Also, participants’ understanding is co-constructed by the children and parents, through Oskar and Stella describing the couples in their replies to Moi’s questions, and the parents acknowledging these replies and producing follow-up questions.

In the data, there are ‘great many cases’ (Sidnell 2013: 80) of different-gender couples being described in response to the question of knowing someone in love, similar to the two examples which we have seen above. This is one type of argument for seeing such examples as cases that follow a pattern.

Summing up, cases that follow the pattern of sexuality normativities in the data involve participants producing and treating different-gender couples and living arrangements as the norm. We have seen two examples in some detail here, and the analysis as a whole would build upon many other, and different kinds of, examples in the data.

Evidence from deviant cases

The two examples above with Oskar and Stella, respectively, can be contrasted with the following:

Example 3. ‘Kasper and Vincent’

247 Moi: vet du nån som e kär
do you know someone who’s in love
248 Lud: eh:: två
eh:: two
249 Par: vilka då
who
250 Lud: Kasper å Vincent
Kasper ’n’ Vincent
251 Par: e dom kära i varann
are they in love with each other

252	Par:	nähä vilka e dom kära i då
		no okay who are they in love with then
253	Lud:	nåra i en annan klass
		some in the other class
254	Par:	jaha
		okay
255	Par:	e de tjejer eller
		are they girls or
256	Lud:	m
257	Par:	ha
		okay

Highly reminiscent of the examples that follow the pattern – such as Examples 1 and 2 above – Ludwig here uses a conjunctive structure, 'Kasper 'n' Vincent' (line 250), in reply to the question of knowing someone in love. However, unlike the parents' next contributions in those two other examples, the subsequent contribution by Ludwig's parent questions the very coupledom of Kasper and Vincent (line 251). From the ensuing contributions by Ludwig and his parent, lines 252–257, it is clear that Kasper and Vincent are not to be understood as a couple in love with each other (presumably Ludwig shakes his head or gives some other non-verbal response, between lines 251 and 252).

What makes this a deviant case, then, is partly seen from sequential evidence, in the parent's response to the child's answer, and the participants' mutual meaning construction of 'Kasper 'n' Vincent', despite formal appearances, as not a couple. Additionally, one thing that differs between Ludwig's conjunctive structure and those used by Oskar and Stella above, is the inclusion of two people of the same gender in Ludwig's utterance. One of the ways in which heterogendering works is by making sexualities other than heterosexuality invisible. It may be this mechanism that makes the parent question a couple reading here. As possible further support of sexuality and gender being at issue here, gender is explicitly brought up by the parent in line 255, and Ludwig (line 256) confirms that Kasper and Vincent are in love with girls.

Another sequential deviation in Example 3 comes in the position immediately following Moi's question (here line 248). As can be seen from Examples 1 and 2, this is where an answer is given to Moi's question, enumerating exemplifying couples. Ludwig's response differs from this, giving instead the number of people that he knows are in love, 'two'. This answer may also be what contributes to the parent's inference that 'Kasper 'n' Vincent' are to be understood as two people in love with others and not each other.

In this way, Examples 1–3 have given an illustration of how a collection of examples that are similar in some way – in this case through being the utterances that follow a specific question – can be put together and examined, revealing normative structures through cases that follow and deviate from an identified pattern, respectively. There are also several other kinds of examples in the data that can be examined for what they reveal about heterogendering through deviant cases. One type of example involves participants expressing breaches to their expectations, such as Ebba exclaiming 'WHAT can you get married to a girl' when her parent probes who she wants to get married to. Another type of example is discriminatory or negative utterances, such as Hannes expressing that two male-presenting characters in the app cannot get married or that a boy going out with a boy is 'odd'.

Challenges

Based on evidence from cases that follow and deviate from a pattern, it can thus be argued that heterogendering is prevalent in the data. However, there are also other kinds of examples, which complicate the picture. Consider Example 4:

Example 4. 'Agnes and Vera'

201	Moi:	vet du nån som e kär
		do you know someone who's in love
202	Mor:	Agnes å Vera
		Agnes 'n' Vera
203	Par:	du få prata ordentligt så dom hör
		you need to speak properly so they can hear

This example follows the pattern of the child – here Morgan – describing a couple in the second-pair part (Stivers 2013) of the question–answer adjacency pair (line 202). It can also be said to follow the pattern of the parent not questioning the couple as such (line 203), meaning that Morgan and the parent interactionally co-construct the couple as unremarkable. The couple here is a same-gender couple, involving Morgan's sister Agnes. In other parts of the data, Agnes herself also mentions Vera as the person that she is in love with, and this is also interactionally conveyed as something ordinary. Similarly, Siri and her father Jesper jointly construe 'daddy Peter' as the person that Jesper is in love with, and Siri also mentions 'Vilgot's mummies', among other couples, as being in love.

What do such examples mean for heterogendering? Would it be inaccurate to connect empirical evidence to the theoretical notion of heterogendering here? Well, yes and no. No, because of the great number of normatively conveyed other-gender assumptions that permeate the data, attesting to the pervasiveness of heterogendering. Here, actual numbers of same-gender and other-gender couples in the data set as a whole could be stated to support the argument. Yes, because it would not give the full picture of the data. Considering Examples 1–4 again, in light of the whole material, what comes across even more strongly than heterogendering is couple normativity, irrespective of sexuality or gender constellations. That is, in the data as a whole (based on many more cases than Examples 1–4), the couple as a way of organising love, sexuality, living arrangements, etc., is superordinate to, and can thus be theoretically partly detached from, heteronormativity. Then, given the interdependence between different realisations of genderism as shown by Hornscheidt (2012, 2015), couple normativity can be expected to interact with heteronormativity in different ways.

As a brief conclusion of the analysis of sexuality normativities, my aim here has been to show how the identification of cases following and deviating from a pattern can be useful analytical tools, and also how micro-level actions by participants can be connected to macro-level language, gender, and sexuality theories. At the same time, my aim has also been to show how a critical approach, investigating challenges to one's analysis, is necessary.

Analysing cisgender normativities

Having shown how an analysis of sexuality normativities can be carried out, I will here consider more briefly an analysis of cisgender normativities, addressing the overarching questions of which cisgender norms are produced by the participants, and how these norms are interactionally achieved.

Evidence from cases following the pattern

In the example below, Siri and her friend Felix are doing the app activity of giving Moi a family, by choosing from a large set of characters that are shown visually in the app (but otherwise not verbally described in any way by the app). Having chosen a set of characters, they talk about the ages of these fictional family members:

Example 5. He and she

205	Moi:	hu gamla ä vi
		how old are we
206	Sir:	[m:::]
207	Fel:	[eh: han] ska va kanske:
		[eh: he] should be maybe:
208	Sir:	ksch arton
		ksch eighteen
209	Fel:	nä @ tju- [tjuge::]
		no @ twe- [twenty::]
210	Sir:	[@ @]
211	Sir:	[a]
		[yeah]
212	Fel:	[nej] trett- tretti:nie
		[no] thir- thirty:nine
213	Sir:	a trettinie [å hon]
		yeah thirtynine ['n' she]
214	Fel:	[å hon] ska va trettiåtta
		['n' she] should be thirtyeight

Siri's and Felix's use of gendered pronouns to refer to the characters (lines 207, 213, 214) attest to their assumption of coherent genders as something that can be read off their perception of the visually presented characters. Coherence over time can be seen through participants' repeated use of the same pronoun for the same character on different occasions when using the app (not shown in the extract). In this way, Siri, Felix, and other participants can be seen to be orienting to an unnamed and taken-for-granted norm (cf. Kitzinger 2008) of coherent gender.

The prevalence of gendering, and thereby the continuous reproduction of gender as a relevant category, is further seen through numerous examples in the data (not shown in this chapter). For instance, participants use gendered pronouns, gendered proper names, and gendered family roles such as 'mummy' and 'daddy' in their utterances. These also reproduce a binarily gendered worldview. Thus, categorical and binary gendering are both firmly attested to in the data. Cisgendering presupposes both categorical and binary gendering, and further involves the assumption of gender coherence over time, in perception, and through actions and identities.

It might be argued that pronoun gendering is unavoidable in languages like Swedish and English – as opposed to e.g. languages like Finnish where the single third-person pronoun *hän* does not encode gender – that is, that the language system itself constructs categorical, binary, and cisgendering. However, language use always involves choice, and analysing the linguistic choices that language users make is precisely what underlies discourse and interaction analysis. Alternatives for Siri and Felix here could have been to use referring expressions like 'this/that one'.

Evidence from deviant cases

In interaction with a parent, Matilda asks ‘but why does she wear a tie’, and ‘why doesn’t she wear a dress’, about a bride character in the app. These two examples involve cisgender incoherence being constructed as a clash between ‘gender assignment’ (‘she’) and ‘gender presentation’ (‘wear a tie’, ‘not wear a dress’), using terms from Zimman (2015). A similar example is Marika asking her little sister Sara ‘why did you say daddy to a girl’, holding Sara accountable for what Marika sees as a clash between the ‘gender role’ of ‘daddy’ and the ‘gender identity’ of being a ‘girl’. ‘Accountability’ (Scott and Lyman 1968) is the idea that it is the unanticipated and non-normative which needs to be explained, and requests for accountability in relation to gender constitute deviant cases which give good evidence for participants’ orientations to normative structures regarding cisgender normativities.

Consider next the following exchange, which occurs a few turns after Example 5:

Example 6. She you mean

222	Sir:	å HA:N ska va::
		’n’ HE: should be::
223	Fel:	eh hon menar du
		eh she *you mean*
224	Sir:	ho[n:]
		sh[e:]
225	Fel:	[h-] hon ska va
		[sh]- she should be
226	Sir:	typ tre
		like three

In this example, Felix initiates a repair sequence in line 223, where ‘repair’ is the CA term for participants’ treatment of problems in interaction which have to do with hearing and understanding, and the like. In Example 6, the repair concerns the gender of the character they are talking about. Felix’s utterance conveys a perceived gender incoherence between Siri’s assignment of ‘he’ and the presentation, role, or identity that Felix assumes for the character. Thus, in addition to accountability, repair of assigned gender is another way in which deviant cases regarding gender attest to cisgender normativities.

Challenges

In the following example, Gabi is talking to their parent:

Example 7. Mapa

061	Moi:	who are the people in your family
062	Par:	can you say
063	Gab:	°ma:pa:°
064	Par:	say it a little bit louder
065	Gab:	u:o[:]
066	Par:	[who] am I
067	Gab:	ma- mapa
068	Par:	and who else is in our family

069	Gab:	mama
070	Par:	and who else
071	Gab:	Cam
072	Par:	okay

Gabi here uses the term '*mapa*' for their parent (lines 63, 67). This is a term created from the Swedish '*mamma*' and '*pappa*', so in one sense it builds upon binary gendering, but in another sense, it challenges it, by naming something outside of the binary. Cisgender being definitionally restricted to a binary system, '*mapa*' then also challenges cisgendering. Thus, this example constitutes a challenge to the cisgender normativities shown by the other examples above.

In a general way, challenges to cisgendering would involve examples of participants embracing gender incoherence in various ways. Examples of categorical gendering being challenged exist in the data, in the form of participants using non-gendered expressions such as 'that person' or 'that/this one', that is, here participants do not assign gender at all. Such examples can perhaps also be analysed as challenging cisgendering, as cisgendering relies on gender being assigned. An interesting case in this regard is also utterances where 'he or she' is used with a specific reference, such as the Moi character. Such a referring expression seems to allow for gender fluidity (while categorical and binary gendering remain intact). However, such examples in the data are typically offset and overruled by the same app characters being gendered on other occasions in the interactions. Examples that more explicitly and firmly embrace gender incoherence and fluidity are rare in the data, with the use of '*mapa*' in one family as an exception.

Conclusion

This chapter has employed the notions of 'heteronormativity' and 'cisnormativity' in the enterprise of using ethnomethodologically grounded CA for the analysis of gender and sexuality normativities. Evaluating this approach, there are several distinct advantages to using CA for gender and sexuality research in general and normativities in particular: it shows what people are doing rather than what they believe they, or others, are doing; it can reveal how discourses at the societal macro level are formed, used, and challenged at the interactional everyday micro level; it can make seemingly invisible norms visible and thereby help denaturalise the seemingly natural orders of cisgendering and heterogendering. By using CA, the gender and sexuality scholar can also take full advantage of several decades' work on interactional practices in other areas. Disadvantages of CA as a method include practical obstacles: transcription is highly time-consuming, and, as with any field work, finding participants and obtaining access may be difficult.

Future directions

In recent years, multimodality and embodiment have received increasing attention in CA research, with studies of gaze, gesture, bodily posture, and movement, in relation to objects and physical space. This can be expected to develop as a highly productive line of investigation also for language, gender, and sexuality research, with detailed micro-level analyses of, for instance, embodied gender expressions and assignments in specific interactional contexts; embodied interactions in sexual encounters; and gender and sexuality normativities conveyed in embodied ways.

An area which has received increasing attention in language, gender, and sexuality research in recent years involves gender and sexuality non-binaries. Here, queer-theoretically informed CA studies ought to be able to generate significant new knowledge of human genders and sexualities in practice, such as through analyses of how binary norms are upheld and challenged in various ways in different interactional settings.

Transcription conventions

((…))	meta-comments and non-verbal actions
☺…☺	said while laughing or smiling
:	lengthening of preceding sound
(…)	uncertain transcription
@	laughter, each token marks one pulse
[…	speech produced in overlap
°…°	quiet voice
…-	interruption
<u>word</u>	emphasis
WORD	strong emphasis

Further reading

Sidnell, J. and Stivers, T. (eds) (2013) *The handbook of conversation analysis*. Chicester: Wiley-Blackwell.

This edited volume is a comprehensive guide to all aspects of CA method and theory.

Wilkinson, S. and Kitzinger, C. (2014) 'Conversation analysis in language and gender studies', in Ehrlich, S., Meyerhoff, M., and Holmes, J. (eds) *Handbook of language, gender, and sexuality*, 2nd edn. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, pp. 141–160.

This chapter deals with CA as a method for language and gender research, focusing on interactional practices such as turn-taking and interruption.

http://emcawiki.net

This site contains a continuously updated bibliography database of CA publications.

Zimman, L., Davis, J. L., and Raclaw, J. (2014) *Queer excursions: retheorizing binaries in language, gender, and sexuality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This edited volume gives critical and complex analyses of gender and sexuality binaries, showing both how binaries are sometimes needed for analytical purposes and how, in other settings, binary understandings would be erroneous.

Related topics

Sexuality as non-binary: a variationist perspective; gender diversity and the voice; an ethnographic approach to compulsory heterosexuality; feminist conversation analysis: examining violence against women; applying queer theory to language, gender, and sexuality research in schools.

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20

Examining girls' peer culture-in-action

Gender, stance, and category work in girls' peer language practices

Ann-Carita Evaldsson

Introduction

This chapter outlines how an ethnomethodological approach to gender as a reoccurring achievement of situated conduct (West and Zimmerman, 1987, 2009) and an emergent property of interaction (Benwell and Stokoe 2016; Speer and Stokoe 2011) make possible a dynamic view on gender among girls. The methodological starting point is how gender and gendered norms of interaction are co-constructed and constituted among girls in everyday peer-group interaction through their participation in language practices such as gossip, disputes, and story-telling (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2011, 2014 for overviews). The analytical focus is on how repeated performances of gossip disputes provide young girls with resources for "doing gender" and strengthen feminine relations, while making others accountable for gender in-appropriate conduct.

Following an ethnomethodological approach from Garfinkel (1967), the analytical point of departure is the 'doing of gender' as a locally managed practical accomplishment (West and Zimmerman 1987, 2009). As West and Zimmerman (1987: 125) note in their classical paper 'doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities', that casts pursuits of expressions as either gender-appropriate or, as in the case, as gender-inappropriate, that is accountable. In this perspective the doing of gender is a members' phenomenon in the sense that accountability to normative conceptions of gender involve 'observable practices in interaction' (West and Zimmerman 2009: 115). That is 'to do gender is not always to live up to normative conceptions of femininity or masculinity; it is to engage in behavior at the risk of gender assessment' (West and Zimmerman 1987: 136).

In the analytical section an ethnomethodological conversation analytical approach to membership categorisation sequence work (Benwell and Stokoe 2016) combined with a multimodal interactional approach to stance is used to explore how gender is accomplished in girls' peer group interaction (Evaldsson 2007; Goodwin 2007, 2011; Goodwin and Alim 2010). Sacks' work on membership categorisation analysis (MCA; Sacks 1972, 1995; Stokoe 2006) is now a well-established approach in studies of gender and discourse both in research on children's peer language practices (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2011, 2014) and in feminist conversation analysis (Speer and Stokoe 2011: see chapter by Tennent and Weatherall in this volume). A crucial feature of membership categorisations is that they both are constitutive of and reflect conventional expectations of normative behaviours within a specific group and culture (Evaldsson 2007). As will be further shown in the analytical section gendered categories such as 'girls' and 'boys' are not used explicitly in girls' gossip dispute activities; instead, the co-participants make use of a variety of ways to describe, evaluate, and categorise co-participants such that gender along with other social categories are made relevant in the course of interaction. Thus, for MCA, the analyst necessarily draws on extra-contextual resources in the form of cultural knowledge of the participants and the setting to explicate the sense-making orientations of the participants (Evaldsson 2007; Speer and Stokoe 2011). In this particular study, ethnographic knowledge of the girls, their interactional history, and the social arrangements of groupings in school is used for examining girls' peer culture in action through an examination of members' methods of doing gender along with other social categories are accomplished in interaction.

In order to capture how repeated performances of particular kinds of stances and categories are habitually and conventionally associated with particular subject positions (associated with gender, ethnicity and/or class including relations of power) an ethnomethodological approach to doing gender is combined here with sociolinguistic work on stance (Bucholtz 2009; Jaffe 2009). Thus instead of treating girls' participation in gossip disputes as intuitively linked to a fixed form of feminine behaviour, the focus is on gender as mediated by stance to explore the indexical mediation of language practices and social identities (Ochs 1992). As argued by Jaffe (2009: 8), in taking up stances speakers 'project, assign, propose, constrain, define, or otherwise shape the subject positions of their interlocutors'. Drawing in particular on Goodwin's (2006, 2011; Goodwin and Alim 2010) ethnographic and multimodal interactional approach to girls' peer language practices, the analytical focus is on how embodied acts of stances including both talk and the body are performed in interaction for displaying alignment/and or disalignment as well as for taking up oppositional and/or multiple positions vis-à-vis co-present as well as absent others. The sociolinguistics of stance situates also linguistic acts of stance within the sociocultural framework that give stances their social meanings (Jaffe 2009). By combining ethnomethodological perspectives on gender with a sociolinguistic approach to stance, I will demonstrate how at an analytical level, repeated performances of stances and category-work, indexing inappropriate feminine behaviours, co-exist with, and become woven into the local moral and social business of the interaction at hand.

Research on gender and peer language practices

Ethnographically based research on gender and language in children's peer language practices have demonstrated how children's participation in storytelling, gossip, disputes, teasing, and insults is tied to the accomplishment of social selves. Children co-construct their social world, negotiating gendered relations and social boundaries, evaluating self and others, creatively transforming category memberships and gendered norms in their social life with peers (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2011 for an overview). In line with the shift that has occurred in the field of language and gender, this implies a shift from binary gendered norms and differences in boys' versus girls' behaviours and language to a focus on diversities of gender identities and variability of language practices (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2014 for an overview). The approach taken is underpinned by performative and constructionist approaches to gender and social interaction (Bucholtz 2009; Garfinkel 1967; West and Zimmerman 2009). What emerges is a multifaceted and dynamic view of how girls (and boys) perform and do gender in moments of peer group interactions that problematises easy gender dichotomies (see for example Evaldsson 2002, 2007).

In this section I discuss some findings on what makes gossip disputes pervasive features of girls' language practices and social life with peers (see Eder 1995; Evaldsson and Svahn 2012, 2017; Goodwin 1990, 2006; Mendoza-Denton 2008; Shuman 1986). Particularly Goodwin (1990, 2006) has demonstrated through ethnographic and multimodal interactional analyses how girls across groupings engage in extended and complex types of oppositional stances in gossip dispute sessions in ways that refute simplistic notions of all females as non-competitive or non-aggressive. Building on long-term ethnographic work combining conversation analysis and Goffman's (1981) notion of footing, Goodwin (1990) shows how a group of urban African American neighbourhood girls engage in he-said–she-said gossip events that reorganise and realign the social organisation. The girls' instigated complex forms of gossip-dispute stories directed towards an absent target, leading to future confrontations of the offending party. The findings can be compared with Shuman's (1992) early linguistic ethnographic work on everyday storytelling among working-class girls (African American, European American, and Puerto Rican) in a junior high school. Shuman found for example that groups of girls engaged in extended gossip-telling activities leading to upgraded disputes and possible fights directed towards an instigator that were linked to entitlement to talk about someone else's offences. In her linguistic ethnographic study of Latina gang girls in Northern California, Mendoza-Denton (2008) discusses how a form of gossip, here named 'talking shit', is used among girls both to portray others unfavourably and to brag about own fights. In addition Eder (1995) demonstrates in her micro-ethnographic work in middle schools how groups of working-class girls engage in aggravated forms of gossip disputes, indexing toughness and assertiveness as central for their gender.

In more recent ethnographic studies of girls' peer group interaction in a multi-ethnic school setting Evaldsson and Svahn (2012) demonstrate how a friendship group of girls' instigate gossip disputes to sanction offensive behaviours of a targeted girl for calling on adults for help (Evaldsson and Svahn 2012). Through a range of collectively and repeatedly performed derogatory category descriptions and embodied actions, the target was cast as 'a snitch' and then confronted for being a familiar 'offender'. In a previous article (Evaldsson and Svahn 2017), based on the same corpus of data as this study, we have explored the organizing force and normative character of anger and aggression in how girls constitute their participation in gossip disputes culminating in fights. Goodwin (2006, 2007, 2011) also shows in her ethnographic work how girls engage in forms of social aggression in gossip dispute and insult sessions to exclude and sanction members who want to socialise with them. A group of white middle-class American girls constantly engaged in negative evaluative acts of degradation to build power asymmetries towards a girl of African American and low-income background, indexing the girls' own upper-middle-class status as valued (Goodwin and Alim 2010).

These and other findings demonstrate the importance of exploring the dynamic and multifaceted nature of how feminine gender identities are co-produced as girls differentiate themselves from other girls in peer interaction when the moral and social order is at stake. Moreover it shows the need for long-term ethnographic analyses to explore how broader social categories such as gender along with ethnicity, age, language, social class, friendship, and notions of power are enacted in girls' peer interactions both in schools and neighbourhoods.

Ethnographic analyses of girls' gossip disputes

The data in this chapter draw on a long-term ethnographic study based on video recordings (108h) of children's everyday peer language practices in a low-income multi-ethnic school setting in Sweden. The data was collected by a former doctoral student (see Svahn 2012), as part of a research project on school bullying (Evaldsson and Svahn 2012, 2017).[1] Through a long-term ethnographic fieldwork during one school year, it became possible for the fieldworker to identify, access, and document with video, reoccurring language practices in children's friendship-groups. The linguistic fieldwork that focused on girls from two fifth grade classrooms provided rich ethnographic knowledge of the girls' language practices in instances where there were no other adults present. Most often girls and boys were in each other's presence in the schoolyard, while they mainly socialised in same-sex groups with other children that they know from school. The gossip disputes that are in focus in the analytic section were initiated by one of the most popular groups of girls in fifth grade. The girls often created micro-dramas in the schoolyard to deal with real and imagined offences of particular girls (compare with Goodwin and Alim 2010; Shuman 1986). The girl group in focus consists of seven 11-year-old girls (Yaasmiin, Salina, Tara, Emine, Beyan, Azra, Samina) with various ethnic backgrounds (Somali; Eritrean; Kurdish; Palestinian) and with a long relational history of socialising with one another. While it is possible to identify the girls' different ethnic and social backgrounds, these identity categories were seldom articulated in the girls' interaction. However long-term data collection made it is possible to show how gender along with ethnicity and social class are co-constructed in girls' everyday interaction.

Analysing activity trajectories of gossip disputes

The interactional analysis traces an activity trajectory of video-recorded gossip dispute activities in which members of the popular peer group stage a micro-drama where they report about and take action against offences of a particular girl (see also Evaldsson and Svahn 2012, 2017). Drawing on ethnomethodological membership categorisation analysis in sequences of actions (Sacks 1992; Stokoe 2006), the focus is on how the co-participants do gender as they make normative assessments that link 'category-bound actions' and 'identity-categories' with the person being assessed (Evaldsson 2007; Goodwin 2011). The methodology of extended fieldwork combined with an ethnomethodological and multimodal conversation analytical approach to stance was critical for the analysis (Goodwin 2006). Building on Goodwin's (2000) multimodal interactional approach to participation the analysis focuses on how co-participants make use of different modalities (talk, prosody, and the body) to perform actions and identities in interaction. The fact that video-recordings provide repeated possibilities for listening to and viewing the participants' embodied actions and language practices was important for transcribing and analysing the data.

The video excerpts are transcribed following conventions developed within CA (see transcription conventions) combined with images from video-recordings. The English translations are as close as possible to the Swedish verbatim records. To ensure the participants' anonymity, all names have been replaced with pseudonyms. The convention of single quotation marks indicates the contrastive membership categories ('fighting girl' versus 'coward') and category-bound actions ('fighting back' versus 'not standing up for oneself').

Instigating reports about fights to negatively assess a target of offence

The unfolding gossip-telling follows the general definition of gossip as a form of storytelling whereby pejorative information is passed about a (non-present) third party (Goodwin 1990). The analysis of the first excerpt focuses attention on how the girls who constitute the core group – Yaasmiin, Emine, Tara, and Azra (Figure 20.1) – organise their participation through instigating stories (Goodwin 1990). The instigated stories project a chain of actions that eventually culminate in a confrontation of the target (Evaldsson and Svahn 2017). The instigating story, as Shuman (1986: 51) notes, is aimed not so much at describing the offensive actions performed by the target (Rana) but at morally evaluating the behaviour and character of the person. In this process the co-participants take up oppositional stances and uses 'members' categories' (with negative valence), indexing gender inappropriate behaviours to discriminate the reported target from the members of the peer group.

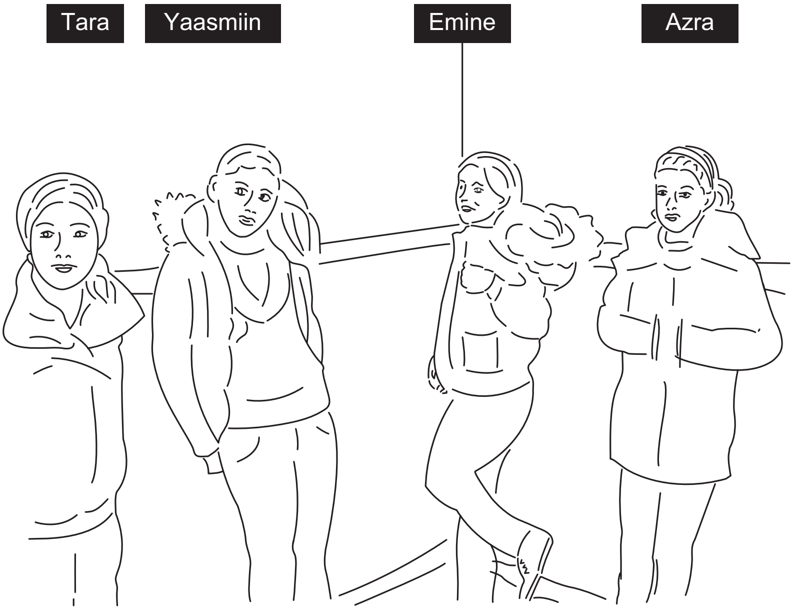

Figure 20.1 The four girls constituting the core group are standing in the hallway.

Excerpt (1)

1.	**BOY 1:**	↑Hallå:+ Beyan bråka me Rana innan-
		↑Hey: Beyan had a fight with Rana before-
		+--*Comes down the stairs*
2.	**EMINE:**	[↑Ahh:men hon ehh. ↑C-Phh
		[↑YEAhh: but she'shh. ↑REtar-ded
3.	**YAASMIIN:**	[↑JAAhh. ↑ASS↑Å::hh i klassrummet
		[↑YEAhh ↑LIK↑E::hh in the classroom
4.		[*((Steps forward))*
5.		(.hh.) hon sa så här till mej (.) hon bahh
		(.hh.) she said like this to me (.) she likehh
6.		>"asså va vill du jävla ↑FULING"<

>”like what do you want you fucking ↑UGLY person”<
7. >jahh. ba (.) >”↑Fuck you”<
>I’m like (.) “↑Fuck you”<
9. **ALL:** *((Laughter and mumbling comments))*

The transcription demonstrates how one of the girls, Rana, through the instigated story becomes subject to the other girls’ negative evaluation in ways that discredit both her actions and her membership in the girls’ peer group. To start with, one of the girls, Emine, who usually takes the lead, aligns with an instigated story about a fight between one marginal group member (Beyan) and the target (Rana), ‘↑Hey: Beyan had a fight with Rana’ (Excerpt 1, line 1). Emine’s use of the feminine pronoun ‘she’ together with an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz 1986) in the form of a third-person insult ‘Yea:h but she’s retarded’(Excerpt 1, line 2) positions Rana as expected to act in abnormal ways (Sacks 1992; Stokoe 2006). The use of the pejorative category ‘retarded’ (Sw. CP, i.e. Cerebral palsy) is shaped with a high-pitched voice to intensify the deviant gendered character of the target. Already in the following turn one girl, Yaasmiin, who stands close to Emine (Figure 20.1), affiliates with the negative evaluations. Her response cry ‘↑YEAhh ↑LIK↑E::hh’ (line 3) that is also shaped in a high-pitched voice (Goodwin and Alim 2010: 184) serves to announce a spectacular story.

By animating the actions performed by target, Rana, ‘hh.she said like this to me (.) she likehh’, the next teller (Yaasmiin) provides further evidence of the target’s offences. Goffman’s (1981) notion of footing (animator, principal, figure) is relevant here for showing how the teller locates the negative categorisation of the target in the ‘imaginary’ of the telling through an animated third-party report (lines 6–8). By re-enacting the reported insult >‘like what do you want you fucking ↑ugly person<‘ (line 6) the teller, Yaasmiin, casts the target as a principle figure (Rana) responsible for speaking badly and therefore not to be trusted (Evaldsson 2002; Goodwin 1990). In that way Yaasmiin manages to distance herself from the reported insult, indexing a contrastive category membership for herself as loyal to her gender.

By inserting herself as a figure in the imaginary of the telling, the teller (Yaasmiin) publicly justifies her acts of retaliation ‘(.) >I’m like “↑Fuck you”<‘. The first-person pronoun ‘I’ in the described comeback indexes a subjective stance associated with a feminine gender identity of ‘toughness’ and ‘assertiveness’ (Jackson 2011). Yaasmiin’s comeback is publicly staged to strengthen her own gendered identity of ‘standing up for oneself’. At the same time the telling offers affective cues to the other girls in the group to affiliate with her social position (Goodwin and Alim 2010). We can see here how the oppositional stance taken towards the targeted girl cast her as acting in abnormal ways while it indexes ‘toughness’ and ‘fighting back’ as gender-appropriate peer group conduct for the rest of the girls.

Upgrading reported insults in parallel third-party reports

As an interactional event, the girls gossip disputes are organised within shifting forms of ‘participation frameworks’ (Goodwin and. Goodwin 2004) of multiple actors who contribute in various ways. In what follows, a parallel third-party report in the form of a second story is produced by two other members (Samina and Beyan) of the peer group. The two girls, who at the time are in the hallway, produce a second story that topically ties to the first (Sacks 1992). The analysis will show how the gossip-telling creates a participation framework of two-against-one that allows the offended party to gain in gender reputation while the principal figure (Rana) loses hers (Evaldsson 2002; Goodwin 1990).

Excerpt (2a)

10.	**SAMINA:**	*((Comes down the stairs with Beyan))*
11.		↑Ja bahh >"titta på dej [själv du"< =
		↑I'm likehh (.) >"you look at [yourself"< =
12.	**BEYAN:**	[↑MEhhJ?
		[↑MEhh?
13.	**SAMINA:**	= hon bahh (.) ["↑Fuling"(.)
		= she likhhe (.) ["Ugly person'"(.)
14.	**BEYAN:**	[↑MEhhJ?
		[↑MEhh?
15.	**SAMINA:**	= ja bahh (.) "titta på dig själv du"-
		= I'm likehh (.) "you look at yourself"
16.	**BEYAN:**	↑MEhhJ? (.) kalla hon ↑ME:J FU;:L↑ING
		↑MEhh? (.) did she call ↑ME:: U:G↑LY

As can be seen in the transcription, the recipient of the instigated story (Beyan) inserts herself as a figure in Samina's telling and cooperates in the negative characterisation of the third party (i.e. the target Rana) (Goodwin 2011: 268). The affective response cry, '↑MEhh', from the recipient (Beyan) is marked by prosody, expressive amplitude, and high pitch. The self-reference '↑ME::' is then recycled three times (lines 12, 14, 16). The instigated story is designed by the teller (Samina) to place the recipient (Beyan) in the position of the one who has been offended: '↑MEhh (.) did she call ↑ME:: (.) UG↑LY', (line 16). The reported offence motivates a shift in footing or change of social positions for Beyan from 'victim of offence' to a new public identity – that of an 'accuser' that commits herself to confronting the target (Evaldsson and Svahn 2012, 2017) directly to her face (Excerpt 2b lines 18–20).

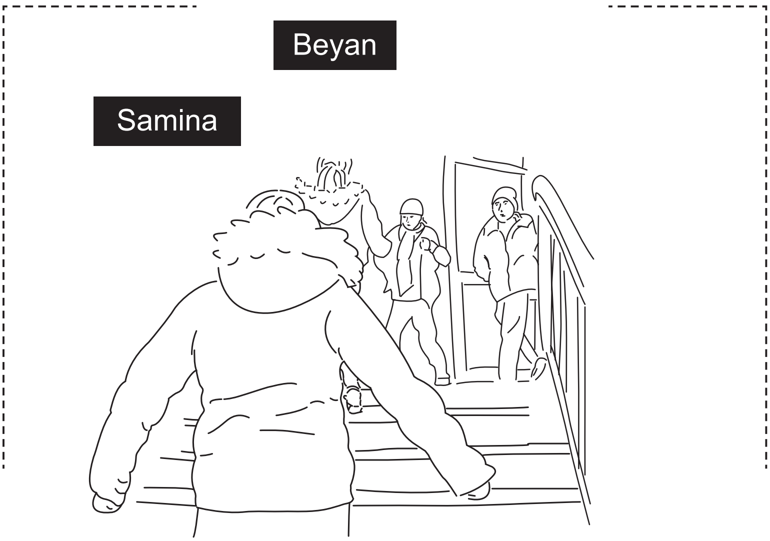

Figure 20.2 Beyan runs up the stairs, followed by Samina.

Excerpt (2b)

18. **BEYAN:** (*(Walks toward Rana followed by Samina))*
19. VARFÖR KALLA DU ME (.) ↑FULING (.)
    WHY DID YOU CALL ME (.) ↑UGLY PERSON (.)
20. för ja e ↑BÄTT– ja ser ↑BÄTTre ut än du gör
    cause I'm ↑BETT– I'm ↑BETTer looking than you
21. **RANA:** *((Mumbles something, turns away))*
22. **BEYAN:** ASS↑Åhh >↑VA inte så himla kon.hh↑sti<
    Lik↑ehh >↑DOn't be so darn wei.hh↑rd<
23. *((Turns around, starts walking down))*

The person referenced in Beyan's confrontational act WHY DID YOU CALL ME (.) "↑UGLY PERSON" (.) (line 19) builds further animosity towards the target for the reported insult of 'talking badly behind the back'. The derogatory category used by the target is contrasted with a description of herself as 'good looking': 'cause I'm ↑BETT– I'm ↑BETTer looking than you'. The contrastive person description shifts the meaning of the reported insult, 'ugly person', from 'being disloyal' to one's gender to indexing 'good looking' as valued gender attributes. However, instead of responding to the upgraded accusation Rana now turns her body away and leaves the scene (line 21). The withdrawal is commented on in a somewhat disappointed manner by Beyan, the accuser: 'Like↑hh ↑DOn't be so darn wei.hh↑rd' (line 22), transforming the acts of withdrawal into a sign of weakness or 'cowardice'.

As Sacks (1972) notes, category-bound actions point out the moral features of category concepts and thus the very accountability of certain absences or failures to perform the expected category-bound actions. Thus, failing to perform the normative peer group conduct of 'fighting back' warrants a degradation of the targeted girl's membership status.

Invoking gender categorisations in playful and stylised performances

The following analysis of the unfolding gossip dispute will further show how categorical attributes such as 'fighting back', 'standing up for oneself', and 'having a laugh', which are common masculine attributes for working-class boys (see for example Evaldsson 2002), are contingently re-enacted as a gender appropriate conduct when the girls organise their peer culture-in-action. The following analysis will focus attention on how shifts in footings (Goffman, 1981) from serious to playful modes permit the girls to manipulate and play with gender representations of themselves as 'victims of offences' in a deliberate stylised play-acting (Goodwin 2011: 268; Goodwin and Alim 2010).

The use of the collective pro-term 'we' (Sacks 1992: 144–149) in Emine's opening statement 'we can fi:ght with Rana' (line 1), projects a collective membership of a particular category, that of 'fighting girls'**.** The following imperative '[come ↑o::n', provides further resources for taking a collective stance and to stage an imaginary social space where the girls commit themselves to confront the target and to 'fight back' (see figures below and Excerpt 3).

Figure 20.3a The girls commit themselves to confront Rana.

Figure 20.3b Azra and Yaasmiin perform a catfight.

Excerpt (3)

1.	**EMINE:**	*VI KAN BRÅ:KA MED Rana, [KO↑::M
		WE CAN FI:GHT WITH RANA, [*COME ↑O::N*
		[*((Smiles))*
2.		(2.0)
3.	**AZRA:**	>ja hatar henne< jag kommer sl↑åss
		>I hate her< I'll fi↑ght

4.	**YAASMIIN:**	*Ja har lust att bar↑a	[så hä:ra om du var hon=
		I feel like j↑ust	[like *thi:s if you were her=*
5.			[*((Grabs Azra))*
6.		[=da:::ng da:::ng da:::ng	
7.		[*((Pretends to knee Azra three times))*	
8.	**AZRA:**	om du va ho:n -om du var ho:n jag	[skulle så hä↑r
		if you were he:r –if you were he:r I	[*would like thi↑s*
9.			[*((Pulls Yaasmiins ponytail))*
10.	**YAASMIIN**:	↑WHOA::::H↑	
11.		*((Starts laughing))*	
12.	**TARA:**	ca:↑t fight hon ska göra ca↑t fight	
		ca↑t fight she'll do a ca↑t fight	
13.		(1.8)	
14.	**YAASMIIN:**	*hon tar ca:t fight jag gör så	
		*she takes a ca:t fight I do like	
15.		här da:::ng da:::ng*	
		this da:::ng da:::ng*	
16.	**BEYAN:**	*((Looks into the camera))*	
17.		(hh.) ja:: (.) det h↑är e:: (.) galna ungdomar	
		(hh.) yea::h (.) th↑is i::s (.) crazy kids	

Already in the following turn one of the girls, Azra, affiliates with the collective membership. In verbalising a highly negative emotional stance, 'I ha:te her' (line 3), she upgrades her negative attitude towards the target for acting in gender-inappropriate ways while she commits herself to participate in a fight: 'I'll fight' (line 3) (Evaldsson and Svahn 2017). The animated use of the personal pronoun 'I' becomes gendered through the embodied conduct, exaggerated affect displays, and talk-in-interaction (Jackson 2011: 32). The affective self-reference 'I' in 'I hate her' and 'I'll fight' index shared gender norms of conduct by virtue of the strong subjective stance claims made for 'standing up for oneself' and 'taking a fight'; although the gendered character of the 'I' as a 'fighting girl' in contrast to the claimed identity for the target as a 'coward' is not explicitly used in the girls' interaction.

The two girls' highly emotional attitude towards 'taking a fight' and 'fighting back' sets the stage for the girls in the peer group to co-participate in a hypothetical fight play. Yaasmiin immediately aligns with the imaginary play framework staged by Azra, by embracing for herself the normative gender conduct of 'taking a fight', in terms of 'I feel like just' (line 4). She then directs Azra to play the role of an imaginary target, 'if you were her' (line 4). A combination of physical re-enactments, including pretend knee-kicks and a loud voice animating the sound effects of actual hits '↑DA:NG ↑DA:NG ↑DA:NG' (line 6), is used here to produce a stylised fight performance in which certain gender characteristics are re-enacted. In an embodied format tying, reiterating Yaasmiin's earlier performance, Azra stages a stylised performance in which she directs Yaasmiin to act as 'if you were her,' (line 8). Azra now treats Yaasmiin 'as if' she were the reported target, Rana, through pulling on her ponytail (Figure 20.3b). The stylised performance, keyed through the use of high-pitched prosody, excessive screams and laughter tokens (lines 10–11), demonstrates how the excitement lies not only in 'fighting back' but also in 'having fun' and 'putting down' other girls who engage in gender inappropriate conduct.

What is noteworthy is how the girls' stylised embodied performances of 'taking a fight' becomes recognisable as a culturally valued gendered activity for members of the girl group.

The fact that Tara playfully categorises Azra's stylised hairpulling as a 'cat fight' (line 12) warrants a contrastive category for the reported target as a 'coward'. In direct connection, Yaasmiin makes a stylised fight performance: 'I do like this DA:NG' (lines 14–15), which is staged to her own advantage. The stylised embodied re-enactments intensify the derogatory characterisations of the targeted girl as acting in ways that are, as Speer (2005: 119) notes, 'transgressive' for one's gender. Through the girls' collaboratively performed actions the targeted girl, Rana, is cast as a flawed character and as someone who does not even know how to fight. Although it is obvious to the present girls that the stylised fight performance does not produce authentic gender identities (lines 16–17), the imaginary framework has a serious side as it commits the co-participating girls to physically confront the target in the near future.

The multiplied use and consequentiality of a sexual abusive category 'slut'

In this micro-drama, which culminates in directed telling, chasing, and open fights, the gender-inappropriate behaviours and derogatory categories attributed to the offending party for the reported insults are gradually transformed and upgraded (Evaldsson and Svahn 2017). The last example focuses attention on the multifunctional valence of the sexual abusive category 'slut' in the reported insult 'WHY ARE YOU CALLING ME A SL↑U::T' (Excerpt 4, line 1). It will be shown how reports about offences have a strong performative character and power in that they position the target as accountable for the offences while they commit the person being attacked behind her back to confront the offender. The girls now end up chasing the targeted girl, Rana, across the schoolyard, with Samina taking the lead (see the figure below).

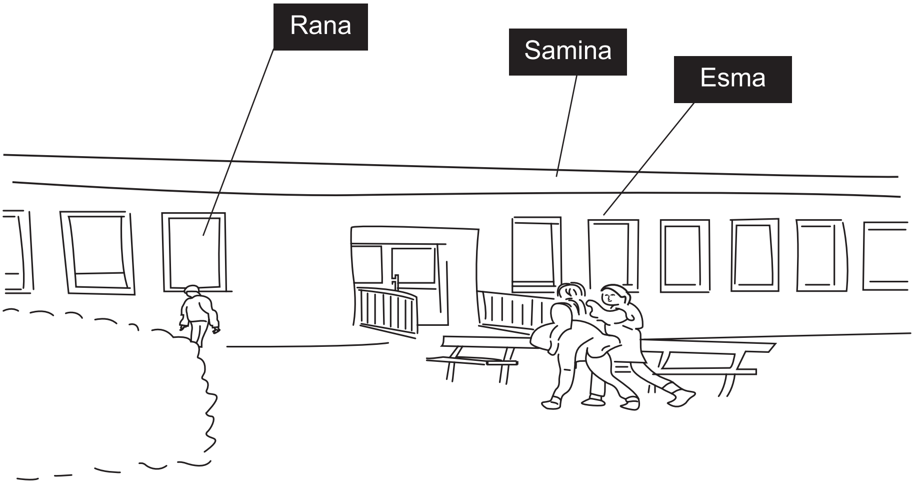

Figure 20.4 The girls end up chasing Rana.

Excerpt (4)

1. **SAMINA:** VARFÖR KALLAR DU MEJ H↑O::RA
   (→*Rana*) WHY ARE YOU CALLING ME A S↑U::T
2. **EMINE:** ä::rligt du har gjort de' förut också::
   (→Rana) ho::nestly you've done it before too::
3. **ESMA:** Sarah håller käften
   Sarah shuts ***up***

4.	**SAMINA:**	ingen annan går på:: henne:: no one else atta::cks he::r
5.	**RANA:**	SLUTA FÖLJA EFTER MEJ ↑HOROR (.) VAD S↑ÄGER NI? STOP FOLLOWING ME ↑SLUTS (.) WHAT DO YOU S↑AY?
6.	**SAMINA:**	*((Starts walking faster towards Rana))*
7.	**ESMA:**	[*((Tries to hold Samina back))*
8.	***(→Samina)***	[ski:t i henne [never mi:nd her
9.	**SAMINA:** ***(→RANA)***	KALLA 'RU OSS ↑HO::ROR? AR' YOU CALLIN' US ↑SLU::TS?
10.		*((Shakes off Esma's hand and starts running towards Rana))*

Through the girls' chasing activity, the targeted girl, Rana, is held directly responsible for the morally transgressive actions of sexually insulting another girl. The use of the sexual category 'slut' in the reported sexual insult portrays the target in a sexually derogatory ways (Brown and Chesney-Lind 2005). Calling someone a 'slut' is a common form of sexual regulation that circulates between girls in schools when they attack other girls for coming across as 'bad girls' (Brown and Chesney-Lind 2005). However, while the term 'slut' is both gendered and sexualised on a symbolic level, the girls' use of the pejorative category 'slut' indexes norm breakers of all types, not just those seeking sexual attention

By accusing the target for the reported sexual insult 'WHY ARE YOU CALLING ME A SL↑U::T' (Excerpt 4, line 1) Samina positions herself as a 'victim of a sexual offence' to justify her rights to 'fight back' (cf. Shuman 1986: 172). At the same time the public event of a reported sexual insult creates a micro-political environment of multiple parties who support the current accuser to oppose the offender. One of the girls, Emine, immediately aligns with Samina to build further animosity towards the reported offender. Through her use of an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz 1986), the targeted girl's behaviour is cast as extreme and longstanding: 'you've done it before too::' (line 2). The upgrading of the offence creates a public event of all-against-one with all the girls' now ending up chasing the target around the schoolyard. At this moment the accused and chased party, Rana, turns the sexual abuse towards her perpetrators to defend herself, 'STOP FOLLOWING ME (.) SLU::TS' (line 5). However Rana's come-back is turned against her in Samina's embodied response-work, which makes not only herself but the collectivity of girls into 'victims of a sexual offence': 'Ar' you callin' us slu::ts?' (line 9).

Thus, rather than simply presenting oneself as a 'successful aggressor', the reports of a sexual insult works to assert that the girls have been seriously offended (cf. Shuman 1986: 172). The accusation warrants 'fighting back' as justifiable feminine conduct for the girls in the peer group. The reported offences position also specific participants such as Samina with specific entitlement to take action and defend the moral order, 'no one else atta::cks he::r' (lines 4, 7–10) (cf. Goodwin 1990). Indeed, what is evident is that the right to take action against an offender by 'fighting back' is also charged with social consequences for the accuser who may lose her social status if she fails to carry through the attack.

Concluding comments

In this chapter I have shown how an ethnomethodological conversation analytical approach to membership categories in sequences (Stokoe 2006), combined with notions of stance and footing (Goffman 1981; Goodwin and Goodwin 2004; Goodwin 1990, 2006) make observable the emergent character of how young girls are doing gender through repeated stance performances in courses of unfolding gossip dispute activities (see also Evaldsson 2007; Evaldsson and Svahn 2012, 2017). It is in recognition of the multi-layered cultural meanings of categories, stances, and actions within specific contexts of use that an ethnomethodological approach to gender and language provides an empirically grounded analysis of situated actions that 'remains true to the participants' orientations' (Speer and Stokoe 2011: 25). What is noteworthy in the sequential analysis is how the participants' orientations to gender and norms of conduct become recognisable through negative person descriptions, assessments, and category-bound activities directed towards a target for failing to perform gender-appropriate conduct. The gender reference is also picked up in subsequent turns at talk and embodied conduct by the co-participating girls, to whom the gender inappropriate behaviours do not apply, who upgrade their group membership as they commit themselves to confront the target.

The ethnomethodological conversation analytical approach to membership categories demonstrates the importance of analysing the emergent propriety of social interaction and 'in-course' accomplishment of gender (Goodwin, 2011; Speer and Stokoe 2011; Stokoe 2006); and how an analysis of 'doing gender' incorporates a sensitivity to the contingencies that the participants themselves orient to in the temporal unfolding of actual events. Thus, from members' perspective what is a gender appropriate conduct become important to be attentive to in-courses-of-actions. As shown, if a girl does not manage to master proper interactional procedures her gendered identities and membership status in the group may easily become subject to questioning and contestation.

As has been found in earlier research of girls growing up in working-class communities, group members continuously strengthen alignments and commitments to shared norms of femininity through linguistic practices such as gossip disputes (Eder 1995; Evaldsson and Svahn 2012, 2017; Goodwin 1990, 2006; Shuman 1986). The sociolinguistic notion of stance and footing as developed by Goodwin (2006, 2007, 2011; Goodwin and Alim 2010) demonstrates the dynamic and performative nature of gendered identities and how the participating girls not only manipulate their actual selves but create multiple representations of self and others. For example, the girls' stylised play actions of a 'cat fight' signal the multiple and multi-layered character of actions, stances, and identities (Jaffe 2009); and how the form of a given act can be transformed through the use of multiple modalities (talk along with non-vocal performances and embodied conduct) (see Goodwin and Alim 2010) into something else.

The study of stance also demonstrates the importance of considering the more enduring interactional and social purposes, and the subject positions taken up more broadly (Bucholtz 2009). At a symbolic cultural level the repeated stance performances of degradation, either playful or serious, have enduring consequences for the positioning of the target. In the social context of gossip disputes in-group members draw upon gendered norms of conduct in their communities to cast particular girls as 'cowards' and as 'disloyal' to their gender, which in turn may have severe social consequences for specific girls (cf. Goodwin and Alim 2010).

Future directions

In conclusion, worth drawing on from the findings are some theoretical and methodological issues that are of relevance for future ethnographic research on gender, sexuality, and language in interaction; and that both girls and boys social worlds and peer language practices should be included in this endeavour.

Most important is the creative and agentive role children's peer interactions play in performing and simultaneously enacting a feminine or a masculine gender identity and group membership, and how in this process talk, voice, and the body, along with the material environment, are used to perform multifaceted membership categories, identities, and social relations (Goodwin and Kyratzis 2014 for an overview). Ethnographically based research and close analysis of talk- and bodies-in-interaction are both essential for capturing the routine local accomplishment of gender along with other social categories in children's everyday peer language practices; the more enduring social organisation and networks of its production; and the various situated and cultural practices in which it occurs. As noted by Goodwin and Kyratzis (2011) in their review of peer language research, it is 'through examining stance taking we can come to grips with the concerns that deeply animate participants'. The ways in which girls across groupings manipulate and play with gendered, ethnical and racial representations in peer interaction, point to the importance of exploring how local identifiers and broader social categories are co-constructed through playful stance taking and deliberate stylizations.

It is in this dialogical context that long-term ethnographic research of children's peer language practices becomes critical for making observable the situated and dynamic ways in which girls and boys, in transnational, culturally hybrid and multilingual settings perform social identities that are important to them in their social life with peers.

Transcription conventions

Transcripts are based on Jefferson notation (Jefferson 2004).

bu-u-	a cut-off of the preceding sound
[ ]	an overlap of speech
=	no break or gap between turns
(.)	brief interval (less than 0.2) within or between utterances
so:::rry	a sound stretch,the number of colons indicates a prolongation
<u>you</u>	underline indicates emphasis
↑	shifts into high pitch
↓	shifts into low pitch
DOG	loud talk is indicated by upper case
hey?	indicates a rising intonation
dog¿	a Spanish question mark indicates a substantial rise
here,	a comma indicates a continuing intonation
did.	a full stop indicates falling, final intonation
soft°	softer, quieter sounds
.>quick<	talk is speeded up
<slow>	talk is slowed down
( )	the talk is not audible
(house)	transcriber's best guess for the talk
together!	indicates an animated tone
((walking))	annotation of nonverbal activity

Note

1 The data in this chapter has been used in a coedited article with a different analytical focus (Evaldsson and Svahn 2017).

Further reading

Goodwin, M. H. and Kyratzis, A. (2011) 'Peer socialization', in Duranti, A., Ochs, E., and Schieffelin, B. (eds) *The handbook of language socialization*. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, pp. 365–390.

This chapter provides an overview of central research on children's peer language socialisation across diverse cultures and settings.

Goodwin, M. H. and Kyratzis, A. (2014) 'Language and gender in peer interactions among children and youth', in Erlich, S., Meyerhof, M., and Holmes, J. (eds) *The handbook of language, gender, and sexuality*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, pp. 509–528.

This chapter presents an in-depth review of the different paradigms that have influenced and continue to influence research on the language and gender of children and youths among peers.

Ochs, E. (1992) 'Indexing gender', in Duranti, A. and Goodwin, C. (eds) *Rethinking context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 335–358.

In this chapter, Ochs presents her pioneering work on indexing gender and arguments for an indexical perspective on gender as mediated by stance.

Speer, S. and Stokoe, L. (2011) 'An introduction to conversation and gender', in Speer, S. and Stokoe, L. (eds) *Conversation and gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–28.

This edited volume brings together a range of studies on gender using a conversation analytic approach, examining children's play, helpline calls, family interaction, social work, and mediation.

West, C. and Zimmerman, D. (2009) 'Accounting for doing gender', *Gender and Society*, 23(1), pp. 112–122.

In this article, West and Zimmerman reflect on their classical ethnomethodological work (West and Zimmerman 1987) on 'doing gender' and how the concept has been used among other researchers with different theoretical and methodological approaches.

Related topics

The accomplishment of gender in interaction: ethnomethodological and conversation analytic approaches to gender; feminist conversation analysis: examining violence against women; the accomplishment of gender in interaction: ethnomethodological and conversation analytic approaches to gender; gender and sexuality normativities; applying queer theory to language, gender, and sexuality research in schools.

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Part V

Sociocultural and critical approaches

21

Language, gender, and sexuality

Reflections on the field's ongoing critical engagement with the sociopolitical landscape

Lia Litosseliti (Part V lead)

Introduction

I started writing this chapter at a particularly socially and politically turbulent time in 2020. The world was in the grip of the COVID-19 global pandemic, which put many of us in 'lockdown' within our homes and cities, and soon started to expose our societies' various pressure points and inequalities. At the same time, the death of George Floyd at the hands of the police in the USA sparked the beginning of a wave of anti-racism solidarity protests around the world, which continue globally and locally as I write. During that time, I was reminded by Michel deGraff, in his talk (aovivo.abralin.org – June 2020) on Black lives and the politics of linguistics and education in post-colonies, of the Linguistic Society of America's statement that 'given our distinct insights into communication and culture, linguists are well positioned to contribute to social justice and equality'. It could not have been a more suitable time, then, to reflect on equality and social justice, and specifically on the focus of this section of this volume, on sociocultural and sociopolitical approaches within the language, gender, and sexuality (LGS) field.

The field has been, since its inception, inherently concerned with the examination of language and gender – and later, language, gender, and sexuality – as sociocultural phenomena, explored within social settings, domains, contexts, and cultures. Additionally, LGS scholars have developed extensive and rich analyses of the multi-faceted relationships between language, gender, sexuality, and society, and of the effects of language use within societies and vice versa. Excluding work in formal linguistics focusing exclusively on parts and features of language such as grammatical gender or pronouns (and not on the *use* of grammatical gender and pronouns), the vast majority of LGS work could be broadly described under the umbrella term of sociocultural or socially oriented linguistic scholarship, in being concerned with the above-mentioned social contexts, relationships, and effects. The work cited in this chapter on sociocultural and sociopolitical approaches, accordingly, comes from all the traditions included in the eight parts of this volume; and scholars in all of these traditions have helped advance the field as a whole, including by engaging with many perspectives in social and feminist theory and other disciplines.

Sociolinguistics is an apt example of a substantial body of work within sociocultural linguistics that reflects the influence of other disciplines (linguistic anthropology, sociology, psychology, communications, literary theory) and shows how linguistic, cognitive, ideological, stylistic, cultural, and social dimensions are inextricably intertwined – for example in studies of the prestige of languages and language varieties. However, the increasingly narrow association of the term sociolinguistics with quantitative studies of linguistic features and their correlation to sociological variables, has led to a distinction between the body of work in 'sociolinguistics' and the umbrella term of 'sociocultural linguistics' – the latter denoting 'the broad interdisciplinary field concerned with the intersection of language, culture, and society' (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 5). And further, within the diverse sociocultural linguistics scholarship, some theoretical and methodological approaches will be distinct from others in their particular emphasis on *political* dimensions (for example, these are at the centre of critical discourse analysis, see below) and on *cultural* dimensions (which are often key, for example, in anthropology and ethnography).

In this chapter, I map the terrain of the language, gender, and sexuality field's ongoing critical engagement with the sociopolitical landscape, as it expanded and became more diverse over the decades. I have chosen to refer to the 'sociopolitical' landscape as a more encompassing term than 'social' or 'sociocultural' and to highlight the field's development as inextricably linked with sociopolitical struggles – notably struggles for women's, civil, and LGBT+ rights. I start with the field's long-standing close links with feminism and the practice of feminist politics (first section). I then consider three broad areas where the field has expanded in recent years – and which have involved/ necessitated and further led to the field explicitly engaging with sociopolitical developments: attention to intersectionality (second section); the inclusion of sexuality scholarship (third section); and the development of critical methodologies, including through dialogue with other disciplines (fourth section). In the fourth section I also draw from my own work in order to illustrate the importance of a continuing and renewed engagement with feminist theory/methodology and other disciplines for our field. Finally, I introduce the four contributions which follow in this part of the volume.

The chapter is not intended as a comprehensive review; rather I am being selective in my references to existing studies, in order to illustrate key strands of LGS work and perspectives. In addition, I highlight texts on key developments and debates for those new to the field (in this respect, excellent starting points are Bucholtz 2014, McElhinny 2014, and Zimman and Hall's 2016 bibliography on language, gender, and sexuality).

The field's feminist foundations

The feminist movement – a movement of political campaigning for reforms on different sets of ideas such as women's suffrage, access to education and employment, sexual violence, equal pay, and reproductive rights – is often described through a wave metaphor. First-wave feminism is associated with the suffragette women's movement and the struggles for political equality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Second-wave feminism, from the early 1960s to the 1980s, promoted social equality for women, reproductive freedom, and political resistance against women's casual and systemic oppression inside and outside the home. Third-wave feminism, from the early 1990s (though there is disagreement about its chronology), can be described as a diffuse movement, embracing intersectional feminism and marginalised groups and advocating for the multiplicity and performativity of gender. Finally, there is considerable debate about whether the digitally driven, sex-positive, queer, #MeToo, inter-generational feminism of the last decade or so can be described as a fourth wave.

Since the second wave, feminism has been a fundamental influence on language, gender, and sexuality work. The different feminisms developed over time may have different perspectives and emphases, but they share a commitment to addressing social/gender inequality. In the same vein, feminist linguists share an explicit or implicit commitment to connecting gendered-related linguistic phenomena to gender inequality or discrimination, even though they take varying theoretical and methodological perspectives in fulfilling this commitment.

In her 2014 review of the feminist foundations of LGS research, Bucholtz traces the theoretical roots of feminist linguistics back to the difference-based theories that emerged during feminism's second wave. From the early days of Lakoff (1975) and the 'sexist language' debates, to notions of gender 'dominance' of men over women through small-scale social interactions, to the '(cultural) difference' approach and theorisations of female talk, these theories start from a typically binary 'difference' position (women's/girls' language use being different from men's/boys') and with women's experience at the centre. Their merits and omissions have been extensively discussed in both texts (e.g. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013; Ehrlich et al. 2014; Litosseliti 2006) and LGS curricula over time, typically treated as overlapping theories of deficit (liberal feminism), difference (cultural feminism), and dominance (radical feminism) (Cameron 1995).

It is not my intention to reproduce the difference paradigms' contributions and gaps here. Rather, the point in the context of my discussion of the field's long-standing engagement with feminist politics and social inequality, is that these theories were a product of their political time: a time of second-wave feminist consciousness-raising around civil and women's rights, action to increase women's visibility and participation in the public sphere, and campaigns against sexism/sex discrimination in all domains of social life. Put differently, these paradigms, too, took shape in a particularly fertile environment for both explicit critiques and activism around social and gender inequality. And as the environment kept changing over time, so did the LGS field (more on which later). The field's long-term intimacy with feminism notwithstanding, not all LGS work (back then and today) can be described as *feminist* linguistics work, because its stake 'in feminism as a political movement or theory may not be evident or explicit' (Litosseliti, 2006: 22); and because 'not all of it shares a political commitment to social justice. [Rather, some of it] seeks simply to correlate language patterns with categories of gender and / or sexuality' (Bucholtz 2014: 23–24). Nevertheless, feminist linguists have been instrumental to the field's development from the start and continue to take the field in new sociopolitically committed directions (see below).

Not surprisingly, these directions are not necessarily or straightforwardly unified. A case in point is material feminist linguistic approaches (Shankar and Cavanaugh 2012), which arose within linguistic anthropology. These approaches are concerned with the material and physical conditions of language use and their role on the social production of gender/gender hierarchies – for example, the conditions that enable or restrict access to education, higher or lower economic status, and workplace and career opportunities. These approaches cannot be categorised in terms of perspective as easily as the 'difference' approaches can. As seen in reviews of examples of this work (Bucholtz 2014; Zimman and Hall 2016), they include an array of studies, from gender, class, and variation, to gendered linguistic labour in the home, to language and gendered embodied practices. The material effects of language/discourses of gender and sexuality are also discussed in several workplace studies within this tradition of research: Hall's (1995) study on the selling of stereotyped women's language in phone sex; Toerien and Kitzinger (2007) on emotional labour in a UK beauty salon; Holmes (2006, 2014) on the gendering of requests and refusals in New Zealand factories; Cameron (2000) on feminine communicative styles in UK call centres; and Ostermann (2003) on affiliative strategies at an all-female police station and feminist crisis-intervention centre in Brazil. I return to material feminist linguistic approaches and more recent work on language and political economy towards the end of this chapter.

Since the early days, LGS research has developed to become wider and more diverse. In the mid-1990s, under the influence of the 'discursive turn' in social theory and post-structuralism (see Part VI, this volume), the conceptualisation of gender as something we do or accomplish in discourse and gender identities being constructed in a context-situated and fluid process of negotiation, appropriation, and restatement (see e.g. Litosseliti 2006; McEntee-Atalianis 2019) has added greater nuance, context-specificity, and analytical complexity to language, gender, and sexuality work. The fragmentation of feminism into feminisms (liberal, radical, multicultural, postcolonial, etc.), and particularly the third-wave emphasis on the multiplicity and performativity of gender, have also led to a problematisation of gender categories as fixed or stable – especially so when categories like race, class, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation are also taken into account.

Over time, the field grew and benefitted from the involvement of new language scholars from a range of fields, such as anthropology, communication, education, linguistics, psychology, sociology, and gender studies. It also benefitted from a wider array of global and cross-cultural perspectives, illustrated in studies mentioned later in this chapter; in examples of work from Poland, Brazil, Japan, the Middle East, and North Africa (Ehrlich et al. 2014), Japan (e.g. Okamoto and Shibamoto Smith 2004), sub-Saharan Africa (Atanga et al. 2012), Greece (Canakis et al. 2010), etc.; and in Global South geopolitical perspectives that question the dominance of Northern scholarship in our field (see Milani and Lazar 2017).

Moreover, contrary to the studies of the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s, LGS investigations since the mid-1990s have extended their focus beyond white, straight, middle-class women, and have included a focus on men/masculinity as well as on sexualities (see below). In these ways, the field became more wide-ranging and diverse, as well as more critical (although see the fourth section later): while a single defined set of feminist goals became less of a focus, LGS scholars began to interact with critical feminist work on race, colonialism/post-colonialism, multiculturalism, femininities/masculinities and sexuality.

In what follows, I consider three key areas where, in addition to the foundational and ongoing engagement with feminism, the LGS field has expanded in recent decades – and which have involved and further led to the field explicitly engaging with the broader sociopolitical landscape: attention to intersectionality; the inclusion of sexuality scholarship; and the development of critical methodologies, including through dialogue with other disciplines.

Intersectionality

As the field expanded, it became more engaged with the ways in which gender intersects (particularly evident in close analyses of interaction) with other social dimensions or forms of identity, such as race, social class, age, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality. Intersectionality (see also Leppänen and Tapionkaski, this volume) is a theoretical response by black feminist scholars who sought to understand black women's particular experiences (e.g. Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1991), but more generally it is a theoretical response that recognises that the interplay of different dimensions of social life plays an important – and neglected – role in maintaining systems of oppression.

Intersectionality theory can be usefully disruptive. Most evidently, it questions the second-wave feminist assumption of similarity of experience among women and its primary focus on the concerns of white middle-class heterosexual women (Hancock 2007; Smooth 2011; Weldon 2008). In this sense, it is a useful tool for holding a movement, or academic field, or research paradigm to account, by questioning some of its own hegemonies and exclusions. In addition, intersectional perspectives further disrupt the idea of a linear singular identity (that there is one way of being a woman, or being black, or being gay, and so on), thereby shifting the attention to non-normative categories.

Intersectional perspectives within the LGS field are integral to many sociolinguistic studies (e.g. see Levon 2015; Levon and Mendes 2016) and much of the work on the role of language in the doing of racial and ethnoracial identity work (e.g. Bucholtz 2011 on whiteness; Cashman 2018 and Mendoza-Denton 2008 on Latinx communities; Lanehart 2009 on African-American women). In addition, LGS research on masculinities – as part of the post-1990s language and masculinity scholarship (Benwell 2014; Cameron 1997; Coates 2003; Johnson and Meinhof 1997) which started to examine men's previously neglected gendered lives as well as problematise hegemonic masculinity – have used an intersectional lens to highlight the performance of hegemonic and non-normative masculinities across different social groups (e.g. Kiesling 2005; Milani 2015). In the past five years, there has also been a proliferation of intersectional perspectives in the field – for example, Candelas de la Ossa's 2019 study on guidance for domestic abuse survivors, Baker and Levon's 2016 examination of racialised and classed masculinities in print UK media, Trechter 2014 on language and ethnicity intersections, and several studies in the *Gender and Language* special issue on intersectionality, language, and queer lives (Gray and Cooke 2018).

This body of work moves the field forward by showing the inclusions and exclusions made possible at the (previously neglected) intersections, but also by adding to calls for more, and more developed, LGS intersectional approaches. Within language studies, Romero (2017) for example has argued the need to develop variable-with-variable intersectional approaches (rather than a variable-by-variable approach to gender or race identity), to facilitate more complex, nuanced understandings of identities. Levon (2015) has also argued for the need to integrate intersectionality theory and analysis more fully in language, gender, and sexuality research, if we want to increase our understanding of how social inequalities are produced (and constructed and resisted) by interacting axes of social differentiation. At the same time, it is important to consider that intersectional perspectives require new and nuanced methodological paradigms that can deal with complexity (Celis et al. 2013). And as importantly, scholars also caution against the ubiquitous use of intersectionality to draw attention to the lived experiences of those in the margins without actually engaging with the intersectional systems that produce and maintain oppression (Nash 2008). This broader point also applies to scholarship on sexuality, to which I now turn.

Sexuality

Another way in which the LGS field became wider, as it continued to interact with different social theories and the changing sociopolitical environment, has been through encompassing, in the 1990s, critical work on the discursive and material character of sexuality.

(Sexuality and gender are closely intertwined (see e.g. McElhinny 2014). I discuss sexuality separately here for the purposes of this chapter's structure.)

Similarly to the recognition of the historic lack of intersectional perspectives, language and gender scholars increasingly came to recognise the persistence of gender binaries and heteronormativity that had implicitly shaped previous work in the field (see Zimman et al. 2014), as they began to engage with the emergent field of queer theory/queer feminism (Butler 1990). Queer theory is an interdisciplinary theoretical approach that draws on a range of methodological paradigms in order to critique and destabilise taken-for-granted notions of heteronormativity and of gender as an a priori category (see Sauntson, this volume). The LGS field's shift towards incorporating these perspectives is reflected in the inclusion of *sexuality* in how the field has been referred to since the mid-1990s and in the establishment in 2012 of the *Journal of Language and Sexuality*. This shift is discussed by, among others, Cameron and Kulick (2003), and Motschenbacher and Stegu in their 2013 special issue on queer linguistics for *Discourse & Society*.

The overarching aim of queer linguistics scholarship (see Bucholtz and Hall 2004; Cameron and Kulick 2003; Motschenbacher 2010) is to bring a linguistic lens to the critical examination of sexuality and the relationship between gender and sexual identities and practices – including heterosexual identities and practices. Motschenbacher and Stegu (2013: 522) define queer linguistics as 'critical heteronormativity research from a linguistic point of view', with a focus on the interrogation of privileged and normative sexualities, and a concern for exposing the resulting forms of discrimination. As part of such interrogation, queer linguistics scholarship also acknowledges that language and gender research does not fully capture the linguistic dimensions of desire, affect, and emotion (for debates, see Kulick 2000 alongside Bucholtz and Hall 2004; also Queen 2014). Further, incorporating and building on intersectionality perspectives, this body of work also acknowledges that sexuality needs to be viewed as embedded within broader formations of gender, race, ethnicity, ability, economic status, etc. (Leap and Motschenbacher 2012).

Linguistic approaches to sexuality have broadly focused on the ways in which people enact sexuality through language, as well as the ways in which sexual identities are represented linguistically in a range of settings. More precisely, they can be summarised as investigations of three types of questions (Bucholtz 2014: 36): 'linguistic aspects of the social and political struggle of LGBT groups and individuals', 'the linguistic practices of particular LGBT-identified groups', and 'discursive representations of LGBT identities by both ingroup and outgroup members'.

For example, several sociolinguistic variation studies have examined the role of different variables of sociolinguistic practice – and their interplay – in the negotiation of sexuality (see e.g. Levon 2010). Such work combines micro-level linguistic analysis with a queer linguistics concern with broader social dimensions of power, normativity, inclusion, and exclusion. Queer linguistic studies often draw on a range of different methodologies (Sauntson, this volume), but are united in their consistent effort to question gender binaries and heteronormative/hegemonic gender and sexual subjectivities (see, among others, Barrett 1999; Jones 2012; Zimman and Hall 2010). In many cases, such questioning goes hand in hand with the questioning of Western binaries, as illustrated in, among others, Besnier's 2003 ethnography-based study of transgendered men in Tonga, Kulick's (1998) and Borba and Ostermann's (2007) studies on *travesti* identities in Brazil, Gaudio's 2009 study on the linguistic strategies used by the Nigerian *'yan daudu* and Hall's 2005 work with transgender *kotis* in India. In addition, recent research explores language use and transgender, intersex, and genderqueer identities in different sociocultural contexts around the world (Zimman et al. 2014).

In the final section that follows, I turn to the role of critical and cross-disciplinary methodologies in the LGS field and discuss some recent and new directions.

Critical methodological frameworks and cross-disciplinary bridges

In addition to critical theorisations, the language, gender, and sexuality field's attention to sociopolitical issues is also reflected in its development of critical/feminist methodological approaches. Over the last 20 years, we have witnessed developments in feminist conversation analysis (Kitzinger 2000; Speer 2005; Weatherall and Tennent this volume), feminist pragmatics (Christie 2000), and feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis (Baxter 2008, see also Mackenzie this volume). In addition, probably the most deliberate feminist effort to unite scholarship with political struggle against systemic oppression and discrimination can be found in feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) (Lazar 2005, 2007). FCDA, at the nexus of critical discourse analysis and feminist studies, examines language use as situated in the sociopolitical discourses that constitute and maintain power hierarchies, with a particular interest in hierarchically gendered social orders. FCDA – like other emerging critical approaches to the study of the environment, technology, and the global political economy (I touch on the latter towards the end of this chapter) – bring together materialist and discursive perspectives; this synthesis has the potential to 'influence the field as a whole, as well as feminism more generally' (Bucholtz 2014: 32).

The development of critical methodological frameworks in the field has opened up new questions about the nature of LGS scholarship. Notably, it has given impetus to ongoing debates on the strengths and limitations of 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' approaches that focus on micro- and macro-level analyses respectively. Discussions of these dimensions can be found in, among others, Litosseliti (2018) and in Harrington et al. (2008) – the latter focusing on micro/macro LGS analyses in sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics, discursive psychology, CA, CDA, FPDA, and queer linguistics. For the purposes of this chapter, I will only highlight some notable examples of micro–macro considerations here.

Critical discourse analysts, for example, typically take a materialist approach by looking at how discourses in key social domains (media, politics, workplaces, education) construct power relations, hierarchies, and ideologies (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999; Weiss and Wodak 2003) – including those related to gender, sexuality, and heteronormativity. They look beyond the text and the data for interdiscursive patterns and macro-processes situated in broader sociocultural and historical contexts. They are often criticised (e.g. by conversation analysts) for having an ideological and politically motivated agenda, for cherry-picking texts to suit their agenda (see Murphy and Palma-Fahey this volume), and 'seeing individuals as an effect of discourse, thereby granting them limited agency' (McEntee-Atalianis 2019: 23). In contrast, ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts take an emic approach, starting with a micro-level detailed examination of interaction and speakers' orientations, 'avoiding reference to cognitive processes, discourses or speaker intention. They in turn have been criticised for taking a narrow and decontextualized focus on short extracts of talk without attending to broader cultural, social or political issues' (ibid.: 24).

However, while the questioning of inequalities, ideological hegemonic structures, and their consequences (particularly for those less powerful or in the margins) is central and explicit in the 'top-down' CDA approaches, other, self-described as 'bottom-up', approaches are also interested in such questioning. As Hall and Davis (this volume) put it, ethnographers also engage with questions of power and broader social hierarchies; this engagement helps produce more robust analyses and may also 'persuade our colleagues in other socially oriented fields that language, no matter how small, matters to societal organizations of gender and sexuality' (ibid.).

The development of critical *feminist* frameworks in particular in the field has also raised questions about the field's continuing and/or renewed engagement with feminist theory. I now turn to the importance of such engagement, which, similarly to Bucholtz (2014) and others, I argue that is necessary for combining different perspectives, developing new theoretical and methodological approaches, and linking more closely to advocacy work. The example from our work that follows is situated within a broader call by other LGS scholars for a continuing engagement with feminism and a dialogue with feminist scholarship in other fields. Many have argued against the field losing sight of its political or 'analytical activism' orientation (Holmes and Meyerhoff 2003; Lazar 2007, 2014; Litosseliti 2006; McElhinny and Mills 2007; Mills and Mullany 2011). Cameron (2006, 2009) notably has warned against a diminished preoccupation with political collective action as a result of the field's interest in local linguistic practice, and with the wider increased emphasis upon questions of identity – the shift or 'identity turn' away from 'what can be done' to 'who I am' – also echoed in Lazar's (2009) discussion of the shift from 'we-feminism' to 'I-feminism'. Cameron has again recently (2020) argued that the field's focus on social identity and performance has shifted attention away from issues of power and real-world inequalities.

In the example of my work with Gill and Favaro (Litosseliti et al. 2019), we reaffirm the importance of a renewed political voice and motivation for the LGS field, while responding to calls for new forms of feminist linguistic analysis in a postfeminist landscape (Mills 2012) – that is, analysis that helps us understand the various shifting postfeminist representations of feminism and femininity (Lazar 2014) vis-à-vis 'the global neo-liberal discourse of postfeminism' (Lazar 2007: 154). In particular, we highlight the analytic value of the concept of 'postfeminism as a sensibility' for the LGS field, where it remains under-explored, in contrast with cultural, media, and gender studies, where it has become central to feminist scholarship (Gill 2007, 2016; McRobbie 2009; Tasker and Negra 2007). Starting with the work of scholars in these fields, who take postfeminism as their object of critical inquiry as well as an analytic category for cultural critique, we illustrate how postfeminist themes or tropes can play out in contemporary workplace policies. We focus on the analysis of one text on the idea of 'agile working'. Using this text, we demonstrate the relationship between postfeminism and language-use that on the surface celebrates 'choice' and 'diversity' while in fact co-opting these ideas for profit and erasing any notions of collective struggle for gender equality (see Litosseliti et al. 2019 for full discussion). While this work takes a similar approach to other discourse analytic work with an interest in the discursive resources that structure how gender and gender relations are made sense of, and what inequalities are created therein, it does so by allying fine-grained analysis of language with critical work outside linguistics on postfeminism as a cultural sensibility. We argue that there is both a need and an opportunity for LGS scholars to engage with such cross-disciplinary work, in order to understand current broader cultural patterns, such as how the mainstreaming of workplace policies on gender diversity can, in a seemingly paradoxical way, have depoliticising effects. By expanding our theoretical and analytical toolkit we can also understand 'how current policy agendas can create new hierarchies and inequalities in the current moment' (Litosseliti et al. 2019: 17).

Arguably, in the current moment, the potential for our field to continue to learn (as it always has) in interaction with other fields and disciplines is more important than ever. The contours and practices of the current sociopolitical landscape certainly present opportunities, as well as challenges, for critical LGS examination. Some fertile areas for such examination that have emerged in the field in recent years and are likely to intensify, include, among others, those below.

Gender, globalisation, and political economy

Globalisation continues to influence the production of social meaning and the use of language within shifting, and sometimes competing, global and local contexts. McElhinny's (2007) collection on language, gender, and globalisation has provided theorisations of the effect of globalisation on language and gender in different national contexts and settings. Other scholars have looked at the role of English as an index of global prestige, desire, and sexual identity (e.g. Hall 2009; Leap 2010; Piller and Takahashi 2006). Much of the work in this area falls under material feminist work in language and political economy, which investigates the material conditions of language-use and the commodification of language, in spaces such as workplaces, in late capitalism. For example, Piller and Takahashi (2010) have explored the gendered work of transnational migrant women and the inequalities and ideologies therein. As wealth and social inequalities widen, and as labour mobility, migration, immigration, borders, diaspora, and citizenship continue to be contested and controversial issues, there is significant scope for more LGS work and critique in these areas.

Emerging feminisms/postfeminism, and neoliberalism

As discussed, LGS scholarship in the proliferation of feminisms and in particular postfeminism vis-à-vis neoliberalism has been emerging (Glapka 2018; Lazar 2014; Litosseliti et al. 2019), and linguistic analyses of the ways in which feminism is appropriated to serve and legitimate neoliberalism are much needed. Examples of LGS studies addressing neoliberalism have included Inoue (2007) on the linguistic governmentality of neoliberalism and analyses of gender and language in the neoliberal university (e.g. Goncalves 2019), among others. LGS scholars are well placed to examine how neoliberalism, austerity, and the various processes of de-democratisation (Prügl 2015; Verloo 2011) construct and affect women, men, LGBT+, and trans communities. They can also contribute further to discussions of the recent resurgence of interest in feminism, particularly through the use of new forms of activism, such as social-media technologies (Banyard 2010); and of current issues such as sexualised culture, domestic and sexual violence, and the anti-gender populist movements currently becoming more vocal and mainstream (Borba et al. 2020).

Gender and politics/political participation; intersectional approaches to inequalities

Recent scholarship on gender, language, and politics, gender in media coverage of political campaigns, and gender equality policies (e.g. Cameron and Shaw 2016; Lombardo and Forest 2012; Shaw 2020) illustrates the relevance of cross-disciplinary methods from linguistics and political science for the analysis of women's political representation. Gender and politics scholars have been calling for more robust analyses of the role gender and sexuality language/discourses play in constituting political actors and structures (e.g. Celis et al. 2013); they also point to the need to integrate accounts of regimes, institutions, and other structural dimensions of gender and politics with issues such as identity, self-understanding, and other subjective, micro-level phenomena (ibid.). Further, there is need for more interdisciplinary intersectional approaches to inequalities, as highlighted by both linguists (e.g. Charity Hudley 2015) and gender and politics scholars (e.g. Krizsan et al. 2012).

On a different and final note, intersectional approaches to inequalities, including health inequalities, are also likely to grow in prominence in the post-pandemic landscape. It is early days at the time of writing, but it is clear that the COVID-19 global pandemic and its management are affecting groups differently at the intersections of gender, race, class, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status; and that language and other practices in the workplace, home, education, and public life are being altered in far-reaching ways. Language, gender, and sexuality scholars are well placed – especially in collaboration with other disciplines – to contribute new analyses on (to name a few) the language/discourses/narratives of the pandemic; public health communications and policies; COVID-19 media discourses; interaction among scientists, politicians, and the public; expert discourses in the sense-making and management of the pandemic; discourses and policies on domestic violence during the pandemic; the effects of the pandemic on LGBT+ and other marginalised groups; and the discursive and material dimensions of caring, including shifts in gender roles during and after lockdown measures.

The four chapters in Part V

Sauntson's chapter sees the self-proclaimed political motivations of queer linguistics as a particular strength for investigating gender and sexuality identities in educational contexts, where a social justice orientation is important. The chapter exemplifies how a 'queer applied linguistics' (QAL) framework – as an extension of a critical applied linguistics concern with inequalities – can highlight social inequality problems around gender and sexuality in schools. In addition, Sauntson reinforces the argument that queer linguistics lends itself to being combined with other established methodologies by applying QAL concepts (temporality, spatiality, normativity) to a critical discourse analysis of her interview and interactional data with LGBT+ young people and educators. The chapter adds to our understanding of the discursive construction of restrictive gender binaries and heteronormativity, and their consequences within education settings; and, as importantly, it takes a critical set of tools and methodologies and combines them to enable, in Sauntson's words, 'a greater focus on how macro-discourses and ideologies around sexuality are embedded and inscribed within micro-interactions'. In both these ways, it is an excellent illustration of how far the field has come in engaging with, adapting, and advancing social theory concepts and critical approaches.

Ehrlich and Romaniuk's chapter is also concerned with exposing larger patterns of gender inequalities, in this case through the application of a 'textual trajectory' approach to discourse. Textual trajectories is an approach invested in making visible and denaturalising the workings of social power, control, and inequality. It does this through analysis of the re-contextualisation and meaning transformation of texts across social space and time. Through two examples of analyses in legal and media settings, the authors demonstrate how gendered meanings are transformed and gender inequalities perpetuated as texts travel across settings and are re-contextualised. In the first example, from a sexual assault trial, Ehrlich and Romaniuk's close analysis shows how a strategic act of submission was reconfigured as a sexual consent signal; in the second example, textual trajectories show how the meaning of Hilary Clinton's laughter was transformed as it moved across media environments, from an interactional strategy to a characteristic of her negative, gendered persona. Crucially, these meaning transformations were captured by looking at the interplay of texts within a trajectory, rather than single, one-time instances of texts. The chapter makes a convincing case for a method with the potential to identify the basis for damaging ideological assumptions in institutional settings, an area where politically engaged scholarship is much needed.

In the third chapter in Part V, Murphy and Palma-Fahey investigate the representation of gay marriage and the Irish Mammy stereotype in the TV series *Mrs Brown's Boys*. The particular Irish sociocultural and sociopolitical context – especially the Irish Referendum on marriage equality – is key to understanding the interplay between these representations. The centrality of the changing sociopolitical environment around gender and sexuality in this context guides the authors' use of CDA for their analysis, which they combine with corpus linguistics methods/the use of concordance lines to look at patterns in representation. The chapter emphasises the merits of critically engaging with and combining these methodologies, to usefully bring together micro- and macro-perspectives. At the same time, the media data presented capture some current political struggles in a rapidly changing society; they offer an insightful snapshot of the intersections of language, gender, sexuality, and national identity at the current moment, but which will certainly warrant further investigation as they shift and evolve.

In the last chapter of Part V, Cameron turns to a different, important set of questions: how could LGS scholars make their work accessible and applicable outside academia? What knowledge should scholars seek to communicate, to what audiences, and for what purposes? What are the benefits and costs of such advocacy and public engagement work? Those of us who are invited to communicate LGS research to non-academic audiences will find Cameron's discussion invaluable. She first maps the current terrain of public engagement, which is characterised by feminist and non-feminist agendas co-existing and competing in a public marketplace of ideas; increased pressure on researchers to do public engagement; a multitude of media platforms being available for this purpose; overall, increased opportunities for two-way communication between researchers and wider audiences. Cameron then offers a thoughtful, as well as practical, discussion of some of the problems faced by researchers engaging with wider audiences: the pressure to demonstrate impact and optimise its evidence by presenting controversial or sensationalised findings that have greater publicity potential; having their work misrepresented in the media, reinforcing myths and stereotypes which the research was intended to challenge; and being silenced or attacked for resisting such misrepresentation or for being perceived as 'over-critical' or politically contentious. The chapter not only offers guidance to scholars for addressing some of these problems – by suggesting ways for them to correct, contextualise, and complicate their findings – but also puts forward an approach to public engagement that is informed, realistic, and strategic. As such, it is a worthwhile read for all language, gender, and sexuality scholars who navigate the terrain of advocacy and public engagement.

Together, these chapters offer excellent new contributions to the field's ongoing engagement with the sociopolitical landscape and opportunities for fruitful reflection on the role of the LGS researcher in the current moment.

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22

Applying queer theory to language, gender, and sexuality research in schools[1]

Helen Sauntson

Introduction

This chapter explores how queer theory, and the associated linguistic framework of queer applied linguistics, can be used to fruitfully investigate the ways that different gender and sexuality identities are enacted through language. I exemplify a queer applied linguistics approach by applying it to the analysis of interview and interactional data taken from school settings. Queer theory is largely seen as an interdisciplinary theoretical approach that utilises methods from a range of other paradigms in order to problematise and destabilise taken-for-granted, socially sanctioned notions of gender and sexuality. Language and sexuality work from the 1990s onwards has been heavily influenced by aspects of queer theory. The study of language and sexuality has grown from a fairly restricted focus on lexical studies of gay men's slang to a broader examination of the ways in which language can be used to index sexuality in various contexts of use. Furthermore, the field has moved from an almost exclusive focus on gay men to investigating a range of sexual identities. The incorporation of elements of queer theory has involved a critical reconsideration of what is meant by 'sexuality' and 'sexual identity' and their relationship to linguistic forms, context, and use. In Livia and Hall's (1997) landmark publication, *Queerly Phrased*, the term 'queer' is used to refer to non-normative or resistant identity performances which may or may not be tied to a particular category of sexual identity. Conceptualisations of 'identity' are a key concern of queer theory, as they are in other sociocultural and critical methodologies used in the study of language, gender, and sexuality.

In the following sections, I describe the development of queer theory and its application to the study of gender and sexuality within linguistics – queer linguistics. I consider some of the oft-cited criticisms of queer theory and offer a development of a 'queer applied linguistics' (QAL) framework which works to counter such criticisms. Within QAL, I consider the key concepts of temporality, spatiality, and normativity and their usefulness in accounting for the ways in which different gender and sexuality identities emerge in, and are enacted through, language. I then illustrate the QAL framework by examining some linguistic data (interviews with teachers and young people, and recorded extracts of classroom interaction) taken from school settings. In analysing this data, I draw on critical discourse analysis as a method that can be used within an overarching QAL approach. In the final section of the chapter, I outline other applications of queer theory to research on language, gender, and sexuality beyond education and offer suggestions for how the approach may be developed and utilised in the future.

Queer theory and queer linguistics

Queer linguistics is underpinned by queer theory, which takes 'heteronormativity' as its main object of critical investigation. Heteronormativity is defined by Cameron (2005: 489) as 'the system which prescribes, enjoins, rewards, and naturalises a particular kind of heterosexuality – monogamous, reproductive, and based on conventionally complementary gender roles – as the norm on which social arrangements should be based'. Queer theory scholars such as Halperin (1993) have pointed out that, importantly, there is actually no such thing as 'queer theory' in a singular form. Rather, queer theory consists of many different approaches. But what all queer theory work has in common is its critical investigation of heteronormativity and its resistance to presenting gender as an *a priori* category. Instead, queer theory interrogates the underlying preconditions of gender and sexuality identity, and how these may be enacted and formulated in discourse.

Within queer theory, Butler's (1990, 1993, 2004) theories of performativity have been of particular importance for questioning socially sanctioned concepts of normality in relation to gender and sexuality. Queer theory 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. Butler (1990) develops this notion in her claims that heterosexuality is naturalised by the performative repetition of normative gender identities. Butler surmises that the categories of gender and sexuality have been 'causally entangled in knots that must be undone' (1998: 225–226). Thus, the principle of queer theory that claims an integral and definitional relationship between gender and sexuality is of central importance to queer linguistics and its applications.

Queer linguistics draws on the principles of queer theory outlined above and applies them to the study of language. Motschenbacher and Stegu (2013: 522) define queer linguistics in concise terms as 'critical heteronormativity research from a linguistic point of view'. Most definitions and explanations of queer linguistics are based around the concept of heteronormativity and use it as a theoretical and analytical starting point. Cameron and Kulick (2003) assert, importantly, that queer linguistics can be applied to the critical investigation of heterosexual identities and desires as well as those that 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-based discrimination, whilst queer linguistics 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 that are privileged and this is also a concern of queer linguistics (also discussed by Leap and Motschenbacher 2012). What we can take from queer linguistics is that there also needs to be more critical scrutiny of how privileged forms of heterosexuality are discursively formed in applied contexts with a view to ultimately challenging and changing such practices. With this in mind, intersectionality is an important concept which has been developed within queer theory in order to acknowledge and understand how ‘sexuality’ can involve more than the hetero/homo continuum. For example, identities and relationships may be discursively constructed as normal/not normal in relation to other social dimensions of identity such as ethnicity, age, and social class.

Motschenbacher (2011) and Motschenbacher and Stegu (2013) argue that queer linguistics lends itself well to an eclectic combination of linguistic analytical methods (or methodological pluralism) in order to provide mutually qualifying positions. Leap (2018: 10) has also referred to a ‘scavenger methodology’ as being particularly appropriate for queer inquiry across a range of disciplines. In work which applies queer linguistics, various established methods are therefore drawn on in order to analyse different types of language data. These methods include corpus linguistics, critical discourse analysis, conversation analysis, multi-modal discourse analysis, linguistic landscapes, and interactional sociolinguistics (and this list is not exhaustive).[2] Within the scope of this chapter, it is not possible to review or exemplify applications of all of these methods to work on language, gender, and sexuality. I therefore take one approach – critical discourse analysis (discussed later) – as an illustration of how an established methodological and analytical framework can be used within queer linguistics to explore how gender and sexuality identities are enacted through language in school contexts.

Criticisms of queer linguistics and the development of QAL

Motschenbacher (2011) documents the main criticisms levelled against queer linguistics – that it has restricted relevance and real-life empirical applications and that it raises problematic issues concerning political agency. Motschenbacher counters such claims by arguing that queer linguistics, contrary to the critical claims, does not focus exclusively on documenting gay and lesbian aspects of language. Its focus is on how all sexual identities are construed through discourse, but with particular attention paid to how heteronormativity becomes materialised through discourse as the dominant sexuality. In other words, attention is paid to how non-heteronormative identities are often marginalised through particular discursive processes which are identified through the application of queer linguistic approaches. The effects of such marginalisation can arguably be damaging for heterosexual-identified people as well as members of sexual minorities. The political motivations underlying queer linguistics are thus self-proclaimed and seen as a strength rather than a limitation. It has been argued that there are tensions between queer linguistics as an identity-questioning approach and the focus on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues, which instead suggests an identity-affirming theoretical background. However, counter-arguments claim that the notion of identity does not need to be dispensed with if taking a queer linguistic approach. In terms of its empirical applicability, Motschenbacher counters criticisms by arguing that queer linguistics lends itself well to utilising linguistic methods that have already been established within other areas of applied linguistics, such as those mentioned in the previous section (and many of which are covered throughout this volume), and applying them to queer research purposes.

One such way forward may be to embed queer theory into the existing approach of critical applied linguistics and apply it to analysing discursive constructions of heteronormativity in specific contexts. Critical applied linguistics (CAL) has been defined as ‘the practice of applied linguistics grounded in a concern for addressing and resolving problems of inequality’ (Hall, Smith, and Wicaksono 2017: 18). According to Hall et al., critical applied linguistics is an approach to language study which addresses a specific problem for the benefit of a defined set of 'clients' or end-users. They argue that the identification of a 'real-world' problem should be informed by the people who experience it. But their definition does not address key theoretical issues which, I argue below, have emerged from queer linguistics and are potentially useful to the field of applied linguistics more broadly. Data discussed in this chapter identifies a set of social inequality problems related to gender and sexuality in schools which can be investigated through a queer theory-informed analysis of linguistic practices. We may loosely define 'queer applied linguistics' (QAL), then, as CAL which is informed by queer theory/queer linguistics and which is applied to addressing social concerns with inequalities around gender and sexuality. Like CAL, QAL has a social justice orientation. Drawing on Motschenbacher's (2011) conceptual developments of queer linguistic approaches, I argue that three key overlapping issues have emerged as relevant to work which utilises a QAL framework. These issues are: temporality; space; and normativity. 'Real-world' problems are always situated in time and space, and are therefore temporally and spatially construed. These first two issues map onto what Motschenbacher calls contextuality (spatiality) and fluidity (temporality) in his identification of dimensions that a queer approach to applied linguistics must be able to grasp. What is considered a 'problem' is also at least partially constructed by culturally and socially situated notions of 'normativity' – a concept which, according to Motschenbacher, needs to be theorised more fully in queer linguistics. I briefly consider these key QAL concepts in the remainder of this section before applying them to the critical discourse analysis of school-based language data in the later sections.

Leap (2020) indicates that the temporal signification of 'before' is of central importance and should be critically interrogated in work which focuses on language and sexuality. Leap proposes the approach of 'queer historical sociolinguistics' for engaging with issues of time in relation to language and sexuality. Significantly, Leap argues that temporal narratives can frame historical events in such a way that the narratives obfuscate problematic issues which persist *after* the event in question. Leap's work enables us to see how discriminatory language practices around gender and sexuality are real-world problems which are historical (temporal) constructs. Their temporal and contingent nature means that they are inherently unstable and subject to narrative retellings which imbue them with diverse meanings and effects in different temporal and spatial sites. Importantly, queer time can also function to exclude, restrict, and erase, rather than to open up possibilities that lie beyond the 'normal'. Leap argues that narratives of language and sexuality that end in 'triumph' may actually disguise homophobic (and other discriminatory) practices by focusing only on positive outcomes and rendering invisible continuing struggles experienced by certain LGBT+ individuals and communities. Examples include the 'triumph' narratives that circulate in popular discourse around legal and social 'successes' relating to sexuality such as the passing of same-sex marriage laws and decriminalisation.

This notion of temporality links to another important principle of queer theory discussed by Hall (2013) – that heteronormativity itself is not stable across time and space. Hall (2013: 638) argues that 'the social meaning granted to heteronormativity, even if its idealisation persists, is always shifting across the interactions of those associated with it'. Although temporality and spatiality are probably true of any so-called resistance movement, within queer theory, the ways in which they have the potential to destabilise heterosexuality are important.

Milani (2013) also draws attention to the need for temporal analysis in the discussion of normativity (another key concept in QAL), asserting that normativity as a concept is never stable and is always temporally and spatially contingent. It is from this position that Hall argues that temporality (especially in relation to heteronormativity) should be a key concern of queer linguistics.

In another seminal queer theory work, *In A Queer Time and Place* (2005), Halberstam argues that time and space are subjected to the same kinds of naturalisation processes as discursive practices. Therefore, 'queer time' can both construct and resist normative identities. Drawing on Halberstam's (2005) work and transferring it to the study of language and sexuality, Leap and Motschenbacher (2012: 7) state:

> To study language, sexuality and queer temporality is to ask questions about linguistic and sexual practices that take place in spatial and temporal domains that lie outside of the ordinary, the familiar, and the 'normal'.

Such ideas have led to a recent incorporation of examinations of space and time in relation to language and sexuality. Milani (2013), for example, examines multimodal (linguistic and spatial) constructions of sexual identity in a university environment. He argues that using multimodal methods of discourse analysis, and incorporating a semiotic analysis of sexuality and space, could further our understanding of the relationship between language and sexuality and how it operates in educational and other contexts.

A third key concept in QAL, and in queer theory more broadly, is that of normativity. Motschenbacher (2014) has been critical of the lack of theorising around the term 'normativity' (including *hetero*normativity) in queer linguistics. He argues that much recent language and sexuality work makes frequent reference to the concept of normativity without fully explaining or theorising it. Motschenbacher argues that speakers have a tendency to orient towards a shared notion of normativity in their language practices. However, normativity itself is not stable and a way of theorising it is to view it as constantly shifting and relative to spatio-temporal contexts. Therefore, the three QAL concepts identified here always overlap.

In sum, QAL is problem-focused and has a social justice orientation relating specifically to gender and sexuality issues. It takes critical heteronormativity analysis as its central focus and recognises that key issues within contextualised examinations of heteronormativity need to take into account temporal and spatial understandings and realisations of normativity. I discuss these issues below with illustrations from linguistic data taken from UK secondary school contexts.

Applications of the approach: language, gender, and sexuality in schools

To date, education has been a key area of application of queer theory to the study of language. Nelson (2012) asserts that queer linguistics is an appropriate approach to use to examine the ways in which particular discourses of gender and sexuality are produced in school contexts through the deployment of specific linguistic practices. In previous work (Sauntson 2012, 2018), I illustrate how linguistic methods of analysis can be used alongside queer theory to critically examine the discursive constructions of 'normal' and 'queer' gender and sexuality in school classrooms. I show how incorporating some of the principles of queer theory into the types of analyses already used can help to uncover the ways in which heterosexuality is naturalised and how other forms of sexual and gender identity are 'queered' in school contexts. QAL can therefore provide a helpful theoretical framework for examining how normative and non-normative constructions of sexual identity are enacted through and inscribed in language practices in schools, and how these language practices may effect particular discourses of sexuality. I incorporate the key conceptual elements of temporality, spatiality, and normativity within QAL when researching language and sexuality in schools. In practical terms, this means examining how and why speakers and writers orient towards particular ideas of normativity through their language practices, and how normative genders and sexualities are represented through the language used in school settings. The approach also involves being aware of how the very notion of normativity may shift in relation to spatial and temporal contexts.

Research in a range of international contexts identifies schools as sites that are characterised by assumptions that students are heterosexual (heteronormativity) and by an atmosphere of homophobia, thus highlighting a ‘real-world’ problem. Despite recent legislative changes in the UK and US, for example, research indicates that heteronormativity and homophobia continue to pervade schools and that the effects of this are damaging for young people identifying or perceived to be LGBT+ (Kosciw et al. 2015; McDermott et al. 2008; Bradlow et al. 2017). However, little attention has been paid to the *linguistic* dimensions of these problems. The application of queer theory to the study of language and education using a QAL framework can arguably be particularly helpful for exploring the often complex ways in which homophobia and heteronormativity are enacted in school contexts, as illustrated in the sections that follow.

Methodology

In a project which explores the role played by language in constructing sexual identities in schools, CDA is used within a QAL approach to uncover linguistic practices in the datasets of: 20 semi-structured interviews with LGBT+-identified[3] young people (aged 13–25) who attend or have recently attended school; 14 semi-structured interviews with educators working in a range of 11 to 16 and 11 to 18 schools in two areas of the UK; 4 (x 1-hour) Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) classroom interactions. In the interviews, all participants discuss their perceptions of how issues around sexual diversity are handled in their schools and what they think the key issues are. Additionally, the young people reflect on their experiences of, and attitudes towards, school in relation to their LGBT+ sexual identities.

In CDA, various types of linguistic analysis are used to uncover power relations and ideologies. There are various formal linguistic features which can be focused on in applying CDA, such as (but not limited to): lexical items; metaphors; evaluative language (e.g. semantic fields and adjectives); intertextual references; grammatical and syntactic structures. In the data presented in this chapter, I focus mainly on particular lexical items and intertextual references which Pakula et al. (2015) have identified as ‘gender-triggering points’ (GTPs) in texts. GTPs are based on Sunderland et al.’s (2002) concept of ‘gender critical points’ in classroom interaction in which specific references draw attention to gender and make it relevant to the lesson in some way. A GTP, according to Pakula et al. (2015), happens when gender is negotiated into relevance through the interaction taking place. Typical examples identified by the authors might include: gender roles being ascribed to characters or social actors; explicit linguistic instantiations of heterosexuality or heteronormativity; stereotypical or non-stereotypical representations of femininity and masculinity. I incorporate ‘sexuality’ into this framework so that GTPs become GSTPs (‘gender and sexuality triggered points’) in the current analysis. And I subsequently add any explicit or implicit linguistic references to sexuality as indicators of GSTPs in the data (some examples are discussed in the next section). I also pay particular attention to GSTPs which also signalled anything relating to temporality, spatiality, and normativity. Therefore, the critical analysis of GSTPs in the data is used to explore the QAL concepts of temporality, spatiality, and normativity. Arguably, the use of this kind of CDA within an overarching QAL approach enables a greater focus on how macro-discourses and ideologies around sexuality are embedded and inscribed within micro-interactions.

After presenting the QAL-informed critical discourse analysis around temporality and spatiality in the interview data, I then move to using examples from the RSE classroom interaction data to explore the dimension of normativity as it manifests in the language used in the data. This is done intentionally to give an idea of the different datasets used in the study. The key QAL concepts of temporality, spatiality, and normativity emerge as salient factors in the interviewees' responses and narratives about their school experiences. These concepts also emerge in the analysis of the RSE classroom interaction data. In the sections that follow, I illustrate the importance of these three concepts and explore how they emerge as salient in the interview and classroom interaction datasets. In doing so, I aim to exemplify a QAL approach which draws on the specific analytic method of corpus-based discourse analysis. As stated earlier, the concepts do overlap – they are presented in separate sections in this chapter purely for illustrative purposes.

Temporality

In the interview data taken from the school-based project, the young people and teacher participants in the study refer explicitly to school as a temporal (and spatial) state, as in the examples below (temporal/historical indicators are <u>underlined</u>). In the first example, Lauren (a history teacher) responds to a question about whether she had been given any training on raising awareness about sexual diversity issues in schools. In the response, Lauren locates her own stance towards teaching about sexual diversity in schools through a historical reference to the introduction of Section 28 in 1988.[4]

> Lauren: <u>I started teaching when clause 28 came in</u> and so you know especially again teaching in Brighton it was all you weren't allowed to say it I mean I remember clause 28 was about not promoting it really it was bizarre it was all shite

Lauren reflects on how the introduction of the legislation had the effect of silencing talk about same-sex relationships in schools and this reflection is accompanied by negative evaluation. The very fact that Lauren raises and discusses this historical event suggests that it continues to have salience for her in relation to sexual diversity issues in schools. It is also an example of what Leap (2018) refers to as 'spectrality' in historical sociolinguistics – past events and discursive formations 'haunting' and continuing to shape sexuality in the present day. A similar phenomenon occurs in the next example in which Natalie (an English teacher) makes a historical reference to 'teachers of my age' (i.e. teachers who have many years' experience in the profession) and their perceived temporally located belief that open discussion about homosexuality continues to be illegal in schools. Natalie reflects on her belief that the passing of Section 28 had the opposite effect of its intended one of making teachers talk openly about sexuality more than they had done in the past. She laments the lack of explicit talk about sexuality that she believes characterises the present time.[5]

> Natalie: I was reading something recently there was an article in was it the TES[6] and somebody had done a big survey with this idea that teachers of my age thought you weren't allowed to talk about homosexuality […] I was reading this and thinking gosh I wasn't aware of that it almost made me do it more
> […]
> I think there was a lot more awareness about that when I mean you know because we think we mustn't do that we have that discussion I don't think as an English teacher we talk about those sorts of things in the same way any more

However, Natalie does not take this as an indicator of young teachers' regressive attitudes towards LGBT+ identities, stating that she believes younger teachers to be 'more liberal' than some of their older counterparts. But, importantly, she perceives less of a willingness to 'take risks' in the present school climate. Thus, open positive discussion about same-sex relationships and LGBT+ identities is temporally located in the past as she indicates here:

> Natalie: I think they're probably very much more liberal than perhaps thirty forty years ago about homosexuality but in terms of text content they are less willing to take risks

The LGBT+-identified young people in the study likewise made numerous references to temporality in relation to certain events and issues raised in the school context. In the first example below, Josh reports a teacher in the present time referring to AIDS as a 'gay disease' located in the space of gay clubs. This spectral homophobic discourse of AIDS as a gay disease is brought into the present in the spatio-temporal context of Josh's recent experience of RSE lessons at school.

> Josh: one thing that shocked me is that they were talking to us all about these dangers of sex and stuff in the sex education part and then they'd take us to a disease section and the teacher there she gets very into it and she talks about AIDS and that was the only time when she talked about gays and stuff but she sort of talked about like AIDS was a gay disease like she was saying this spread from gay clubs

Here, the temporal indicators are not explicit in that Josh does not directly refer back to an earlier time period in the way that the teachers do. Rather, the temporal reference is implicit and functions as another instantiation of the kind of spectral haunting discussed by Leap. The reference to AIDS as a gay disease echoes the dominant AIDS discourses of the 1980s – but here we see in Josh's narrative that this discourse is still being reiterated in classrooms in the late 2010s. Ashford also reports on a teacher relaying to a class that openly discussing LGBT issues and same-sex marriage is 'illegal' in schools and churches. This erroneous information is another example of a spectral discourse from the past being construed in the temporal present. In a similar way to the previous example, the temporal indicators are not explicit, but are implied through spectrality: homosexuality and same-sex marriage were illegal in the past and, even though this is no longer the case, the discourse from the past is reiterated by the teacher in the present to produce a homophobic discourse in the classroom.

> Ashford: I asked the teacher and she said we can't do anything like LGBT and marriage because it's illegal to do it in the church and school

For these young people, there are no available reporting mechanisms for spectral (past) homophobic discourses being construed in the present time in schools. Thus, temporal spectrality (echoes of past homophobic discourse) becomes a legitimate means of perpetuating homophobic discourse in school spaces.

Spatiality

The examples discussed in the previous section have shown how temporality emerges as a QAL concept in the interview data and functions as a means of showing how some of the young people and teachers understand how homophobia is produced in schools in the present day. The second QAL concept of spatiality also emerges as salient in the interview data and often overlaps with temporality and normativity. The young people interviewed for the research often talk about school as a space (or a number of spaces) and frequently report their school experiences as conflicting with their experiences of other spaces, such as the home, social media, and the internet in relation to their sexuality. In this sense, the GSTPs invoke spatiality as well as gender and/or sexuality. They often perceive different gender and sexual norms as operating within the space of the school, meaning that 'normativity' itself becomes imbued with specific meanings which are contingent on school space. The young people participants, in particular, also often report different norms operating in different school spaces, such as specific subject classrooms, toilets, and changing rooms. Whilst classrooms are often perceived to be 'safer' due to the presence of teachers, schools spaces which are not policed by adults are reported by the young people to be experienced as unsettling and threatening and as spaces where non-normative sexualities and genders are likely to be punished through physical and verbal violence. Thus, normativity itself shifts in relation to time and space. Several young people report on the spatial segregation of students according to perceived binary sex in their schools, as in the example below.

> Ashford: another thing that <u>schools need to change is segregating or like putting people in different things because of their gender</u>
> […] <u>girls' changing room right next to it they're on completely different sides of the school and even our PE lessons are quite often segregated</u> which is ridiculous

Some of the young people also constructed their school as an 'unsafe' space, lamenting the lack of spaces within the school which offered safety and freedom from the strict gender and sexuality policing perceived as characterising the school environment.

> Ashley: I think that it would be good to implement discussion of sexuality and gender identity in any kind of conversation about sexual health
> I think that in terms of policy there should really have been some safer <u>spaces</u>
> I feel like the solution they offered was so absurd that I should change with the female staff that would have never worked

In the interviews, the students suggest that safe school spaces could, for example, take the form of ungendered toilets and changing rooms and classrooms in which any form of discriminatory language and behaviour is consistently and explicitly challenged. In sum, the young people talked about their school-based experiences of gender and sexual diversity as largely heteronormative and homophobic, and these discourses were located temporally and spatially through linguistic signifiers such as GSTPs. Moreover, these signifiers of temporality and spatiality overlap with the third key concept within QAL – that of normativity.

Normativity

In the interview data, the young people identified SRE lessons as a key school-based site for the reinforcement of heteronormativity and, therefore, as a temporal space in which they repeatedly felt isolated and marginalised. This is revealed through the QAL-informed CDA presented in the preceding sections. As explained earlier, I also recorded a sequence of four (x 1-hour) SRE lessons as part of the research project. The lessons focused on the topics of the risks associated with embarking on a sexual relationship, and making decisions about relationships. In applying CDA to this dataset, I again used the method of critically analysing GSTPs in relation to normativity.

A key finding which emerged was that 'gender' itself was frequently constructed in binary terms and transgender issues are completely ignored, thus constructing a norm of gender as biological and static. For example, there were frequent references to 'penis' (biological male) in relation to 'boys' (gender). The result is the emergence of normative constructions of gender as reducible to biological sex, and as a binary construct. Furthermore, talk about biological body parts in relation to sex almost always occurred in relation to the negative consequences of engaging in sexual activity, such as the transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), as illustrated in the following examples (in the data examples, GSTPs which construct normativity are underlined):

T: this is thrush this is what a discharge would look
like boys the one below is what a thrush discharge would
look like for a girl

T: it's genital warts and you can see warts on a boy's
penis and warts on a girl's vulval area as well

T: if you don't get it treated then it can cause
infertility when you're older which means it might stop
you from conceiving a baby in the natural way that a baby
is conceived

Another key finding is that particular and restricted normative discourses of heterosexuality are (re)produced through the interaction as well as through the content of the lesson. Monogamous heterosexual relationships are ideologically afforded a normative status and sexual activity which takes places within such relationships is prioritised. Other possible relationship and sexual activity options are notably absent from the discourse. This supports Motschenbacher's (2010, 2011) argument that heteronormativity is 'ubiquitous' and continually thriving in everyday talk. But there is also no diversity represented *within* heterosexuality – it is almost always constructed as two-person, monogamous, and involving no physical sexual activity other than vaginal intercourse. Furthermore, sex is constructed as risky and dangerous, even the vaginal intercourse that is presented as the primary activity taking place within such heterosexual relationships. Sex is constructed in negative terms, and there is a predominant focus on ‘unwanted’ outcomes, such as pregnancy and the transmission of STIs. In the example below, this coincides with the idea that sexual activity amongst teenagers is expected to remain ‘hidden’ from parents and caregivers and that engaging in sex is something that young people would not normally be expected to discuss with their families. It is implied in this example that the hypothetical ‘mum and dad’ would not have been involved in the young person’s decision to start engaging in sexual activity and to take measures to ensure protection. The notion of secrecy and lack of dialogue amongst families is a theme which runs throughout the whole sequence of lessons. The possibility of sex being a topic which is openly discussed in a positive way in the home is absent from the discourse.

T: understand the impact that your decisions have on your life and remember that there are other people involved in that life and it can be for example pregnancy it can be sexually transmitted diseases it can be something as simple as your mum or dad have found condoms in your bedroom or the pill

In examples such as these in which the teacher is discussing the negative consequences of engaging in heterosexual activity, there are more serious consequences for girls than for boys. The negative consequences include infertility, pregnancy, STIs (there are more examples discussed of girls having STIs than boys), being labelled, and having regrets. Thus, ‘regret’ is constructed as a norm for girls in this particular spatio-temporal context.

The actual SRE guidance document for England and Wales (2014) (which informs the content of SRE in state schools) states that there should be ‘no promotion of sexuality’ despite the implicit focus on heterosexuality as exemplified by its concurrent emphasis on reproduction, contraception, and ‘importance of marriage for bringing up children’.

> […] children should be taught about the nature of marriage and its importance for family life and for bringing up children. The Government recognises that there are strong and mutually supportive relationships outside marriage. Therefore, children should learn the significance of marriage and stable relationships as key building blocks of community and society […] teachers should be able to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. There should be no direct promotion of sexual orientation. Sexual orientation and what is taught in schools is an area of concern for some parents.
>
> *(SRE Guidance for England and Wales 2014: 11–13)*

This tension between the edict to not promote sexual orientation and the routine ‘promotion’ of heterosexuality is realised through the ideological assumptions made about normative gender and (hetero)sexuality in the classroom interaction data. In the two typical examples below, the GSTPs invoke heterosexuality, and explicit reference is made by the teacher to ‘mum and dad’, thus inferring that a heterosexual two-parent family structure is the expected norm:

T: diseases it can be something as simple as your mum or dad have found condoms in your bedroom or the pill

T: 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' when discussing 'relationships' in a general sense, thus reinforcing heterosexuality as the expected norm:

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

In sum, the norms operating in the school environments of these young people were overwhelmingly perceived to be discriminatory and intolerant in relation to gender and sexual diversity.

The examples discussed above are intended to give a flavour of how a QAL approach, drawing on the established linguistic analytical method of CDA in its application, can be applied to the study of language, gender, and sexuality in school contexts. The examples illustrate the centrality of the QAL concepts of temporality, spatiality, and normativity within a queer approach and, in doing so, draw attention to real-world problems and challenges currently being faced by young people. What the QAL-informed research reported on in this chapter has shown, for example, is that homophobia (and other gender and sexuality-based discriminatory practices) in UK schools now largely operates at a discursive level and is therefore very difficult to challenge. Moreover, it is evident that research on language, sexuality, and education must move beyond a focus on homophobia towards broader queer linguistic issues of gender and sexuality diversity. The context of the research suggests that sexual equality ('triumph') is becoming an accepted linear 'triumph narrative' (Leap 2020) which actually functions to occlude and obscure ongoing discriminatory practices in relation to gender and sexuality which continue to be discursively achieved.

Future directions

Future contributions to the development of queer theory and its application to language, gender, and sexuality are also likely to involve the development of methods and analytical frameworks. Milani (2013), for example, examines multimodal (linguistic and spatial) constructions of sexual identity in a university environment. He argues that using multimodal methods of discourse analysis, and incorporating a semiotic analysis of sexuality and space, could further our understanding of the relationship between language and sexuality and how it operates in educational and other contexts. Queer linguistics has been applied to the analysis of language and sexuality in virtual spaces (e.g. Hiramoto 2015; King 2011) and it is likely that this will continue to be an important area of development.

The datasets and analytical frameworks used for illustrative purposes throughout this chapter are by no means the only ones that may be used within a QAL approach. Indeed, a key strength of QAL and queer linguistics more generally is its flexibility and adaptability to context and purpose. A QAL approach itself is not intended to be presented as a 'finished product'. In fact, Milani (2014) notes that 'uncertainty' is what crops up in many queer theoretical writings, and this includes research informed by queer linguistics.

The queer dimension of the approach itself means that it should not be stable, but should instead be constantly evolving and always open to contestation and critical development. As an approach, QAL certainly needs more rigorous theorisation of spatiality, temporality, and normativity, as well as what Pennycook (2017) has recently termed 'a queer approach to materiality' whereby greater attention is paid to discursive materialisations of sexualities in relation to political economies. The constructs of spatiality, temporality, and normativity may also come to be usefully applied to other areas of critical linguistic theory, although, at the time of writing, their relevance is only being addressed in relation to queer linguistics.

Furthermore, future projects that apply queer theory (and in particular QAL) to language, gender, and sexuality will take place in different times and spaces and may address different conceptualisations, understandings, and experiences of sexual and gender normativity. But what they will have in common is a desire for social transformation, in which schools become places where acceptance of diversity is the new norm, and a move towards greater social justice.

Notes

1 Some of the material in this chapter is drawn from Sauntson (2016) and (2018).
2 See Sauntson (2019 – Chapter 3) for further discussion of how each of these methods has been applied in empirical studies of language, gender, and sexuality.
3 'LGBT+' (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender +) is a shorthand term for a range of non-heterosexual and non–gender-conforming sexual and gender identities. The 'plus' sign (+) on the end of 'LGBT' is an acknowledgement of the diversity of gender and sexuality identities, whilst at the same time realising that it is not feasible to iterate or capture all of them when discussing gender and sexuality issues. The indeterminacy of the '+' is also an attempt to go some way towards recognising that gender and sexual identities are fluid and difficult to define. For more information, see www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/glossary-terms and www.stop-homophobia.com/lgbt-terms-and-definitions.
4 Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 made it illegal for homosexuality to be 'promoted' in schools. Non-heterosexual relationships were described as 'pretended family relationships'. It was repealed by Britain's Labour government in 2003.
5 Data extracts are transcribed for content only. Conversational features are not included as they did not form part of the analysis.
6 *Times Educational Supplement* – a British newspaper.

Further reading

Baker, P. (2008) *Sexed Texts: Language, Gender and Sexuality*. London: Equinox.

This textbook explores the role of language in the construction of gender and sexuality identities in a range of text types and contexts.

Cameron, D. and Kulick, D. (eds.) (2006) *The Language and Sexuality Reader*. London: Routledge.

This reader brings together work from a range of fields and disciplines which examines various aspects of the relationship between language and sexuality.

Cashman, H. (2018) *Queer, Latinx and Bilingual: A Critical Sociolinguistic Ethnography*. London: Routledge.

This book presents findings from an ethnographic study of LGBTQ Mexicans/Latinxs which explores how participants' ethnic and sexual identities are understood and enacted in relation to their language practices.

Morrish, E. and Sauntson, H. (2007) *New Perspectives on Language and Sexual Identity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

This book, informed by queer theory and queer linguistics, presents a range of linguistic data to explore aspects of the relationship between language and sexual identity with a specific focus on non-heteronormative identities.

Nelson, C. (2009) *Sexual Identities in English Language Education: Classroom Conversations*. London: Routledge.

This monograph draws on queer theory to explore the challenges and opportunities which arise in addressing queer themes and perspectives in English language classrooms.

Related topics

Language, gender, and sexuality: reflections on the field's ongoing critical engagement with the sociopolitical landscape; gender and sexuality normativities; interactional sociolinguistics in language and sexuality research: benefits and challenges; determining the impact of gender stereotyping on patient feedback; investigating gendered language through collocation.

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23

Text trajectories and gendered inequalities in institutions

Susan Ehrlich and Tanya Romaniuk

Introduction

The relationship between language and gender has been investigated by discourse analysts from a variety of traditions, many of which Bucholtz (2003) surveyed in the first edition of the Blackwell *Handbook of Language and Gender* (Holmes and Meyerhoff 2003). Included among the approaches Bucholtz described in this chapter is one she labelled, following Silverstein and Urban (1996), a 'natural histories of discourse' approach. This approach, rather than taking as its starting point the pre-existence of 'bounded' texts that are then subject to analysis, focuses its analysis on the very formation of texts as 'autonomous objects' as well as on their movement across contexts (Bucholtz 2003: 61). In 2003, when Bucholtz's chapter was published, she argued that this approach had 'not yet been fully tapped for its potential as a model for language and gender research' (Bucholtz 2003: 61); 15 years later, in 2018, we would suggest that it has remained largely 'untapped' for these purposes. That is, while the investigation of textual formations and movements, what Maybin (2017: 417) calls the 'dynamic turn' in discourse analysis, has informed recent studies on various types of institutional discourse (see, for example, Lillis and Maybin 2017), very few of these studies have involved the analysis of gender. Thus, in this chapter we attempt to show how investigations of 'movements … of spoken, written and multimodal texts … across social space and time' (Maybin 2017: 416)what we are calling 'textual trajectories' (following Blommaert 2005) – can shed light on gendered inequalities in institutional settings in ways that investigations of single instances of bounded texts cannot. We do this by presenting two case studies, one involving the legal system and one involving the mainstream media.

A 'textual trajectory' approach

A 'textual trajectory' approach to discourse, by virtue of its concern with language, culture, and society and its roots in linguistic anthropology and discourse analysis, is part of the broad, interdisciplinary field that Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 586) have termed 'sociocultural linguistics'. Building on Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) insight that all utterances, even monologic ones, are dialogical in nature (i.e. responsive to previous utterances and anticipatory of future utterances), work on textual trajectories has, as Maybin (2017: 419) says, '*decenter[ed] from specific interactions and bounded texts* in order to address the dialogic chains stretching before and after' (emphasis ours). As an example, consider a police interview with a suspect: when a suspect is interviewed by a police officer that interview forms a 'text'; however, the chain of texts does not stop there; that interview is subsequently turned into a written statement, a statement that can then be referred to, quoted, or used as evidence in a trial by lawyers or judges. Likewise, a 'text trajectories' analysis would not stop with an examination of the original police interview; it would investigate this interview along with the chain of texts that 'stretch … after' it – for example, its written version produced by the police, and the way that this written version might be discussed or cited or quoted by legal professionals in a court of law. Indeed, Blommaert (2005: 67) argues that focusing on a chain of interconnected texts – as opposed to 'the unique, one-time' instance of a given text – provides insight into the institutionally consequential meanings that can be ascribed to a text once it is removed from its original site of production and interpreted by those not involved in the original production. This is important because, as Bauman and Briggs (1990: 73–75) argue, 'entextualization practices' can have transformative effects: once a stretch of talk is 'lifted out of its interactional setting', segmented, and turned into a 'text' (what Bauman and Briggs call 'entextualization'), it may bring something from its earlier context, but may also take on different meanings as it is 'recentred' (i.e. recontextualised) in a new context. Moreover, to the extent that participants in institutions may have unequal access to and/or control over contextualising spaces (as is true in many institutional settings), these transformations in meaning can be deeply implicated in larger patterns of social inequality, *including* gendered inequalities. As Bauman and Briggs (1990: 76) say, 'to decontextualize and recontextualize a text is … an act of control' given that participants in institutions may have differential access to the creation and circulation of texts, differential legitimacy in claims to texts, and differential competence in their use.

The focus on power, control, and inequality that characterises much work on textual trajectories resonates with 'critical' approaches to discourse analysis and the assumption that language (e.g. text creation, movement, and transformation) is implicated in the workings of social power. For a critical discourse analyst such as Fairclough (2001: 230), the way that 'language figures within social relations of power' or 'works ideologically' is often opaque, and thus it is only through analysis that the demystifying and denaturalising of these opaque aspects of language is made possible. This is at least one of the ways in which critical discourse analysis is 'critical' – it promotes an awareness of the naturalised dimensions of discourse (i.e. those aspects of discourse that have come to seem commonsensical and inevitable), with the view that such awareness may, in turn, help to dismantle the unequal social practices revealed by analysis (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). In a comparable way, the goal of much work on textual trajectories is to expose and make visible how institutions can 'shore up institutional power and disempower individuals' (Maybin 2017: 424) through the recontextualisation of texts and their concomitant transformations in meaning. As Park and Bucholtz (2009: 498) maintain, if 'politically engaged scholarship' is to address 'the social inequalities deriving from the hegemony of institutions', then it needs to conduct a 'close analysis' of processes of entextualisation and recontextualisation (i.e. text trajectories in institutions).

In what follows, we present two close analyses of textual trajectories, one involving the legal system and one involving the mainstream media. In both cases, we attempt to demonstrate how texts can be invested with gendered and/or sexist meanings as they are transplanted into new contexts, reinforcing and perpetuating gendered inequalities. As noted above, one of the distinguishing features of our approach is that we do not focus on 'one-time' instances of texts but rather on a linked chain or linked series of texts. Bucholtz (2003) characterises the 'method' we use in the following way:

> If some approaches to discourse analysis emphasize oral discourse, and others focus on written texts, then natural histories of discourse call attention to the interplay between the oral and the written and between earlier and later versions of the "same" oral or written discourse.
>
> *(Bucholtz 2003: 61)*

Indeed, it is by examining the 'interplay' between 'earlier and later versions of the '"same" … discourse' that our approach is able to reveal some of the ideological effects of textual movement and, specifically, how texts can take on gendered and/or sexist meanings as they move into new settings and contexts.

The legal system: strategic submission vs. consent in a sexual assault case: Her Majesty the Queen v. Ewanchuk[1]

A salient feature of communication in the legal system involves the movement of texts across contexts, for example, when audio or video recordings from previous depositions/interviews are played in trials or when trial testimony is represented in the closing arguments of lawyers or in the decisions of judges. In this section, we analyse a sexual assault legal case in which a complainant's account of sexual violence was transformed as it moved from the trial to some of the case's judicial decisions. In particular, as the complainant's trial testimony was recontextualised in the decisions of the trial judge and one of the appellate courts, what the complainant characterised as a series of strategies to avoid more extreme violence (from the accused) was interpreted by the judges as consensual sex. We argue that this meaning transformation was grounded in damaging ideological assumptions about women's sexuality – specifically, the idea that women's sexual passivity and silence can be construed as consent.

The data analysed in this section come from the Canadian criminal trial, *Her Majesty the Queen v. Ewanchuk*. The accused in this case was charged with sexual assault and was acquitted by the trial judge. Upon appeal, this acquittal was upheld by the Alberta Court of Appeal (a provincial court) but upon further appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, the acquittal was overturned and a conviction was entered for the accused. The sexual assault took place during a job interview between the accused and the complainant in the accused's van. According to the complainant's testimony, the interview itself was conducted in a polite, business-like fashion. Nonetheless, after the interview, the accused took the complainant to the trailer behind his van, closed and locked the door of the relatively small enclosure and initiated a number of acts of sexual touching that became increasingly more aggressive. The complainant testified that she complied with many of the accused's requests/demands out of fear that resistance would prompt the accused to become more violent. When the sexual touching progressed to the complainant's breasts and her inner thigh and pelvic area, however, she said 'no' twice. In spite of these expressions of non-consent, the accused persisted. His aggression culminated with his grinding his pelvis into the complainant's pelvis, touching her vaginal area and placing his penis on the complainant's pelvic area under her shorts, at which point the complainant said 'no' for a third time. The accused stopped after this third 'no' (after two and a half hours in the van with the complainant), opened the door of the van at the complainant's request and the complainant left the van. She later charged the accused with sexual assault.

We begin the analysis of the data by presenting excerpts from the initial text in this text trajectory – the 1995 trial in the *Ewanchuk* case. The following three excerpts from the complainant's trial testimony reveal that the complainant was afraid of the accused and agreed to many of his requests/demands because she feared that not doing so could lead to greater brutality and violence.

Excerpt 1[2]

Q: And what happened then?
A: He told me that he felt very tense and that he would like to have a massage, and he then leaned up against me with his back towards me and told me to rub his shoulders and I did that.
(some intervening turns)
Q: Did you want to give him a massage?
A: No.
(some intervening turns)
Q: If you didn't want to give him a massage at that point in time, why did you touch his shoulders?
A: I was afraid that if I put up any more of a struggle that it would only egg him on even more, and his touching would be more forced.

Excerpt 2

Q: And what happened then?
A: Then he asked me to turn around the other way to face him, and he said he would like to touch my feet or he would like to massage my feet, so I did. And he was just touching my feet.
Q: Did you want him to massage your feet?
A: No.
Q: Why did you turn around?
A: Because I guess I was afraid. I was frozen. I just did what he told me to do.
(some intervening turns)
Q: What happened after you turned around?
A: He was massaging my feet, but he didn't stay there. He was moving up my leg more toward my inner thigh, my pelvic area, and then he'd move back again, and then he'd move back up again, and *I just sat there, and I didn't – I didn't do anything. I didn't say anything. I knew something was going to happen, and I didn't want to fight. I didn't want to struggle. I didn't want to scream, because I felt that that would just egg him on more.*

Excerpt 3

Q: And what happened when he reached to hug you?
A: He just did, and I, at this time, I was trying really hard not to cry. I had been wiping my eyes when he was on top of me when he couldn't see me, and I just – I just responded by just lightly putting my arm on him when he hugged me because I was afraid that he would think I was really scared, and that I would leave there telling people.
Q: And why were you worried about him thinking that?
A: Because I didn't think that he would stop there, that it would get worse, and it would be more brutal.

In all of these examples, the prosecuting lawyer is asking the complainant why she complied with the accused's requests/demands: in Excerpt 1, why she gave him a massage, in Excerpt 2, why she allowed him to massage her, and in Excerpt 3, why she reciprocated his hug. In response to these questions, the complainant says a variety of things (italicised above): that she 'was afraid' and 'frozen', that she didn't 'want to fight … struggle … scream … because [she] felt that would just egg him on more', 'his touching would be more forced', and 'he would not stop there … it would get worse … and would be more brutal'. Such responses reflect strategies that many victims of sexual violence employ to prevent more prolonged and extreme instances of violence. As researchers on violence against women have argued, submitting to coerced sex or physical abuse is often 'a strategic mode of action undertaken in preservation of self' (Lembert 1996: 281). That is, if physical resistance on the part of victims can escalate and intensify violence, as some research shows (e.g. Dobash and Dobash 1992) and as many women believe (or are instructed to believe), then submission to coerced sex can be the best strategy for survival. Indeed, the italicised portions of Excerpts 1–3 indicate that the complainant in the *Ewanchuk* case adopted just this kind of strategy: she submitted to much of the accused's sexual aggression in an attempt to avoid more serious violation and injury.

As stated above, the trial judge acquitted the accused of sexual assault and the Alberta Court of Appeal upheld his acquittal. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, these judges represented the events under investigation in ways that were often at odds with the complainant's testimony. Consider, in particular, an excerpt from another text in this text trajectory – the 1995 trial judge's decision at a point when the judge is recounting the 'facts' of the case.

Excerpt 4

B [the complainant] told A [the accused] that she was an open, friendly and affectionate person; and that she often liked to touch people. A told B that he was an open, friendly and affectionate person; and that he often liked to touch people. A and B talked. They touched each other. They hugged. They were sitting on the floor of the trailer and they were lying on the floor of the trailer. A told B that he would like a body massage, and B gave A a body massage. For the body massage, A sat in front of B so that B could massage A's back. They later exchanged places so that A could give B a body massage. B later lay on her back, and A gave B a foot massage. After the foot massage, A massaged B's bare legs and he massaged her bare inner thighs. During this period of two and one half hours, A did three things which B did not like. When A was giving B a body massage, his hands got close to B's breasts. B said "No", and A immediately stopped. When B and A were lying on the floor, A rubbed his pelvic area against B's pelvic area. B said "No", and A immediately stopped. Later on A took his soft penis out of his shorts and placed it on the outside of B's clothes in her pelvic area. B said "No", and A immediately stopped. During all of the two and one half hours that A and B were together, she never told A that she wanted to leave. When B finally told A that she wanted to leave, she and A simply walked out of the trailer.

(From Reasons for Judgement (Moore, J., C.Q.B.A.), 10th November 1995)

In general, this description of what transpired between the complainant and the accused departs quite dramatically from the complainant's testimony. That is, with the exception of 'the three things' that the accused did 'which the [complainant] did not like' (lines 11–12), the picture that emerges from Excerpt 4 is one of consensual sex and reciprocity as opposed to coercion and submission. For example, in line 4 of Excerpt 4, the trial judge states that the complainant and the accused hugged using a reciprocal construction (i.e. 'They hugged') whereas in Excerpt 3, above, the complainant says that she responded to the accused's hug out of fear, i.e. 'because [she] was afraid that he would think [she] was really scared' which in turn would lead to even greater 'brutal[ity]'. Likewise, in line 6 of Excerpt 4, the judge states simply that the complainant gave the accused a body massage in response to the accused's request (i.e. 'A told B that he would like a body massage, and B gave A a body massage'); yet in Excerpt 1, above, the complainant says that she agreed to massage the accused only because she 'was afraid that if [she] put up any more of a struggle that it would only egg him on even more and his touching would be more forced'. Finally, we see that, in lines 9–10 of Excerpt 4, the judge states that the accused massaged the complainant's bare legs and inner thighs, as if this were a consensual act (i.e. 'After the foot massage, A massaged B's bare legs and he massaged her bare inner thighs'); but in Excerpt 2 above, the complainant says that she submitted to the accused's massages because she didn't want to 'egg him on more'. In sum, as the complainant's words were reframed within the trial judge's decision, crucial contextual details were erased – the complainant conveyed in her testimony that she had little choice but to submit to the accused's sexual advances, yet the coercive dimension of these acts is absent in the trial judge's recounting of the 'facts'. Indeed, what the complainant represented as submission and compliance in Excerpts 1–3 was recontextualised as freely given consent in Excerpt 4.

Consistent with the 1998 Alberta Court of Appeal's decision to uphold the trial judge's acquittal of the accused, we see in the following excerpt (from another text in the text trajectory) that the Alberta appellate court supported the trial judge's rendition of the 'facts' of the case.

Excerpt 5

> Yet, if review of the evidence that supports the trial judge's doubts about consent in this case is called for, it may be found in the following. The advances that are now said to be criminally assaultive were preceded by *an exchange of consensual body massages, partially on the floor of the trailer, hugs and assurances of trust and restraint* … Beyond that (and somewhat inconsistent with an appellate profile of Ewanchuk as a relentless sexual predator) every advance he made to her stopped when she spoke against it.
>
> *(From Reasons for Judgement of the Honourable Mr. Justice McClung, 12th February 1998)*

Specifically, like the trial judge, the italicised portion of Excerpt 5 shows that the Alberta Court of Appeal understood the hugs and massages between the complainant and the accused to be consensual and reciprocal. But, of course, the kinds of recontextualisations that we see in both Excerpts 4 and 5 raise questions as to why the complainant's own representations of the events, that is, that she submitted to the accused's wishes out of fear and intimidation, did not receive uptake by the trial judge and the Alberta Court of Appeal.

Other parts of these two judicial opinions are revealing in this regard. Both courts determined that the complainant had 'implied consent' through what they termed her 'conduct'. That is, while they both found the complainant's fear of the accused to be credible, they argued that she had not communicated this fear to the accused. Rather, according to the trial judge, 'she successfully kept all her thoughts, emotions and speculations deep within herself' and 'she did not communicate most of her thoughts, emotions and speculations' (Reasons for Judgement (Moore, J., C.Q.B.A.), 19th November 1995). Such a description of the complainant and of the kind of 'conduct' that the judges viewed as 'implying consent' is interesting as it does *not* seem to depict a woman who is initiating sexual activity nor one who is responding in any active way to the accused's sexual advances. In other words, it is possible that normative ideas about women's passive and acquiescing sexuality (Gavey 2005) were 'in play' when the lower courts in the *Ewanchuk* case ruled that a woman who 'successfully kept all her thoughts, emotions and speculations deep within herself' implied consent. Put somewhat differently, the trial judge and the Alberta Court of Appeal judges seemed to view sexual passivity as appropriately feminine and, as a result, what the complainant described as 'submitting to sex out of fear' was represented in the judicial opinions as the complainant 'consenting to sex', or at the least, implying consent to the accused.[3]

In the *Ewanchuk* case, then, as the complainant's trial testimony was recontextualised in the lower courts' judicial decisions, it underwent a fairly radical transformation: a strategy for preventing more extreme and prolonged instances of sexual violence was transformed into a signal of consent. From a methodological point of view, it is important to notice that the problematic interpretation of consent seen in these courts' representation of the trial 'facts' would not have been evident if the trial or the judicial opinions had been the exclusive object of analysis. That is, it was only by looking at the 'interplay' of texts in the case's textual trajectory that this meaning transformation became evident.

Maybin (2017: 417) has argued, following Bauman and Briggs (1990), that a textual trajectory approach to discourse analysis can elucidate the 'ideological workings of textual movements and transformations' in institutions. Indeed, we believe that our analysis of the 'textual movements and transformations' in the *Ewanchuk* case has revealed how sexist ideologies surrounding gender and sexuality can come to inform women's accounts of sexual violence. Thus, not only does a text trajectories approach illuminate meaning transformations in ways that analyses of single, bounded texts cannot, it also helps to identify and expose the ideological basis of such transformations. In this particular case, for instance, we have argued, following Gavey (2005), that problematic conceptions of female sexuality made possible an interpretation of events such that an unresponsive, emotionless woman could be understood as consenting to sex. We now turn to a second case study that adopts a textual trajectories approach to the analysis of gender from another institutional setting, that of presidential politics.

Politics and the mass media: laughter vs. cackling in media portrayals of Hillary Clinton[4]

Like the legal system, mediated forms of public communication are another context in which texts travel across settings and where the meanings of 'post-hoc recontextualizations' (Blommaert 2005: 46) of such texts can be enormously consequential, as we have seen above with the judges' recontextualisations of a rape complainant's testimony. The mass media's coverage of politics is a quintessential example: political figures, especially during leadership contests and political campaigns, engage in many forms of mediatised speech events – interviews with journalists, debates with political opponents, and town hall meetings with citizens, to name a few. At the same time, these speech events can be subject to entextualisation/recontextualisation: they can become the topic of press releases, news reports and political commentary (i.e. they can become 'texts') and, in the process, can take on meanings that depart dramatically from those produced in the original acts of communication. In this section, we consider the meanings ascribed to Hillary Clinton's laughter in the context of her failed bid for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States in 2007–2008. While Clinton's laughter was not unlike the laughter produced by her (male) political opponents during events such as broadcast news interviews, as it moved from its 'original occasion of production' (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012: 133) to various kinds of media reports it became known as 'The Clinton Cackle'. In other words, it took on sexist, even misogynistic meanings, as it was recontextualised in other kinds of settings within the mass media.

Consider, first, how Clinton used laughter in the kinds of broadcast news interviews (i.e. the original occasions of production) that seemed to initially trigger her laughter's characterisation as 'The Clinton Cackle'. In late September 2007, Clinton completed what is known as a 'full Ginsberg' by appearing on all five Sunday morning political talk shows on the same day – ABC's *This Week*, CBS's *Face the Nation*, CNN's *Late Edition*, FOX's *Fox News Sunday*, and NBC's *Meet the Press*. It was around this time that her laughter became the subject of intense scrutiny by journalists, media commentators, and pundits, and was dubbed 'The Clinton Cackle' as indicated by the following headlines (one form of 'text' in the analysis of mass media):

> Clinton *cackles*; lies about Iraq vote.
>
> *(*The Rush Limbaugh Show, *13th September 2007)*

> That Clinton *Cackle*.
>
> *(*The Boston Globe, *30th September 2007)*

> Democratic frontrunner can *cackle* all the way to the nomination.
>
> *(*The Seattle Post, *2nd October 2007)*

> Hillary Clinton is trying to get the last laugh over her now-infamous *cackle*.
>
> *(*Daily News, *4th October 2007)*

> The cold *cackle* of opportunism.
>
> *(*The Washington Times, *5th October 2007)*

> The candidate's *'cackle'-like* laugh.
>
> *(*The Toronto Star, *30th December 2007)*

Excerpt 6 comes from one of these five 'Ginsberg' interviews. (This excerpt, and the ones presented in what follows, are representative of more general patterns identified in the data.) It begins following a brief segment in which the interviewer (IR), Chris Wallace, showed a short clip of an interview with Clinton's husband, former President Bill Clinton, during which Clinton complained about Wallace's interview questioning and accused Wallace of doing a 'nice little Conservative hit job' on him. Following the clip, Wallace launches his first question of the interview, beginning at line 1.

Excerpt 6

2007Sep24-Fox News Sunday-Hyper-partisan
IR: Chris Wallace; IE: Hillary Rodham Clinton

01	IR:	Senator taw:lk about Conservative hit jobs, right-wi:ng
02		conspiracies,=wh↑y do you: and the President have such a
03		hyper-partisan view of politics.
04		(0.3)
05	IE:	khe=Hah=Hah=ha:=hah=ha:=ha:=ha=.hh £well Chris if you
06		had uh walked even a day in our shoes over the last
07		fifteen years I'm sure you'd understand.£ .hh
08		but y'know the real goal for our country right now is to
09		get beyo:nd uh partisanship. a:nd uh I'm £sure trying to
10		do my part.£ .hh because we've got a lot of se:rious
11		problems thet uh we're trying tuh deal with.
12		this week I rolled out my: American health choices plan. […]

Wallace's question asks Clinton to account for her and her husband's 'hyper-partisan view of politics'. The irony of this question, of course, lies in the fact that such a description of the Clintons comes from a journalist on the Fox News Channel, which, despite its slogan, 'Fair and balanced', has been frequently accused of biased reporting (see, for example, DellaVigna and Kaplan 2007). Thus, when Clinton begins her response to the question with laughter (line 5), she seems to be treating Wallace's question as laughable. While going on to accept the presupposition of Wallace's question (i.e. that the Clintons are 'hyper-partisan') to some extent in lines 5–7, in lines 8–9 Clinton resists the IR's 'hyper-partisan' description by refocusing the question on the 'real goal' for the country, namely, moving 'beyond partisanship'. This resistance to Wallace's question (and its presuppositions) is at least one indication that Clinton's laughter here, even though produced in response to a serious question, is challenging the question's legitimacy, signaling that it is not in fact one that should be taken seriously.

Excerpt 6 is just one example of a practice that Clinton engaged in systematically in the broadcast news interviews during the 2007–2008 primaries (and most likely, more generally) – laughing at the completion of or during serious interviewer questions (see Romaniuk 2016). Such laughter seemed to act as a public display of disaffiliation, expressing disagreement with critical or otherwise problematic commentary produced by an interviewer. For a politician like Clinton, then, laughing in such contexts acted as a form of 'damage control'; that is, the laughter treated the preceding questions as laughable, and, in combination with other embodied stance displays, it functioned to mitigate the potential damaging effects of such questions on her or her campaign. A question that arises from this kind of analysis of Clinton's laughter is the extent to which it may be a generic interactional practice, deployed by politicians more generally as they seek to 'contain' the damaging effects of journalists' questions. Excerpt 7 is one indication that this is the case (see Romaniuk (2013) for further evidence that this kind of laughter functions as a generic interactional practice). This excerpt features David Gregory interviewing New York Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer.

Excerpt 7

2009Jan12-MSNBC-MeetThePress-1: Sarah Palin
IR: David Gregory; IE: Chuck Schumer

1	IR:	Is Sarah Palin the future of the Republican Party,
2	IE:	.hh hh=w(h)el(h)heh heh heh .hhuh I guess I shouldn't
3		judge and let them £f(h)ight among themselves.£
4		hn [hehhheh]
5	IR:	[What do] you think though.=
6	IE:	=.h[h
7	IR:	[D'you think she's qualified to be president?
8	IE:	.hh Well y'know, I- I- I think the: American people
9		saw her. (0.2) and they saw:, (.) problems
10		in terms of preparation and knowledge of things,
11		but y'know. uh: four years away is a lo- three and
12		a half years away is a long time away so I'm not
13		gonna make a judgment. […]

Like Excerpt 6, the IR's question (in line 1) is delivered as serious. That is, the IR does not 'invite' (Jefferson 1979) a laughing response in any hearable or visible way and, yet, it is responded to with laughter (lines 2 and 4). As in Excerpt 6, Schumer resists answering the question, and this resistance combined with his laughter work to characterise the question as one that should not be taken seriously. Indeed, Excerpts 6 and 7 (in addition to many others documented by Romaniuk 2016) serve to illustrate that the practice of laughing in response to (or during the production of) an IR's serious questions is not some idiosyncratic feature of Clinton's discursive repertoire, but rather a systematic activity that many politicians engage in during news interviews with journalists. Nonetheless, despite the generic nature of this interactional practice, when Clinton's laughter became recontextualised in other kinds of media discourse, it acquired not only a gendered meaning but a very negative one. That is, there is much evidence to suggest that 'cackle' (as in 'The Clinton Cackle') has strong indexical associations to 'witches'.

Romaniuk (2016) showed that a collocational analysis of 'cackle' (an analysis that investigates the ways in which certain words habitually pattern together) demonstrates its negative semantic prosody and its strong association with 'witches'. But, there is also ample evidence of this association in the media representations themselves, some of which make explicit the connection between Clinton, her laughter, and witches. Excerpt 8 is but one example of this pattern; it is of particular interest for our purposes here because it inserts video footage of Clinton laughing during a news interview (of the type excerpted in Excerpt 6) into Glenn Beck's television commentary. In other words, it entextualises Clinton's laughter (i.e. draws boundaries around it and detaches it from its naturally occurring context) and then recontextualises it in another setting.

Excerpt 8

> *Glenn Beck*, October 7, 2007
>
> America's starting to pay attention to the real issues that America faces, namely Clinton's laugh. I've never noticed it but critics have. They've called it, and I'm quoting 'less of a laugh and more of a cackle'. *Some have been a little more cruel as to even compare her laugh to the Wicked Witch of the West,* which is just a little unfair ((laughingly)). Here is the actual Wicked Witch of the Wizard of Oz. [((Video clip of the Wicked Witch of the West is played))]. *Okay, and here's the wick- uh the junior Senator from New York.* [((Plays entextualised video clip of Clinton laughing during news interview))].

In this excerpt, Beck reproduces a description of Clinton's laugh as a 'cackle' and then refers to those who have likened it to the laugh produced by the 'Wicked Witch of the West'. Although claiming that this comparison is 'just a little unfair', Beck proceeds to invoke the association anyway. Two video clips are then played: one featuring the laughter of the Wicked Witch of the West and the second featuring Clinton's laughter during a news interview. (Note the strategic use of self-initiated repair when Beck introduces the video clip of Clinton: 'here's the wick– uh the junior Senator from New York'.) Thus, Clinton's laughter is 'framed' as witch-like not only by Beck's references to the Wicked Witch of the West, but also by the witch herself, as seen and heard via a video clip. And, of course, this (re)contextualisation dramatically reworks and reshapes the meaning of Clinton's laughter relative to its meaning in its original speech event: it is no longer understood as an interactional strategy – laughing off the seriousness of a question – that politicians deploy in doing 'damage control'. Rather, this kind of recontextualisation describes Clinton's persona and does so in a particularly negative, gendered way – she is depicted as witch-like.

This witch trope is not uncommon as a characterisation of women who participate in electoral politics (consider the late Prime Minister of England, Margaret Thatcher, for example), and, thus, in Clinton's case, it seems not unrelated to the fact that she was seeking the Democratic nomination for President of the United States at the time that these kinds of representations were circulating. As feminist scholars of politics have argued, the presidency remains a 'bastion of masculinity' (Anderson 2002: 105) and any viable contender for the presidency, who also happens to be a woman, is forced to run against the deeply entrenched cultural image of 'man as president' (Carroll 2009). Clearly, the 'cackle' characterisation of Clinton's laughter, and its concomitant association with witches, is just one of the many examples of sexism and misogyny that women political leaders encounter when they 'run up' against this dominant/ideological cultural image. For our purposes here, however, what is noteworthy about these particular representations is their genesis in source interactions where Clinton's laughter was not in fact a gendered practice nor a negatively evaluated one.

In demonstrating the way that the meaning of Clinton's laughter was transformed as it moved across media environments, this analysis, like the previous case study, makes a key methodological point: it was only by looking at the 'interplay' of texts in a trajectory of texts that this meaning transformation became evident. That is, to have looked *only* at the media representations of Clinton's laughter, with its sexist and misogynistic overtones, would not have revealed that Clinton's laughter was a generic interactional practice deployed by both male and female politicians in broadcast news interviews. And, conversely, to have looked *only* at the source interactions (i.e. the broadcast news interviews) would not have revealed how negative, gendered meanings can be ascribed to practices that are not in and of themselves gendered. We see here how a textual trajectory approach is indeed a 'critical' approach to gender and discourse analysis: it can expose the workings of power and ideology in institutional discourse in ways that analyses of single instances of texts cannot.

Conclusion

As outlined above, work on textual trajectories has 'decentred' analysis from discrete, bounded interactions in order to address the textual chains that 'stretch before and after' (Maybin 2017: 419), under the assumption that meaning-making is never exhausted in a text's original occasion of production. Rather, as Blommaert (2005: 76) says, as texts move along their trajectories, participants 'not involved in the initial act of communication' can ascribe meanings to texts 'often deeply different from the ones performed in the initial acts of communication'. We have tried to show that the investigation of textual trajectories offers language and gender scholars a method for capturing some of the gendered inequalities that textual movements can produce in institutions – inequalities that may be harder to discern when single, one-time instances of texts are examined. In focusing on the way in which key contextual details were lost as texts travelled across settings in our two case studies, we have provided insight into how new contextualisations can invest texts with new meanings. Specifically, we considered how a strategic act of submission was reconstituted as a signal of sexual consent and how a politician's (generic) strategy for doing 'damage control' was reconfigured as characteristic of her negative, gendered persona. Overall, then, we are arguing that the kinds of reshapings and recastings that texts may undergo in their institutional trajectories are by no means innocent acts – rather, they are informed by, and thus can cast light on, broader patterns of gendered inequalities. In this way, we view a textual trajectory approach, at least in the context of institutions, to be a key method for 'critical' discourse analysts interested in language and gender. As we have tried to demonstrate, the denaturalising of opaque aspects of language that reflect and perpetuate sexist meanings requires, in many cases, an examination of chains of interconnected texts – what we have called, following Blommaert (2005), textual trajectories.

Future directions

We suggest that future research in the area of language, gender, and sexuality would benefit from the kind of approach we are advocating in this chapter given that there are a variety of institutional domains and contexts in which a linked series of texts (i.e. a text trajectory) is implicated in meaning-making. One potentially fruitful area of inquiry would be to consider how texts are subject to transformations as a result of new and emerging technologies. For example, a text trajectory approach could investigate gendered slogans and/or phrases (e.g., #metoo) by analysing their occurrence across social networking sites such as Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat and, in particular, how the affordances of these emerging technologies may work to promote, negotiate, contest, or erase the gendered meanings evident in the terms' original occasions of production.

Notes

1 The analysis in this section is based on Ehrlich (2007).

2 The excerpts that come from official court transcripts or media reports have been represented in Times New Roman. Excerpts 6 and 7 are transcriptions of interactions transcribed by the researcher, following the conventions of conversation analysis despite appearing in Times New Roman (as opposed to Courier).

3 As noted above, the Supreme Court of Canada overturned the acquittal of the accused and, accordingly, its decision represented the complainant as submitting to the accused's aggression out of fear.
4 The analysis in this section is based on Romaniuk (2013, 2016).

Further reading

Hodges, A. (2011) *The "War on Terror" Narrative: Discourse and Intertextuality in the Construction and Contestation of Sociopolitical Reality*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

In this book, Hodges follows the trajectory of the discursive term, 'War on Terror', from the Bush White House to its circulation in mediatised forms of public communication to its use in the talk of 'ordinary' citizens.

Lillis, T. and Maybin J. (eds.) (2017) *Text and Talk*. Special Issue: *The Dynamics of Textual Trajectories in Professional and Workplace Practice*, 37(4), pp. 409–551.

This co-edited special issue of the journal, *Text and Talk*, has two goals: it contributes to the theoretical development of an approach to discourse analysis that investigates the projection of texts across different spatiotemporal contexts and it illustrates this dynamic approach to discourse analysis with empirically based studies from a number of institutional contexts: policing, social work, medical surgery, and social housing.

Trinch, S. (2003) *Latinas' Narratives of Domestic Abuse: Discrepant Versions of Violence*. Amsterdam and Philadelphis, PA: John Benjamins.

In this book, Trinch follows the process by which US Latina women obtain protective orders (i.e. restraining orders) that will prohibit their violent partners from making contact with them. Trinch is interested in the omissions and distortions that the women's oral narratives of abuse undergo as they are reformulated as written affidavits for the courts.

Wortham, S. and Reyes, A. (2015) *Discourse Analysis beyond the Speech Event*. London: Routledge.

This book introduces an approach to discourse analysis that looks beyond bounded, fixed-speech events in order to understanding how meanings emerge across speech events. The book provides concrete methods for analysing texts as they move across spatiotemporal contexts.

Related topics

Anthropological discourse analysis and the social ordering of gender ideology; gender and sexuality normativities; language, gender, and sexuality: reflections on the field's ongoing critical engagement with the sociopolitical landscape; language, gender, and the discursive production of women as leaders.

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24

'I thought you didn't accept gay marriage Fr'

Combining corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis to investigate the representation of gay marriage and the Irish Mammy stereotype in *Mrs Brown's Boys*

Bróna Murphy and María Palma-Fahey

Introduction

Our work comes at a time when researchers such as Bednarek (2010) and others (Baker 2005; Gregori-Signes 2017; Westman 2007) have begun to explore the impact of television scripts in society and on the general public. As Wood (2007: 257) asserts, media products not only transmit certain values but also have the potential to contest values regarding social issues. One such example is Westman (2007) who looks at the production of values and the representation of geek women and men in *Gilmore Girls* and the manner in which societal gender expectations are contested in this show. Westman (2007: 22–24) points out that the programme offers a different gendered representation of the term 'geek' which is not only portrayed in terms of male characters but also female. This in turn offers up new perceptions of women in technology which differ from traditional associations. Geek women, for example, are not portrayed as masculine and antisocial but as beautiful and brilliant, prompting Westman (2007: 26) to propose a redefinition of the concept which reflects a more positive portrayal of geek women in both textual, virtual, and real contexts. This example hints at the power of scripted fictional media to generate and disseminate cultural values (Fairclough 2003) while also supporting or contesting ideologies that in turn promote changes to views and stereotypes around gender (Bednarek 2010; Quaglio 2009). Baker's (2005) study on *Will and Grace*, in turn, looks at representations of gay sexuality and explores the manner in which sexuality and desire are portrayed. He asserts that the sitcom emphasises the representation of a type of discourse that he calls 'be yourself' (2005: 101) and argues that the focus on gay identities relies on characters' behaviour which serves to highlight the need for gay characters to come out in order to fully be themselves. Baker asserts that the representation of homophobia is 'complex and context dependent' in such a series where homophobic terms, such as 'fag', are often used not only to enhance humour, (2005: 125) but also to defuse it. He also acknowledges the writer's role in exploring uprooted views around gay identity and its underlying aim to educate and enlighten its viewers, a point which we will also consider in our analysis. This more recent interest in representing a more inclusive view of gender and sexuality is also reflected in shows such as *Queer as Folk* (Channel 4, UK 2000–2005) and *The L-Word* (Showtime, 2004–2009) which all include new linguistic and behaviour-related roles which reflect insights into concepts of gender and sexuality. Bednarek (2010) also alludes to the inclusion of gay or bisexual characters in some episodes of popular, established contemporary series such as *Grey's Anatomy* (ABC 2005–) and *House* (FOX 2004–2012) amongst others. This chapter explores the manner in which the concept of gay marriage is portrayed and contested against an Irish sociocultural and political backdrop in the series *Mrs Brown's Boys*. It focuses, in particular, on the interplay between gay marriage and the Irish Mammy stereotype. In doing so, it seeks to illustrate the power of combining corpus linguistics (CL) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) to unveil insights into changing sociocultural values around gender and sexuality in scripted fictional media. Although our focus is on gender and sexuality, it is worth mentioning other portrayals which promote inclusivity and contest stereotypes such as the character of the young male surgeon in *The Good Doctor* (ABC 2017–) who is portrayed as having autism and savant syndrome. To some extent, these portrayals remind us of Hartley's (1999) view of television as 'the transmodern teacher', a term that is used when television tackles issues in a way which serves to enlighten its audience and widen the breadth of understanding around specific sociocultural issues. As a result, such shows could be viewed as semiotic sites which facilitate the negotiation and construction of meanings and identities around gender and sexuality (Gledhill and Ball 2013: 351), a point which we will return to below.

Context, data, and methodology

Context

Our corpus is a 71,655-word dataset of televised semi-scripted fictional media taken from the popular television series *Mrs Brown's Boys* between 2012 and 2014. We also draw on a YouTube clip featuring Mrs Brown speaking on gay marriage which went viral in 2015. The series was created by Irish writer and performer Brendan O'Carroll, who plays the leading role of the Irish matriarch ('the Mammy' also known as 'Mrs (Agnes) Brown'). O'Carroll has long been associated with the character who came to life in the 1990s featuring in books such as *The Mammy* (O'Carroll 1994) and *The Chisellers* (O'Carroll 1995). She has also been portrayed by O'Carroll in stage plays, on radio, and in 2014, in film. The show centres around the character Mrs Brown who is a loud, vivacious, and foul-mouthed, widowed Irish matriarch who cares for her grown-up family following the death of her husband, and who takes an active interest in their lives. Mrs Brown is played by O'Carroll, a man, who presents himself dressed as a middle-aged traditional Irish housewife and who draws on traits associated with the stereotype (discussed below). This portrayal is not only reflective of Mrs Brown's early incarnation in stage plays but also follows historical traditions in theatre where it was common for men and boys to play female roles, a trend which dates from the Ancient Greeks to Shakespeare and into the seventeenth Century. Theatre has always been a safe space to view fluid gender identities where gender roles and sexual identity, as illustrated below, are questioned, mocked, or unsettled and where humour is often generated from this fluidity (Ward 2016).

Mrs Brown's leading role and importance are reflected in the title of the show and also emphasised by the fact that she begins and ends the show with a solo personal monologue and concluding address. The show features her adult sons Mark, Rory, Dermot, and Trevor, and daughter, Cathy, as well as her best friend, Winnie, and other minor characters. It is worth highlighting that some members of the cast are close family members in real life. For instance, Cathy is O'Carroll's (Mrs Brown) wife and Winnie is his sister. The show which is pre-recorded at BBC Glasgow on stage, in front of a live audience, adopts an informal production style where mistakes and tomfoolery are left unedited, ad-libbing is common, and where much of the humour is provided by and centres around Mrs Brown. In 2011, O'Carroll was quoted as saying, 'I love the lines that are not in the script', which reflects his attitude and approach to the show. He added that as well as being the writer and playing the lead role, the producer allows him to have an opinion on the overall look and feel of the show. He also emphasised the importance of the television series being filmed in front of a live audience as it allows them to keep it as close to a stage show as possible and stated that both himself and the actors rely on the live audience for the rhythm of their performances. The close relationship between the cast members, the ad-libbing, live recording, and the fact that O'Carroll has mentioned that while the Irish matriarch is not based on his mother, she is informed somewhat by his mother and other Irish mothers' traits, all add layers of contextual background to the data (Beacom 2013). However, in doing so, they also make it challenging to categorise *Mrs Brown's Boys* under a specific media genre. While it shares many commonalities with the genre of sitcoms including a continuing cast of characters and sequence of episodes, it also presents features related to the genre of soap opera as it draws on the audience's shared knowledge of the stereotype, and seeks to engage the audience, through humour, by including direct messages and subtle, nuanced meanings which convey an appreciation of the main traditional traits associated to the stereotype. To some extent, it also adopts some of the traits of a stage play in that it is still performed in front of a live audience and includes audience laughter, scenes, and shots of the audience. This fuzziness in terms of its categorisation makes it an interesting context to explore as it breaks the mould by positioning itself as a new and emergent genre of its own (Murphy and Palma-Fahey 2018).

One of the main reasons for exploring gay marriage in *Mrs Brown's Boys* is its role in actively supporting gay rights and equality outwardly showing support for same-sex marriage. For instance, the show includes gay characters and featured a gay marriage story line involving Rory, Mrs Brown's son. Her character also recorded a video on YouTube which went viral, prior to the Irish same-sex marriage referendum (2015), where she promoted same-sex marriage as a necessary and natural step into the future, urging voters to exercise their right. Out of character, O'Carroll has also spoken out on gay rights, equality, and acceptance. In addition, Mrs Brown's role as a matriarch and an advocator of gay rights is also relevant as historically women in Ireland were controlled by church and state, and, as the Catholic Church does not accept or acknowledge gay sexuality, Catholic women (and men) were expected to conform and follow the Church's teachings. The concept of the Irish Mammy stereotype, mentioned in this chapter, is something of a hangover from years of social, cultural, political, and religious entrenchment where women, in Ireland, were confined to a life within the home (Inglis 2005) and where their main role as 'natural mothers' was written into the Irish Constitution in 1937. The Irish Mammy was expected to care for the well-being of her family and the stereotype therefore relates to exaggerated traits around motherhood, home-keeping, and a lack of worldliness (see also Murphy and Palma-Fahey 2018 for a full discussion). This historical context is relevant to our analysis and will be integrated into our discussion below.

Data

The data (see Table 24.1) amounts to approximately 71,655 words, including 13 full episodes, a number of which were taken from Series 2, which was broadcast in 2012, the year the show won three comedy awards. Each episode lasts approximately 30 minutes usually airing after 9pm and is aimed at an adult audience. According to an Ofcom 2017 survey, it was the fourteenth most popular show watched by adults aged between 55 and 64 in 2016. While the dataset is small, it is nevertheless useful in providing a snapshot into a very particular and specialised genre in terms of gender/cultural representation. O'Keeffe et al. (2007: 198) state that small specialised corpora, such as this one, do not need to be as large as more general corpora to yield reliable results. Koester (2010) adds that many of the limitations of such a corpus, which emerge naturally, can be counterbalanced by reference to the context which provides useful contextual clues and background data, which, in turn, can lead to more meaningful and nuanced accounts. The scripts were accessed by downloading them from the BBC website, initially as PDFs which were then converted to word documents and analysed using CL and insights from CDA. Six scripts unavailable online were sent to us directly by the BBC. No changes were made to the files and stage directions and other information were also taken into account in the analysis. In addition to the corpus, we also draw on a one-off 2.14-minute YouTube video by Mrs Brown where she breaks away from the programme but, still in character, urges the Irish population to vote in favour of marriage equality. The clip went viral attracting over 2 million views and 68,000 shares on Facebook alone and was an example of how fictional media can be used to reach wide audiences to push sociocultural and sociopolitical agendas while using the popularity of shows as a platform.

Table 24.1 The *Mrs Brown's Boys* dataset

	Title	*Year*	*No. of words*	*No. of viewers (million)*
1	Series 1, Episode 1 – The Mammy	2011	5935	2.64
2	Series 1, Episode 2 – Mammy's secret	2011	5809	2.63
3	Series 1, Episode 3 – Mammy's merchandise	2011	5819	2.68
4	Series 1, Episode 4 – Mammy rides again	2011	6283	2.99
5	Series 1, Episode 5 – Mammy of the groom	2011	5811	2.96
6	Series 1, Episode 6 – Mammy's miracle	2011	6518	4.10
7	Series 2, Christmas Special – Mammy Christmas	2012	5073	11.68
8	Series 2, Christmas Special – The Virgin Mammy	2012	4943	10.72
9	Series 2, Episode 4 – Super Mammy	2012	5221	7.05
10	Series 3, Christmas Special – Buckin' Mammy	2013	6851	11.52
11	Series 3, Christmas Special – Who's a pretty Mammy then	2013	6729	11.27
12	Series 3, Episode 6 – Mammy swings	2013	846	9.10
13	Series 4, Christmas Special – Mammy's tickled pink	2014	5823	9.85
	Sub-total		**71, 655**	
	YouTube Clip – Mrs Brown's speaking in support of gay marriage prior to the 2015 Irish Referendum on marriage equality	2015	340	2 million +
	Sub-total		**340**	
	Total word count		**71, 995**	

Methodology

To analyse the corpus, we draw on a combination of CL and CDA in order to explore the portrayal of gay marriage and the Irish Mammy stereotype in *Mrs Brown's Boys*. In this section, we will discuss our reasons for combining CL and CDA and will then provide insights into initial trends emerging from the data which provide structure for our analysis.

In the last decade, there has been increasing evidence of interest in exploring the synergies that exist between CL and CDA (e.g. Baker 2012; Cheng 2012; Flowerdew 2012; Orpin 2005) and it is clear that obvious strides have been made since McEnery and Wilson (1996) and Biber et al. (1998) first suggested that the amount of corpus-based research in discourse analysis was small (Krishnamurthy 1996). Since, further research has tapped into the potential of what the combination of these methods has to offer (e.g. Baker 2008; Mautner 2012; Partington 2008) and, in particular, has illustrated their impact on and contribution to the exploration of language, gender, and sexuality (Baker and Levon 2015; Taylor 2013). However, while much of the discussion to date has largely focused on how corpus tools and methodologies can help to enhance and support CDA around its areas of weakness (Mautner 2012; Partington 2004), there are fewer studies which highlight the strengths of CDA in supporting some of the shortcomings encountered in corpus research, especially where context is key. In this chapter, we illustrate how CL can be used as one of the methods within CDA to provide insights into gender and sexuality. We seek to demonstrate the effectiveness of concordance lines as a way of investigating initial insights into representation. However, when we go beyond the line, we draw then on qualitative analyses which take the wider sociocultural and sociopolitical context into account. In this way, CDA offers a way of moving from exploring the patterns (through CL) to a more in-depth social analysis which provides insights into the relationship between language and other elements of the social processes (adapted, Wetherell, Taylor and Yates 2001).

In line with Cheng (2012), we describe CL as an empirical method of linguistic analysis and description which uses corpora as the primary data and starting point. It aims to find 'probabilities, trends, patterns, co-occurrences of elements, features or groupings of features' (Teubert and Krishnamurthy, 2007: 6) to arrive at generalisations about language phenomena. In contrast, CDA views 'language as discourse and as social practice' (Fairclough, 2001: 21) and studies the relationship between language and ideology (van Dijk 1997; Wodak 2001). Halliday's (1985) approach posits that 'language is firmly rooted in its sociolinguistic context' (Orpin 2005: 37) and is comprised of three stages: description of text, interpretation of the relationship between text and interaction, and explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context (Fairclough 2001: 21–22 cited in Cheng 2012). In considering its status, Baker et al. (2008) see CDA as an academic movement, a way of doing discourse analysis from a critical perspective, which often focuses on theoretical concepts such as power, ideology, and domination. These are not just abstract concepts but concepts which can be performed within particular texts. In this chapter, we look at how they are performed focusing on how language use reflects societal ideologies in *Mrs Brown's Boys*. We also comment on the power of scripted media to contest and push social agendas within an Irish sociocultural context. Baker et al. (2008) state that CDA is not a method nor is it associated with a specific set of methods and instead adopts methods such as CL, in our case, that is adequate in order to achieve its specific aims. Likewise, they do not view CL as a single method, but rather a collection of different methods (both quantitative and qualitative) which are related and make use of technology as well as human input.

Despite the growth of research in this area, most studies which draw on CL and CDA tend to focus on how corpus approaches can help enhance and improve CDA research (Koller and Mautner 2004; Mautner 2012; Partington 2004). Baker (2012), among others, puts forward the proposal that CL can improve the validity objectivity of CDA research, resulting in a more robust and valid set of findings. Mautner (2012) highlights the value of accessing corpora to help boost the empirical credence of analyses which serves to counteract the charge, frequently levelled at CDA, that individual texts are cherry-picked to suit the researchers' own political agenda (Orpin 2005). The merits of enriching CDA with a corpus- driven–approach, Mautner (2012) claims, also lies in allowing researchers to look at data from a different perspective, triangulating other forms of analyses and, in the process, validating results. This particular focus is enlightened by recognising the epistemological differences between both fields and the fact that corpus analyses, by virtue of their methodological status, treat the text as a product rather than as an unfolding discourse. This places emphasis on the integrity of the text, the process, and social action, which are central concerns in CDA (Flowerdew 2012). It is clearly at the socio-analytical level that CDA becomes more powerful as it allows more readily for the incorporation of relevant contextual factors such as historicity and the interwoven relationship and sociocultural impact of religion, politics, and gender stereotypes, as discussed below.

Being aware of the portrayal of gay marriage in the show, we were interested in exploring how it was portrayed in terms of language use. We began by searching for relevant items in the corpus through frequency, n-gram lists, and manual analysis and found items such as *marriage*, *gay marriage*, *wedding*, *gay wedding*, *gay couple*, Rory, Deano + the lemma *marry*. We also found items such as *homosexual, lesbian, queer,* and *homosexuality* although these were not linked, in any way, to the portrayal of gay marriage when looked at in the data. Therefore, our search focused in on only the forms that provided insight into gay marriage (*gay marriage*, *gay wedding*, *marry**[1]). The overall number of instances for the items was low given that gay marriage was only addressed in one episode (Ep. 6). Nonetheless, when the forms were looked at in context, they seemed to show a negative discourse prosody[2] (see Table 24.2) around how the construct of gay marriage was portrayed in the show (lines 1, 5, 6, 7 refer to gay marriage and the Catholic Church, lines 2, 3, 4, 8

Table 24.2 Negative semantic prosody for *gay marriage* in *Mrs Brown's Boys*

1	I thought you didn't accept	**gay marriage**	Fr D. No Mrs Brown I said the Church didn't
2	Why does it have to be a	**gay wedding**	Why does it have to make a statement?
3	ng as they're okay with it being a	**gay wedding**	Mrs B: None of your uncles or aunties so
4	just as long as they know it's a	**gay wedding**	Mick: Oh they're fine they're broad minded
5	**Rory and Deano** will never be	**married**	in the eyes of the church
6	**Rory and Deano** would need the pope's permission to get	**married**	in a Church but they don't need anybody's
7	**thing is Rory and Deano got**	**married**	This morning the two of them **on their own**
8	White satin. La La: Boring it's a	**gay wedding**	It has to make a statement
9	See the Church's position on	**marriage**	Is that it can only exist between a man and a

refer to gay marriage as 'different'). These trends were then used as a starting point for our analysis.

The merits of combining CL and CDA in this way means that the qualitative analysis avoids the accusation of 'cherry-picking' data as it is based on a trend generated from the concordance lines. Likewise, CL avoids the limitations associated with a small dataset and lack of contextual background in that we view each text as a semiotic entity which is embedded in an immediate text-internal co-text, exploring collocates and other relevant words and phrases in proximity, as well as an intertextual and sociopolitical context (Baker et al. 2008). It is this context that is useful in understanding underlying and often hidden meanings within a sociocultural context. This is particularly important in fictional media where there are scriptwriters involved who play a role in the reproduction of dominant/shared knowledge. They also shape and present agendas and ideologies in society (Bednarek 2012) that are all framed against specific cultural, social, and historical contextual backdrops.

Analysis and discussion

This analysis will focus on two main themes which emerged from the classification of the concordance lines: gay marriage as 'different', and gay marriage and the Catholic Church, and we have used these lines as a way of selecting the extracts we explore below. The final section will explore language use by Mrs Brown in her YouTube clip about marriage equality.

Gay marriage as 'different'

Extract 1 appears early in the show when Rory starts planning his wedding and discussing who to invite. This initial conversation between Rory and his mother serves to acknowledge that a *gay wedding* is something that needs others' consideration and approval (Turn 2) and may not be accepted by everyone (Turn 3) and subsequently does not seem to be on an equal footing to heterosexual marriage (Turn 1). Turn 3 implies potential prejudice and homophobia, at least, on the part of Mrs Brown's relatives who, she suggests, will not attend. What is interesting, however, is that the script does not portray Mrs Brown in the same way, setting her up instead as a potentially more open-minded character who is still seeking insights from Rory as to how gay marriage works (Turn 1), questioning its differences regarding protocol knowing that not everyone will be accepting but still wishing to support her child even if it is contrary to traditional social expectations. In this way, the extract brings to the fore conflicting views around acceptance and equality which are expressed by both Rory and Mrs Brown. It also raises awareness around societal attitudes while portraying Mrs Brown's lack of familiarity with gay marriage but also her willingness to understand and support her son and thus imply support for marriage equality.

Extract 1 (Episode: 'Gay marriage episode'/concordance line: 3)

1. Mrs Brown: How does this work with guests? I mean do we invite your uncles and aunties?
2. Rory: As long as they're okay with it being **a gay wedding**
3. Mrs Brown: None of your uncles or aunties so

Extract 3 takes place between Mrs Brown and La La, the wedding planner, and provides further evidence of how gay weddings are viewed as being 'different'. On the one hand, La

La plays to stereotypical views of gay sexuality, which are often enhanced by celebrities in the media, according to which gay weddings and behaviour have to be extravagant and ostentatious (Turn 1). On the other hand, Mrs Brown questions and indeed challenges this perception rejecting the notion that it should be 'a circus' in favour of seeing it as a celebration of love by attempting to normalise it. This further reinforces the Irish matriarch's growing understanding and acknowledgement of gay marriage as it shows her efforts to dispel and disregard stereotypes by contesting and challenging any limiting views in her bid to push an agenda of equality. It is in stark contrast to conversations involving Mrs Brown in early episodes which portray her as being uneducated around the topic of gay sexuality (see Extract 2) and plays to the more traditional traits of the Irish matriarch stereotype.

Extract 2 (Series 1, Episode: 5)

1. Mrs Brown: He must be a lesbian too!
2. Winnie: Mick is a homo?
3. Mrs Brown: Winnie – the book says you're not allowed to say that – it's not politically correct.
4. Winnie: Oh what do you say?
5. Mrs Brown: I dunno, queer I think

Extract 3 also shows her move away from the power of the Catholic Church and their opposition to gay marriage which is revealing given that historically women in Ireland had to comply with the Church's domination. We see Mrs Brown's attempt again to normalise gay marriage and in doing so perhaps dispel the stereotypes associated with it. It could also be said that she uses the script to challenges views in order to encourage her audience to reflect on what gay marriage is. This is in line with Hartley's (1999) view of television as 'a transmodern teacher' and also O'Carroll's style as a writer who, in the past, has integrated and addressed relevant social issues in his work.

Extract 3 (Episode 6, Series 3/concordance line: 8)

1. LaLa (Wedding Planner): Boring, it's a **gay wedding** it has to make a statement
2. Mrs Brown: Ah
3. LaLa: What?
4. Mrs Brown: Why does it have to be a **gay wedding**? Why does it have to make a statement? Why can't it just be that **Rory and Deano** are in love and commit themselves to that love together for the rest of their lives. We don't need a circus, we don't need wet suits and feckin' oxygen tanks

Gay marriage and the Catholic Church

This section looks at the second theme where Extract 4 takes place between Mrs Brown and Fr Damien, a local Catholic priest. It shows Mrs Brown challenging Fr Damien on the Church's stance on gay marriage (Turns 5, 7, 9, 11) and Fr Damien's discomfort as he fails to respond or provide justification for the Church's position (Turns 8, 10). This leaves him silenced, deflated, and weak in the face of her questioning (Turns 8, 10). She focuses, in particular, on unpicking the Church's views on love, one of the basic tenets of their teaching, and is shown to portray the Church as lacking and contradictory in so far as they appear to only support, recognise, and acknowledge certain kinds of love. It is interesting to note the importance and relevance of the script's focus on the Catholic Church. This could be said to be a deliberate effort by scriptwriters to challenge and deconstruct the Church's archaic views towards gay marriage in light of the 2015 referendum on marriage equality. In doing so, the script taps into the historical role of the Church in Ireland as a potential stumbling block for equality around gay marriage. It also targets the show's popularity with an older demographic (55–64) (Ofcom 2017), who traditionally would have grown up following the Church's restrictive teachings, in a bid to perhaps educate or provide alternative views to what they may believe. This extract also emphasises Mrs Brown's separation from the Church's teachings as she overtly challenges Fr Damien. She uses her voice for justice and, to some extent, is an embodiment of the changes that women have gained in Ireland since the 1970s (e.g. access to contraception, permission to work, right to pensions (Inglis 2005)). Her interaction with the priest also signals, to some extent, the diminishing power of the Church over society in Ireland which came through her argument as well as her use of taboo language (Turn 11). This was later evidenced in Ireland's decision to become the first country to legalise same-sex marriage by popular vote (2015) and overturn abortion laws (2018). This analysis has shown that going beyond the concordance lines allows access to more holistic insights, meanings, and interpretations which only surface when the wider context is accessed (Antaki et al. 2003).

Extract 4 (Episode 6, Series 3/concordance line: 9)

1. Mrs Brown: Fr Damien I'm glad you called around I wanted … to have **Rory's marriage** blessed in the church …
2. Fr Damien: Mrs Brown **Rory and Deano** will never be **married** in the eyes of the church
3. Mrs Brown: I know that ha ha no I'm just looking for a blessing of some sort …
4. Fr Damien: Look the church won't bless something not only that it doesn't recognize but is against
5. Mrs Brown: Against what is it against?
6. Fr Damien: The church's position on **marriage** is that it can only exist between a man and a woman
7. Mrs Brown: I know that but what is the church's position on love?
8. Fr Damien: Sorry eh ah umm well there are many different types of love I mean like love for one's family is different from love for one's let's say pet
9. Mrs Brown: Really and what's the difference? Explain the difference between those two loves
10. Fr Damien: Well it's like eh
11. Mrs Brown: Look Fr I know **Rory and Deano** would need the pope's permission to get **married** in the church but they don't need anybody's permission to fall in love and as for the ceremony I don't give a shite if they jump over a brush but you show me in any bible anywhere where Jesus Christ refuses to sanctify love
12. Trevor: Would you like me to show you out Fr?
13. Fr Damien: Yes I think so

This portrayal of gay sexuality in relation to the Church is taken further in Extract 5. Here we see another interaction between Mrs Brown and Fr Damien who turns up for the post-wedding celebrations. When questioned by Mrs Brown as to why he had attended, Fr Damien is shown to disassociate himself from the Church, identifying as an individual as opposed to a representative of the Catholic institution. He says ‘I said the Church was against it, I’m happy to celebrate love in whatever shape it comes’ (Turn 4). In light of the context and historical background as well as our argument above, this is a powerful statement as he disengages from the Church’s views to promote equality and acceptance and asserts his support for gay marriage (Turn 2).

Extract 5 (Episode 6, Series 3/concordance line:1)

1. Mrs Brown: Fr Damien, what are you doing here (post wedding celebrations)?
2. Fr Damien: Like the rest of you I came to celebrate the happy couple
3. Mrs Brown: I thought you didn’t accept **gay marriage**
4. Fr Damien: No Mrs Brown I said the Church was against it I’m happy to celebrate love in whatever shape it comes

A clear advantage of exploring this small specialised dataset from a CL-CDA perspective is that it enables us to situate the interpretation of the findings within a wider multi-level understanding of the broader ideological context which, in turn, facilitates access to more subtle social and linguistic patterns (Taylor 2013). However, as Baker and Levon (2015) point out, there are shortcomings to this kind of approach. The first is that the findings may not be generalisable beyond the text and the second is that the analysis runs the risk of being overly subjective. To account for this, in our study, and in order to validate our interpretation of the sociopolitical agendas mentioned above, in the next section, we look at O’Carroll’s interaction with marriage equality beyond the show focusing, in particular, on a YouTube video he made while in character as Mrs Brown. This dataset serves as a means of triangulating the data in order to affirm synergy and validity of our analysis from the show.

Gay marriage beyond the show: Mrs Brown’s YouTube clip

Through social media, Mrs Brown’s character was used to produce a YouTube clip promoting marriage equality in the lead up to the Irish referendum in 2015 referring to it as ‘A message from the Mammy in chief’. Accompanied by her son Rory who is gay, Mrs Brown addresses the Irish nation urging them to vote in favour of same-sex marriage and, to some extent, cements her role as an advocate for policy change around marriage equality which clearly moves her agenda beyond the show. In Turn 1, Extract 6, she attempts to normalise same-sex marriage, a point she had already made in the show, and questions why it should be an issue. She draws on previous historical moments in Irish society such as marriage between Protestants and Catholics to show how attitudes change and taps into people’s fear of change, claiming ‘the world didn’t end’. In this extract, we see the intersection between fiction and reality where she acknowledges the difficulties of change but draws on shared historical sociocultural and sociopolitical background, aligning herself with the audience by claiming ‘we can do it, we’ve done it before’. The Irish matriarch again shows her evolution by leaving the domestic stereotype which has long characterised her by claiming for herself a public identity and taking an active sociopolitical role in the promotion of justice. This is reflective, to some extent, of O’Carroll’s own mother, whose character he has said he draws on, as she was the first female member of the Irish parliament in the 1950s and campaigned largely for social justice. The extract once again reflects O'Carroll's use of the media as 'a transmodern teacher' (Hartley 1999), extending its use beyond the show, as he educates the audience, reminding them of the importance of embracing change: 'we all have to grow up a bit now … every generation gets its change to make a big change … so go on do it'.

Extract 6 (YouTube Clip)

1.	Mrs Brown:	Any two people who feel in love enough should be allowed to get married, what's the fecking fuss?
2.	Rory:	Well some people believe that if you allow gays and lesbians to get married it might change the meaning of marriage and family
3.	Mrs Brown:	… when I was a young girl there was a big hoo-ha about mixed marriages you know Catholics marrying protestants and black people marring white people but … They still went and got married (laugh) and the world didn't end, no (eh eh eh) and we all grew up a little bit and you know we all have to grow up a little bit now. Marriage isn't easy changing the law isn't easy and changing attitudes is even harder, but we can do it, we've done it before and the world didn't end …. You know Rory, there was a time when woman weren't allowed to vote (laugh). I know, you see that's the thing, every generation gets the chance to make a big change and you're going to get your chance on May the 22nd. So go on do it.

Conclusion and future directions

Combining CL and CDA has allowed us to unveil and discuss the interplay between patterns in the script and current sociocultural and political issues within a wider Irish context. We show the potential of CL in accessing insights into discourse prosody but also show where it falls short and a more qualitative analysis becomes important. This analysis, where wider social context is key, provides a more holistic exploration of relevant, political, cultural, and historical background, which is not usually considered in corpus analyses (Baker et al. 2008). We emphasise the importance of combining methodologies and also critical engagement with different methods in order to acknowledge their benefits and understand their limitations. This closer level of scrutiny allows us to look at how language functions in constituting and transmitting knowledge through fictional media and its power in organising social and political agendas. By going beyond the show and extending our analysis to social media, we seek to triangulate our data in order to improve the validity of our insights. Our study relies on scripts and social media clips but stops short of including insights from media professionals which would be an important future direction in terms of engaging them in the potential impact of language analysis in their work. Alongside this is the importance of audience perception and opinion which is becoming increasingly more relevant as many fictional and semi-fictional programmes are now being accompanied by live commentary and feedback through Twitter and other means. This new relationship between the television and audience participation has much potential in terms of taking forward how we, as viewers, consume television shows like this and actively engage with key issues of gender and sexuality presented and/or emerging in the shows.

Notes

1 * indicates the lemma.
2 Discourse prosody: ‘a form of meaning which is established through the proximity of a consistent series of collocates’ (Louw 2000: 57). The primary function of discourse prosody is to express speaker/writer attitude or evaluation (Louw 2000: 58). It can be positive or negative.

Further reading

Harrington, K. (2008) ‘Perpetuating difference? Corpus linguistics and the gendering of reported dialogue’. In: Harrington, K., Litosseliti, L., Sauntson, H., and Sunderland, J. (eds.) *Gender and Language Research Methodologies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan, pp. 85–102.

This chapter raises awareness of issues around corpus analysis and the interpretation of corpus data and is useful in providing a strong methodological account of corpus linguistics in studies on language and gender. It is useful to read both this and the previous chapter by Kosetzi (2008) in order to see the different ways gender is approached by these two ‘methodologies’.

Kosetzi, K. (2008) ‘Harnessing a critical discourse analysis of gender in television fiction’. In: Harrington, K., Litosseliti, L., Sauntson, H., and Sunderland, J. (eds.) *Gender and Language Research Methodologies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, pp. 227–239.

This chapter is useful as it explores the importance of using CDA to analyse gender representation in fictional media. It provides a robust methodological discussion and deals with issues of validity in CDA.

Related topics

Perception of gender and sexuality; the impact of language and gender studies: public engagement and wider communication; language, gender, and sexuality: reflections on the field’s ongoing critical engagement with the sociopolitical landscape; determining the impact of gender stereotyping on patient feedback; an ethnographic approach to compulsory heterosexuality.

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25

The impact of language and gender studies

Public engagement and wider communication

Deborah Cameron

Introduction

Today, researchers in many parts of the world are exhorted by government agencies, funding bodies, and the institutions which employ them to maximise the impact of their work beyond their own academic community. Exactly how 'impact' is defined and measured varies widely across systems and institutions. What different definitions have in common, however, is the principle that researchers should contribute not only to the advancement of knowledge in their own academic field, but also to the larger economic and social good, by making the knowledge they produce accessible and relevant to non-academic constituencies which have a stake in it, a use for it, or an interest in it. For researchers in the field of language and gender studies this is not a new development: there is a long tradition of engagement with both feminist and more 'general' publics outside the academy. But the conditions for this kind of engagement have changed significantly over time, presenting researchers with new opportunities, but also new challenges. What these are, and how they can be negotiated, are the main questions addressed in this chapter.

There are a number of ways in which researchers may pursue impact, not all of which will be considered in detail in this chapter. Some research is designed from the outset to have applications outside the academy: it may be commissioned by, or carried out in collaboration with, a non-academic partner (e.g. a government department, a charity, or a commercial company), or it may be undertaken independently, but with the aim of informing policy or practice in a domain such as healthcare or education. Some language and gender research falls into this category. There is, for instance, a well-established tradition of research on educational issues like boys' disengagement from foreign language learning (Carr and Pauwels 2006), or the classroom dynamics that tend to marginalise girls (e.g. Graddol and Swann 1988), and this work has often addressed policymakers and practitioners as well as the researchers' own academic community. The same is true of some research on gender-linked patterns in other kinds of institutional discourse, including customer service interactions (Stokoe et al. 2017), political speech in legislative assemblies (Shaw 2013), and judicial proceedings relating to sexual violence (Ehrlich 2001). An interesting recent example is the DOOM ('Discourses of Online Misogyny') project undertaken by corpus linguists at Lancaster University (Hardaker and McGlashan 2016), which investigated rape threats and other misogynistic abuse addressed to women online. This project had academic goals and was funded by one of the UK's research councils, but it was also intended to help companies like Twitter devise more effective ways of dealing with the problem.

Research which is not 'applied' in the sense just discussed may nevertheless be designed to benefit the research subjects and/or the community they belong to, adopting what Cameron et al. (1992) label an 'advocacy' approach. This has been a common practice in sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological research, where the best-known examples have involved researchers advocating on behalf of disempowered minority language-users and speakers of stigmatised nonstandard dialects (see e.g. Lawson and Sayers 2016). However, as Baugh (2006) points out, there is also an element of advocacy in some work on language and gender, where researchers have felt a similar responsibility to counter ill-founded stereotypes and damaging popular myths by putting counter-arguments and counter-evidence in the public domain. This kind of public engagement may be narrowly targeted (e.g. where researchers advocate for an individual or a community in judicial or quasi-judicial proceedings), or it may be much more broadly conceived, a matter of addressing a heterogeneous 'general public' via the print, broadcast, and online media. The second, 'broad' form of public engagement will be the main focus of the following discussion.

History

The tradition of public engagement mentioned above goes back to the early 1970s, when the study of language and gender first emerged as a visible and coherent academic enterprise. It is often said that this new field of inquiry was influenced by the contemporaneous Women's Liberation Movement, but this arguably fails to capture the closeness of the connection. Retrospective accounts (e.g. Lakoff 2004; McConnell-Ginet 2011) suggest that the creation of the field was an active and conscious expression of feminist political commitment. As Lakoff (2004: 18) recalls in her introduction to the thirtieth anniversary edition of *Language and Woman's Place* (a book which was one of the earliest and most influential examples of public engagement by a language and gender scholar): 'It was recognized early that language was important, that there were consequences when grown women were "girls" and the masculine pronoun was "normal" to refer to everybody'. The deleted agent of 'recognized' is 'feminists': it was the discussions that were happening in feminist political groups which prompted academics like Lakoff, who had been trained in linguistics or an adjacent discipline, to build on the insight that 'language was important' by systematically analysing the ways in which everyday language-use both reflected and reproduced women's subordinate status.

In relation to this early phase of the field's history it is arguably misleading to separate the processes of academic knowledge production and public dissemination in the way present-day models of impact do. Scholars were bringing feminist ideas *into* the academy in order to create knowledge which they would then share with feminists and others *outside* the academy, and both processes were seen as contributing to the larger struggle for equality. For this generation of (mainly women) language and gender researchers, the academy was far from being an 'ivory tower' which kept them at a distance from the 'real-world' problems they analysed. The institutional sexism of universities, displayed in everything from their hiring practices to the curricula they prescribed for students, was a real-world problem in its own right (for an account of the conditions facing women academics in the US in the early 1970s, see McConnell-Ginet 2011). In these circumstances, developing courses on 'women and language', or publishing analyses like Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place* (which originally appeared in 1973 as an article in the journal *Language in Society*, before being published as a general interest book two years later) was an overtly political act. No less than the more practical initiatives in which some researchers later became involved, such as producing guidelines for non-sexist writing (e.g. Frank and Treichler 1988; King 1991), it was an intervention aimed at changing both the academy and the wider culture.

Though the term 'impact' in its present-day sense had not yet entered mainstream academic usage, it is clear that much early language and gender research was intended to be accessed and used by non-academic feminist audiences. But the conditions in which the field first emerged were specific to their time and place, and inevitably they did not persist unchanged. By the late 1980s, academic feminism was losing its previous organic connection to grassroots political activism as the latter began to decline. Language and gender research was gradually becoming more visible, more organised, and more academically 'respectable'; it was still seen by many practitioners as a 'feminist' area of inquiry, but as time went on there was less consensus on what that meant. Feminist perspectives were themselves increasingly diverse, and there were also some researchers who argued that the field's historical association with feminist politics and feminist theory had become an obstacle to scientific progress (for an example see Preisler 1998; a feminist counter-argument was made by Cameron 1999). Differing ideas about the field's relationship to feminism as a political enterprise also affected attitudes to public engagement – what kinds of knowledge researchers should seek to communicate, to what audiences, and for what purposes. Conflict on this issue erupted dramatically at the beginning of the 1990s, as the research community contemplated a spectacularly successful example of a language and gender scholar making expert knowledge accessible and relevant to a mass audience: Tannen's book *You Just Don't Understand* (1990), which became an international bestseller and made its author a household name. Its impact was indisputable, but it was also highly controversial.

There were two main reasons for this controversy. Tannen had used a popular generic formula (that of the self-help or advice book) as the vehicle for her argument that gender differences in language-use arose from the differing experiences of boys and girls in same-sex childhood peer groups, and that in later life these differences led to systematic miscommunication between individuals of different sexes. This 'difference' or 'two cultures' approach was favoured by some researchers in the 1980s (e.g. Maltz and Borker 1982; Sheldon 1990) while others criticised it for being inattentive to the effects of power and status inequalities on cross-sex interaction. Tannen's use of it (and the fact that she did not address the objections others had made to it) was one of the things with which her critics took issue, in her academic as well as her popular work. But in the case of the popular work there was another line of criticism, which focused more directly on what some saw as Tannen's retreat from, or even repudiation of, the field's tradition of feminist political engagement. In a critical review of *You Just Don't Understand*, Troemel-Ploetz (1991) accused Tannen of depoliticising language and gender research by harnessing it to the project of individual self-improvement rather than social and political change. For another critic, Freed (1992), Tannen's 'different but equal' message both reflected and contributed to what Faludi (1991) had recently dubbed the 'backlash', a new mood of cultural resistance or hostility to feminism.

Not all researchers shared these strong reservations about *You Just Don't Understand*, and Tannen has continued to contribute to the scholarly literature on language and gender (see e.g. Tannen 2014). However, her critics were not wrong to see the popular reception of certain ideas about men and women as symptomatic of a new gender conservatism. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, 'difference' accounts of male and female communication styles would be reiterated approvingly in a series of popular science books which more clearly exemplified Faludi's concept of the anti-feminist 'backlash': their argument was that feminism had reached its natural limit, and any remaining inequalities were the inescapable effects of 'hard-wired' sex differences. That certainly was not Tannen's view, but other writers who wanted to advance it (see e.g. Baron-Cohen 2003) found it easy to combine her generalisations about language (often rendered in simplified terms) with the account of sex-differentiated human nature made available by evolutionary psychology, and findings from the newly influential current of research on the human brain that Fine (2011) would later dub 'neurosexism'. It was the success of this popular science genre, together with the continuing popularity of self-help books like *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* (Grey 1992), which prompted me to make my own contribution to the tradition of feminist writing about language and gender for non-academic audiences, *The Myth of Mars and Venus* (Cameron 2007). In some ways this text harks back to the explicitly political/polemical writing of the 1970s; but it reflects the mood of its moment by being a more defensive intervention, an attempt to counter the 'post-feminist' biological essentialism that seemed to be in the ascendant 30 years later.

That moment has also passed: since around 2010 there has been a resurgence of feminist political activism, particularly among young women, which has created a new audience for the kind of politically engaged writing that was pioneered by the first generation of language and gender researchers. At the same time, the non- or anti-feminist forms of writing which became popular in the 1990s and early noughties have not faded away. Today, feminist and non-feminist presentations of the subject of language and gender co-exist, and indeed compete, in an increasingly crowded public 'marketplace of ideas'.

The impact agenda: competition and conflict in the contemporary media marketplace

One recent development which has contributed to the rise of this marketplace is the advent of the 'impact agenda' itself (i.e. the formal or informal adoption of impact as a goal for researchers and the institutions which employ or fund them). In the past, communicating with non-academic audiences was something individual academics might choose to do, but there were few professional rewards for doing it, or, conversely, penalties for not doing it. Today there is a much stronger expectation that researchers will take or create opportunities for public engagement, and more pressure on them to develop the necessary skills and habits. Although formal regimes for assessing impact do not necessarily rank the dissemination of expert knowledge to general audiences as highly as, say, applied research or consultancy (in the UK's Research Excellence Framework public engagement is defined as a 'path to impact' rather than a form of impact in itself), some research suggests that in practice assessors in humanities and social sciences have been unwilling to discount or downgrade it (Watermeyer and Chubb 2019), and it is also valued for other reasons (explored further below) by the institutions that employ academic researchers. Many universities now offer training sessions on subjects like 'talking to journalists', 'using social media', or 'making a podcast'; doctoral students and early career academics are routinely advised to promote themselves and their work by, for instance, maintaining an active Twitter account, starting a personal blog, or contributing regularly to an established group blog.

These new practices of professionalisation reflect another key development: the proliferation of media platforms which can be used to engage with wider publics. In the pre-digital era only a small and select group of academics could gain access to a mass audience, and to do so they depended on the support of professional gatekeepers (such as the editors who commissioned ‘general interest’ books or opinion pieces in newspapers, and the producers who selected experts to contribute to radio and TV broadcasts). Since the advent of Web 2.0, however, which enables anyone with an internet connection to become a ‘content creator’, it has become possible for academics to bypass the gatekeepers and communicate with non-academic publics directly. Though most academics who blog, vlog, or podcast will be addressing relatively small online audiences, the potential exists for them to attract a large global following – and if they do, there is every chance that the mainstream media gatekeepers will also show an interest. The mainstream itself has expanded to fill the space available online, and academe is among the sources digital media producers have turned to in order to meet their need for a continuous supply of new content. It is still relatively difficult for an academic to be commissioned to write a trade book or a column in a printed national newspaper, but it is not so difficult to secure a slot for an opinion piece on the same newspaper’s website, or in an entirely virtual publication like *Slate* or the *Huffington Post*. In the context of the impact agenda this arrangement suits both parties: researchers and scholars gain access to non-academic audiences, while the media gain access to a dependable (and cheap or unpaid) pool of content-providers.

As a result of these developments it has become easier than it was in the past for academic researchers to communicate with wider audiences, and for non-academics to access expert knowledge. Overall, that must surely be regarded as a positive thing. But some commentators have drawn attention to what they see as the less positive effects. For instance, Roelofs and Gallien (2017) suggest that the use of quantitative measures as evidence of impact has created a perverse incentive for academics to produce ‘clickbait’, seeking to optimise the statistical evidence of impact (number of page views, downloads, citations, comments, shares) by deliberately taking up controversial topics, making provocative arguments, and presenting research findings in sensational terms. Roelofs and Gallien’s comments were prompted by a case in point – an article defending Western colonialism which appeared in *Third World Quarterly* in 2017. The article’s highly provocative argument prompted criticism of its scholarship, complaints about the editorial process that had allowed it to be accepted by a scholarly journal, and a petition calling for it to be retracted. It was later withdrawn by the publisher. In the meantime, however, and as a direct result of the outrage it provoked, the article had become, according to widely used measures such as the ‘Altmetric Attention Score’, the most ‘impactful’ the journal had ever published. While this may be an extreme case, Roelofs and Gallien argue that it exemplifies a rather general trend: ‘Academia’, they write (2017: np), ‘is replicating the structure of the mass media’, and ‘the result is to dilute the idea of impact to simply publicity’.

The US sociologist McMillan-Cottom (2015: np) observes that under current conditions academic institutions may well see publicity as one of the benefits of public engagement: ‘attention can be equated with a type of prestige, [and] prestige is a way to shore up institutions when political and cultural attitudes are attacking colleges and universities at every turn’. But what institutions want is positive publicity, and they are often unprepared to deal with the negative variety. If a researcher is attacked or threatened, s/he may not always be able to rely on her institution to protect, defend, or support her. McMillan-Cottom believes that there is too little institutional awareness of the potential costs of public engagement, especially for women and minority scholars. As she bluntly notes, in most fields – especially those concerned with politically contentious issues such as racism and gender inequality – ‘public scholarship means pissing people off’. Individual researchers are too often expected to bear the costs alone, while conversely, institutions take it for granted that they are entitled to claim a share in any benefits.

Language and gender researchers are well-positioned to take advantage of opportunities for wider communication via mass media, because the subject they study does generate both interest and controversy. But precisely for that reason, researchers are vulnerable to the problems mentioned above. Feminist researchers may find themselves under attack for political reasons: while that is not a new phenomenon – in the 1990s a journalist once devoted a whole column in the local paper to denouncing me and my research – it is a different kind of experience in the age of social media, which make it easy to generate public outrage (one of the most important currencies of what McMillan-Cottom calls the ‘affective attention economy’), and to engage in organised harassment. The newspaper column attacking me provoked one letter of complaint to my employer, which was ignored; today the university might receive hundreds of emails. Another problem for language and gender researchers is having their work presented by the media in ways that misrepresent it, reinforcing myths and stereotypes which the research was intended to challenge. Conversely, researchers may be denied media attention *because* their work resists this kind of framing.

Some of these points can be illustrated by looking at the way language and gender research has been covered in *The Conversation*, an online publication launched in 2011 to showcase the work of academic researchers and scholars in a form accessible to non-specialists. Staffed by professional editors and run on a not-for-profit basis, it publishes short, topical pieces under a Creative Commons licence which allows its content to be republished by other media outlets. Not only are contributors to *The Conversation* not paid, universities must pay a subscription fee to make their employees eligible to write for it. This could be compared to the funding model for open-access scholarly publishing where the cost of publication is paid by authors, typically using money from either a research grant or the institution they work for, and its successful adoption by a publication whose purpose is to facilitate wider communication shows how important the impact agenda has become. What *The Conversation* offers is access to a sizeable global audience, not only via its own site, but also through other sites which republish content from it, and this is now a commodity for which institutions are willing to pay.

A search of the articles published on the site over a 12-month period (October 2016 to September 2017) identified eight items which presented or discussed some kind of language and gender research. Their titles – presumably composed by staff editors rather than academic authors – are listed below in chronological order of publication:

1. ‘He’ versus ‘she’ in Australian media coverage: what the language of news tells us about gender imbalance;
2. Trump vs. Clinton is a chance to think more clearly about gender and leadership;
3. Improving gender equality is the key to tackling Britain’s male teacher shortage;
4. Hidden figures: how Black women preachers spoke truth to power;
5. Do men and women really find different words funny? Here’s what the research says;
6. You can tell if someone is attracted to you by their voice;
7. Female doctors show more empathy than male doctors;
8. AI can predict whether your relationship will last based on how you speak to each other.

The Conversation's brand is built on the idea of combining 'academic rigour [with] journalistic flair', but it might be asked whether some of these titles lend credence to the argument that the impact agenda incentivises 'clickbait'. Items (6), (7), and (8), in particular, might invite the criticism that they 'sex up' the research discussed in the body of the article, presenting its findings in attention-grabbing but reductive and potentially misleading terms. In some cases it is not just the title which invites this criticism. For instance, the writer of (7) ends his piece by suggesting that if you are looking for an empathetic doctor you should choose a woman. That conclusion does not follow from the research findings he presents (it was not the case that every female doctor in the sample showed more empathy than every male doctor, only that there was a statistically significant difference between group averages): rather it exemplifies a kind of reasoning which is implicated in stereotyping and sex discrimination.

The items listed above represent a range of academic approaches to, and perspectives on, language and gender. Three of them ((1), (3), and (5)) were written by linguists, while the authors of the other five are specialists in business (2), theology (4), speech processing (6), philosophy (7), engineering and psychology (8). In all the pieces by linguists, and two of the others ((2) and (4)), the perspective adopted could be described as (explicitly or implicitly) 'feminist', in that the author aims to draw attention to sexist biases or challenge gender stereotypes (e.g. that men's distinctive communication style makes them better suited to leadership roles (2) and less well-suited to early years teaching (3)). However, the remaining three items (all taken from the science and medicine sections of the site) reproduce assumptions which feminist research has questioned, presenting what might be characterised as folk-stereotypes (e.g. that women are 'naturally' more empathetic communicators) or speculations (e.g. about the evolution of male–female differences in voice-pitch) as neutral and objective scientific facts. Overall, it might be concluded, *The Conversation*'s 'marketplace of ideas' operates as a free market, fettered only by the requirement that contributors must have reputable academic credentials. Different kinds of expertise and conflicting perspectives on the same subject simply sit alongside one another, leaving it up to individual readers to judge what is valid, useful, enlightening, or interesting.

The Conversation's eclecticism reflects the relatively large role academic contributors themselves play in shaping the site's content: while access to it does depend on gatekeepers (some contributors are approached by editors, others pitch ideas to them – and some may be identified as potential contributors by the press and PR offices of their own institutions), there is no particular editorial line. By contrast, gatekeepers in the traditional media tend to be more directive. While it is possible for academics to pitch their own ideas to editors and producers, it is more typical for them to be approached by media professionals, who will often be looking not for an open-ended conversation about the subject of a planned story or programme, but for someone with 'expert' credentials to endorse the argument they are already committed to.

I know this from personal experience: despite being the author of a book entitled *The* Myth *of Mars and Venus*, I am regularly contacted by media producers asking me to contribute to a story or feature which presupposes the truth of some well-worn Mars-and-Venus generalisation (e.g. 'men can't express their feelings' or 'women apologise too much'). If I question this, what most often happens is that the producer decides she has picked the 'wrong' expert; after thanking me for my input she will proceed to look for a different one who does not reject the basic premise. This is not necessarily a reflection of her personal views on the subject: it has more to do with her professional judgement of what will make a 'good' programme for a particular audience. For some audiences, a 'good' programme may be one whose approach is compatible with my own goals as an academic researcher (e.g. it presents the relevant research evidence fairly and allows space for key points to be explained); in other cases, however, what the producer wants (e.g. a polarised 'debate' on something the evidence is clear about, or a deliberately unchallenging 'light' feature) may be in conflict with my goals. Either way, it will not be my place to dictate to the producer: on her professional turf it will be her judgement that prevails.

This is a point which might merit more attention in the media training offered to academics. Such training tends to presuppose that access to media audiences is desirable in and of itself, and therefore to focus on 'how to' questions: how to present or pitch your work so that gatekeepers will be convinced of its relevance and interest, and how to communicate it effectively to an audience once the gatekeepers have given you that opportunity. But there are other questions that need to be considered. What are you hoping to achieve by presenting ideas or research findings to this audience? Will the terms on offer allow you to achieve your goals, or will they stop you from communicating your knowledge in a way you consider intellectually and politically defensible? In the latter case, should you participate at all?

My own practice, which has evolved over time and in the light of experience (both good and bad), is to decline to participate in media discussions if the answers to my questions about the format, participants, and angle suggest that the discussion will simply reproduce myths and stereotypes which I consider harmful; I also decline requests to contribute to features which trivialise the subject by treating it as light entertainment (a writer or producer's use of the word 'light', or 'light-hearted', is always a red flag). These 'red lines' reflect my own personal commitments, and I am not suggesting they should be adopted by every language and gender researcher. What I am suggesting, though, is that all researchers need to think about their own red lines. It is commonly supposed that the main thing that causes problems for academics in dealing with the media is a lack of skills, but arguably an even more significant problem is lack of control: academics do not define, and often have little power to influence, the media's priorities. That is why it is important to have a sense of what you are *not* prepared to do – and to be willing to say no if those boundaries are not respected.

As I noted earlier, though, in the age of digital media it is possible to bypass the gatekeepers and become not only the creator but also the editor and publisher of your own online content (among academics the main kinds of self-published content are blogs and podcasts, for which there are numerous free and easy-to-use hosting platforms). The obvious benefit this offers is control: you decide what to present to an audience and how. The disadvantage is that, compared to any site with a large pre-existing subscriber base, most academic blogs/podcasts will only ever attract a small audience. Once again, though, it could be argued that thinking in these terms 'dilutes the idea of impact to simply publicity', and that 'real' impact has more to do with the quality than the quantity of attention. It is one thing to reach people and another to influence them: for the latter purpose, a small but very committed readership (or one deliberately targeted on the basis that your work is directly relevant to their concerns) may be preferable to a mass audience with no particular investment in the subject.

My own decision to start a blog (Cameron 2015b) reflected my desire to communicate about language and gender to a particular non-academic audience, namely the new generation of active feminists I mentioned earlier. Considering their age and social location, I believed I was more likely to reach these readers through a blog than through the mass media (I also started a Twitter account so that I could advertise what I published to my target audience, which is well represented on Twitter). In the event, my blog also attracted readers who were not in my target group (e.g. other researchers, teachers, and, through them, students, of language and gender). Of course I am happy to have these readers, but I would not be unhappy if I did not have them, and I continue to design the blog's content around the concerns of its intended, feminist audience.

In one respect, having a larger and more varied audience than I initially expected has been a problem rather than a bonus. My original aims included facilitating discussion among feminists via the comments section of the blog, but as traffic increased I found myself dealing with a growing number of hostile and abusive comments from readers who obviously were not feminists. The targeting of feminists (and more generally, women) online is, of course, a well-known phenomenon (for a comprehensive discussion see Jane 2017), but I had assumed it would not be a serious problem for an academic blogger seeking to engage a small feminist public in discussion of a 'niche' subject. If the audience had remained very small that assumption might have held up, but even a modest level of visibility – say, a post that gets more than 1,000 shares on Facebook – can bring you to the attention of people who will try to cause you problems. On a personal blog you can screen comments and decline to publish those you deem inappropriate, but if the volume of comments is high this becomes a very time-consuming task. Eventually I stopped allowing comments. I also refuse the requests I occasionally receive to republish content from my blog in mainstream media sources, because their threshold for deeming comments unpublishable is too low for me. However, the fact that I receive such requests (and am sometimes quoted in the press, or interviewed on the radio about things I have posted on my blog) shows that a 'niche' product designed for a specific and limited public can sometimes influence the mainstream, through people who have links to both.

Entering public debate: language and gender in the news

One of the roles academics play in the contemporary media marketplace is that of commentators on current events and news stories, and in a world of multichannel, multiplatform, 24-hour news the demand for this kind of commentary has increased, along with the ratio of comment to news reporting. In addition to being asked to do it, academics who self-publish and/or are active on social media often choose to respond to news events or to the public debate they provoke. It might be thought that rather few news stories have any connection with the concerns of language and gender researchers, but in fact a surprising number do. A high-profile example was the US Presidential election of 2016: both candidates' ways of using language came under scrutiny during the campaign (Clinton's voice and speaking style, in particular, were frequently discussed in highly gendered terms), and in October 2016 the release of the 'Hollywood Access' tape, on which Trump was heard to engage in what he later called 'locker room banter', prompted an extraordinary volume of media commentary. In a case like this, where pundits of all kinds are competing to offer their own 'hot takes', what do researchers with specialist knowledge have to offer?

My own answer would be that academic experts can offer three interrelated things, which I will call correction, contextualisation, and complication. *Correction* (as in Labov's (1982) 'principle of error correction', formulated in his classic discussion of the ethical responsibilities of sociolinguists to the communities they study) means trying to counter biases, misconceptions, and dubious claims. During the presidential election campaign, it was suggested, on the basis of statistical analysis of word frequencies, that Trump talked 'like a woman'. The logical and technical problems with this argument were pointed out by the linguist and data analyst Schnoebelen (2016). *Contextualisation* involves drawing attention to the larger patterns which are exemplified by a currently newsworthy case. For instance, criticisms of

Hillary Clinton's 'shrill' voice prompted charges of sexism from her supporters, and arguments from her opponents that the criticism had nothing to do with her sex. In response, the linguist Subtirelu (2016) published a chart visualising corpus evidence showing that 'shrill' (along with 'screech' and 'shriek') was significantly more likely to be used about the speech of women and girls than men and boys. Other researchers put the criticism of Clinton into the larger historical context of discourse on women's public speech, relating the way she was represented in media campaign coverage to the treatment of other female politicians past and present. *Complication* means using expert knowledge to tell a more complex or nuanced story. For example, Trump's 'locker room banter' was generally presented by critics as an expression of his sexist and predatory attitudes to women, while his defenders maintained that it was 'just talk'. But as someone who had studied other examples of 'banter' (e.g. Cameron 1997), I wanted to point out that it is also a mechanism for reinforcing the homosocial, fraternal bonds among men which play an important part in maintaining their social dominance. Banter thus has effects in the world whether or not the behaviour participants talk about (e.g. in this case, 'grabbing women by the pussy') really happened, and whether or not the attitudes they express in this context reflect their 'true' feelings.

Blogging, maintaining a social media presence, and talking to journalists who contact you (particularly if this becomes a regular occurrence) are all activities that demand time and effort, and since they do not usually involve any formal partnership with a non-academic stakeholder, they may not be counted by academic institutions as part of a researcher's 'official' workload. In these conditions it is reasonable to wonder whether the time they take up is time well spent: are you actually making a difference through your contributions to public debate, or are you being recruited to serve the needs of an industry whose real interest is in entertainment rather than public understanding? Arguably, the answer in most cases will be 'a bit of both'. It is unrealistic to expect a blog post, an op-ed article, or a radio interview to make an immediate and visible difference to public opinion or public perception, let alone to alter the course of real-world events. But if enough commentators make the same point or argument often enough, over an extended period of time, the effect can be to shift the balance of discourse on a particular issue, and potentially to alter the views of people who are dealing with the issue 'on the ground'.

An example in the field of language and gender is the emergence during the last few years of a relatively sustained public counter-discourse critiquing the kind of 'verbal hygiene for women' which, while it has existed for decades (see Cameron 1994), has become a significantly larger and more visible enterprise in the age of digital media. Women, especially young ones, are endlessly castigated for a series of old and new 'verbal tics' which are allegedly undermining their authority and their career prospects: these include using uptalk or vocal fry (Wolf 2015), hedging requests with 'just' (Leanse 2015), 'over-apologizing' (Lerner 2015), saying 'I feel like' instead of 'I think' (Worthen 2016), and decorating emails with girly emoji (Best 2017). But the same conditions which have enabled other self-identified 'communication experts' to flood the web with this deficit discourse also make it possible for language and gender researchers to correct, contextualise, complicate, and criticise it, and many have taken opportunities to do so. One fairly recent and striking example occurred in 2015, when a spate of popular media articles criticising women's speech – in particular, their use of uptalk and vocal fry – prompted a number of experts to make public interventions (e.g. Cameron 2015a, Madill 2015, NPR 2015; this case is discussed further by Lawson 2016). Their arguments were also picked up and recycled by some non-academic commentators (e.g. Friedman 2015; Marcotte 2015). The expert critique of deficit approaches to women's language-use may not have achieved the status of received wisdom, but it does now have a place in the conversation.

Future directions

What I have referred to in general terms as 'the impact agenda' is unlikely to disappear in the foreseeable future. In some contexts its importance is clearly increasing: in the UK, for instance, the weight given to impact in the Research Excellence Framework, which is one mechanism for allocating research funding, has been increased since this requirement was originally introduced. In 2017 the government announced plans to introduce a parallel framework for evaluating and rewarding 'knowledge exchange': the wording of the announcement suggested a particular interest in partnerships between academe and business. As McMillan-Cottom (2015) notes, the ambivalence of institutions towards potentially controversial forms of public engagement is already a challenge for researchers in some politically contentious areas of inquiry. In future, researchers may also have to deal with pressure to abandon or downplay critical perspectives in order to exploit the commercial potential of expert knowledge.

In this chapter I have paid attention to the potential costs as well as the benefits associated with public engagement. Like McMillan-Cottom (2015), I think the issue of cost or risk is often neglected, not only by institutions (which have their own motives for encouraging the pursuit of impact), but also among academics, who are often enthusiastic about the project of democratising knowledge and using it for the public good. What I am trying to advocate is not an oppositional stance towards the impact agenda itself (though there is undoubtedly scope for criticism of the way it is implemented in particular contexts), but an approach to public engagement and wider communication that is: (1) informed – able to draw on a critical understanding of the marketplace in which academics must operate (developing this understanding should be as much a goal of media training as equipping researchers with practical and technical skills); (2) realistic – not overestimating what can be achieved through public engagement, or underestimating the potential problems (everyone needs red lines); and above all (3) strategic – if we regard public engagement as more than just another box professional academics have to tick, we need to be clear about our goals in doing it, and make decisions about how, when, and where to do it in the light of what we are trying to achieve.

Further reading

Cameron, D., Frazer, E., Harvey, P., Rampton B., and Richardson, K. (1992) *Researching Language: Issues of Power and Method*. London: Routledge.

This book predates the current 'impact agenda', but it continues to be an important reference point for discussions of the power dynamics of linguistic research, and the case studies it includes are of particular interest to researchers whose goals include sharing expert knowledge with research subjects.

Jane, E. (2017) *Misogyny Online: A Short (and Brutish) History*. London: SAGE.

This is a qualitative study of a phenomenon which is both of interest to language and gender scholars (in that the form of rhetoric it analyses is highly gendered) and of practical relevance to those involved in public engagement online.

Lawson, R. and Sayers, D. (eds.) (2016) *Sociolinguistic Research: Application and Impact*. Milton Park: Routledge.

This edited collection discusses the general notion of 'impact' and uses a selection of specific cases to illustrate the various kinds of impact sociolinguistic research may generate.

Related topics

Perception of gender and sexuality; language, gender, and sexuality: reflections on the field's ongoing critical engagement with the sociopolitical landscape; feminist conversation analysis: examining violence against women; non-binary approaches to gender and sexuality; language, gender, and sexuality: sketching out the field.

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Part VI
Poststructuralist approaches

26

Poststructuralist research on language, gender, and sexuality

Bonny Norton (Part VI lead)

Introduction

My interest in poststructuralism in relation to language, gender, and sexuality arises from my work as a language educator and applied linguist, and my desire to better understand the relationship between identity and language learning (Norton 2013, 2014; Norton and Morgan 2020). In this introduction to 'poststructuralist methodology' I address the complex landscape of poststructuralism from a range of perspectives, including theories of language, subjectivity, identity, and investment. I argue that poststructuralism constitutes a set of theoretical stances that offers compelling insights about identity, knowledge, and power, all of which are highly relevant to research on language, gender, and sexuality. My discussion incorporates insights from the five contributions to Part VI, which address poststructuralist research in the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, the Middle East, and Australia. I examine the research topics under investigation, the methodologies the researchers draw on, and the insights they offer to our understanding of language, gender, and sexuality. I conclude with reflections on future directions in poststructuralist research.

Poststructuralist theories of language

Characteristic of the 'linguistic turn' in contemporary thought, poststructuralist theories assign conceptual and analytic prominence to language and all forms of meaning-making (Derrida 1978). In poststructuralist theory, language is seen as central to the circulation of discourses, which are characterised as systems of power/knowledge that define and regulate our social institutions, disciplines, and practices (Foucault 1972). In poststructural terms, discourses normalise the personal and collective possibilities we are capable of imagining in place and time.

Structuralist theories of language, often cited as originating with the work of the Swiss linguist, Saussure (1966), emphasised the study of the linguistic knowledge (competence) that allowed the idealised speaker/hearer to use and understand a language's stable patterns and structures. Saussure's (1966) distinction between speech (*parole*) and language (*langue*) was an attempt to provide a way of recognising that despite geographical, interpersonal, and social variations, languages have shared patterns and structure. For structuralists, the building blocks of language structure are 'signs' that comprise the 'signifier' (or sound-image) and the 'signified' (the concept or meaning). Saussure notes that it is the interrelationship between signs within a specific linguistic system that guarantees their meaning, and that each linguistic community has its own set of signifying practices that give value to the signs in a language. From this perspective, actual instances of language usage (performance), which could be affected by memory lapses, fatigue, slips, errors, and so on, were not seen as revealing of idealised patterns, and thus were of little interest in the scientific study of language.

Poststructuralists both build on and critique Saussure's linguistic insights. One of the criticisms levelled at his notion of language is that structuralism cannot account for *struggles* over the social meanings that can be attributed to signs within a given language. As author A'ali (this volume) indicates, for example, the signs /Muslim/, /woman/, and /leadership/, can have different meanings for different people within the same linguistic community. Thus while structuralists conceive of signs as having arbitrary meanings and linguistic communities as being relatively homogenous and consensual, poststructuralists take the position that the signifying practices of societies are sites of struggle, and that linguistic communities are heterogeneous arenas characterised by conflicting claims to truth and power. For poststructuralists, language is not conceived of as a neutral medium of communication, but is understood with reference to its social meaning, in a frequently inequitable world. It is this conception of language that poststructuralists define as 'discourse', 'practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault 1972: 49).

Poststructuralist theories of language, proposed by many, but particularly by the Russian literary theorist Bakhtin (1981), saw language not as a set of idealised forms independent of their speakers or their speaking, but rather as situated utterances in which speakers, in dialogue with others, struggle to create meanings. For Bakhtin, language had no independent existence outside of its use, and that usage was social. He used the metaphor of speech communication being a 'chain', an ongoing conversation that new speakers (e.g. children or newcomers to speech communities) strive to join. While structural theories might see language learning as a gradual individual process of internalising a set of rules, structures, and vocabulary of a standard language, Bakhtin saw language learning as a process of struggling to use language to participate in specific speech communities. Using language meant using a tool others had used before, and Bakhtin saw speakers as constrained by those past usages. However, he also saw speakers as able to use language to express their own meanings.

The work of the French sociologist, Bourdieu, directly addresses the poststructuralist study of language and power (Bourdieu 1977, 1991). While poststructuralists are not the only theorists interested in language and power, Bourdieu explicitly drew attention to the importance of power in structuring discourse, with interlocutors seldom sharing equal speaking 'rights'. For Bourdieu, 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' speakers were distinguished by their differential 'rights to speech' or their 'power to impose reception' (1977: 648). A group of workers, for example, might listen more carefully to a talk given by a senior director of a company than they would to a talk given by a junior member of the human resources department. For Bourdieu, using language is a social and political practice in which an utterance's value and meaning is determined in part by the value ascribed to the person who speaks. Recognising that the value ascribed to a person or group can vary depending on circumstances or contexts (in Bourdieu's terms, 'fields'), he saw linguistic discourse as 'a symbolic asset which can receive different values depending on the market on which it is offered' (1977: 651). He further noted that dominant usage is associated with the dominant social class.

As the contributors to this section of the Handbook indicate, the poststructuralist theory of language as discourse provides a framework in which to examine the relationship between language, gender, and sexuality. If we take the position that linguistic communities are not homogeneous and consensual, but often heterogeneous and conflicted, we can better investigate and understand gendered relationships between individuals, communities, and nations, and the ways in which power is implicated in struggles for human possibility.

Poststructuralism, language, and subjectivity

Poststructuralists take the position that every time we speak, we are negotiating and renegotiating our sense of self in relation to the larger social world, and reorganising that relationship across time and space. The intersectional relationship between gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation, among other characteristics, are all implicated in this negotiation of identity. Feminist poststructuralists, in particular, argue that relations of gender and sexuality are by no means static, natural, or inevitable (Weedon 1997). They make the case that relations of gender and sexuality have been created through a complex confluence of social and historical events, discourses, and practices. Poststructuralist frameworks do not attempt to map out universal laws concerning women's or men's experiences but instead work to capture how gender is socially constructed as well as how gender inequality is challenged and resisted. In contrast to traditional theories of gender, poststructuralist theorists of gender have asserted that gender is not something that one *has* but is something that one *does* or performs in particular sociocultural and sociohistorical contexts. This approach can be seen in the work of scholars such as Baxter (2018), Butler (1990), Cameron (2001), and Weedon (1997) among others. From this perspective, discourse is seen as highly significant in the reproduction of and resistance to unequal relations of gender and sexuality. This approach recommends a more thorough understanding of common discourses of gender and sexuality in local contexts so that educators, policymakers, and community members concerned with gender inequity can challenge the reproduction of these ideas.

Weedon (1997), one of the most well-known scholars working in the feminist poststructuralist tradition, and a contributor to this section of the Handbook, argues that it is through language that the individual constructs her 'subjectivity', which she theorises as 'the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself, and her ways of understanding her relation to the world' (1997: 28). Her use of the term subjectivity reminds us that an individual can be simultaneously the subject *of* a set of relationships (e.g. in a position of power) or subject *to* a set of relationships (e.g. in a position of reduced power). In this view, the commonsense notion of 'the real me' remains a fiction. In feminist poststructuralist theory, subjectivity and language are seen as mutually constitutive, and are thus centrally important in how gendered subjects negotiate a sense of self within and across a range of sites at different points in time. It is through language that subjects gains access to, or are denied access to, powerful social networks that enable or constrain human possibility.

Weedon uses the terms 'subject' and 'subjectivity' to signal a break with dominant Western humanist views of the individual. While Western humanist philosophy stresses the essential, unique, fixed, and coherent *core* of an individual, Weedon's view, like that of other poststructuralists, is that the individual (i.e. the subject) is diverse, contradictory, dynamic, and changing over historical time and social space. Like Foucault (1980), Weedon argues that subjectivity is discursively constructed, and is always socially and historically embedded. Post-colonial theorists such as Hall (1997) and Bhabha (1994) used poststructuralist identity theory to analyse how categories such as race and gender have been essentialised. In theorising cultural identity, Hall focuses on identity as changing and in process, 'becoming', and argues that identity is 'not an essence, but a positioning' (1997: 226) in particular historical and cultural environments.

This means of theorising difference has not been entirely satisfactory to those who would assert that their identities are homogenous and unitary, foregrounding a particular aspect of their experience such as gender, race, or religious affiliation. Current worldwide expressions of nationalism and religious fundamentalism testify to this. Such unitary assertions of identity are often explained as 'strategic essentialism' in service of political goals, as discussed by Appleby (this volume). The terms 'identity politics' or the 'politics of difference' reference this particular coalescence of identity and power relations, and recent work by Moore (2020) has explored the possibility that poststructuralist queer theory, for example, might not be antithetical to such approaches, but rather can be seen as a critical extension of the same movement.

Poststructuralism, language, and learning

The poststructuralist position that language is not only a linguistic system, but also a social practice in which experiences are organised and identities negotiated, is highly appealing to scholars interested in identity, language, and learning, particularly with respect to issues of gender and sexuality (Appleby 2014; Gray 2016; Kamada 2010; Moffatt and Norton 2008; Moore 2016; Nelson 2009; Sunderland 2004; Takahashi 2013). Such scholars investigate the extent to which relations of power within classrooms and communities promote or constrain the conditions under which learning takes place, and how gender and sexuality is implicated in negotiations of power across time and place. Such scholars take the position that when learners speak or remain silent; when they write, read, or resist, we need to understand the extent to which the learner is valued in a particular classroom, institution, or community. At the same time, however, it is imporant to understand the diverse ways in which learners may challenge both subtle and overt forms of discrimination, and what implications this has for learning.

I have argued that in order to claim more powerful identities from which to speak, learners can challenge unequal power relations by 'reframing' their relationship to others. This reframing depends, to some extent, on what I have called the learner's 'investment' in the language practices of a given classroom or community (Darvin and Norton 2015; Norton 2013). The construct of investment, informed by Bourdieu's (1977, 1991) theories of capital, language, and symbolic power, signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to a given language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it. I have noted,

> if learners 'invest' in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic resources (language, education, friendship) and material resources (capital goods, real estate, money) which will increase the value of their cultural capital and social power.
>
> *(Norton 2013: 6)*

Unlike constructs of motivation, which frequently conceive of the learner as having a unitary, fixed, and ahistorical 'personality', the construct of investment conceives of the learner as having a complex identity, changing across time and space, and reproduced in social interaction.

The poststructuralist theory of investment has much to offer research on language, gender, and sexuality. In my early research with immigrant women in Canada (Norton 2013), I found that the adult language learners in this qualitative research study were adept at reframing their relations with native speakers of English in order to claim more powerful positions from which to speak. Martina, for example, an adult immigrant woman from eastern Europe who worked in a fast food restaurant with young native English-speaking Canadians, claimed the identity of 'mother' to resist the actions of co-workers who were marginalising her. As Martina said (italics added),

> In restaurant was working a lot of children but the children always thought that I am – I don't know – maybe some broom or something. They always said 'Go and clean the living room', and I was washing the dishes and they didn't do nothing. They talked to each other and they thought that I had to do everything. And I said 'No'. The girl is only 12 years old. *She is younger than my son*. I said 'No, you are doing nothing. You can go and clean the tables or something'.
>
> *(Norton 2013: 136)*

In other contexts, such as Uganda, scholars such as Andema (2014) have found that advances in digital technology have helped female teachers reframe their relationships with others in order to claim more powerful identities in their communities. One female teacher named Betty noted, for example, that she 'felt like a man' when using a digital camera:

> I feel very powerful like a man because I had never held a camera in my life. I have always seen only men carrying cameras and taking photos in big public functions like may be independence celebration, political rallies and wedding ceremonies. But now as I move in the community taking pictures with my camera, I feel I am also very powerful, like a man.
>
> *(Andema 2014: 91)*

As Andema's research indicates, technological innovations are transforming the twenty-first century and shifting the communication landscape, both virtually and face-to-face, with important implications for the gendered subject, as argued by Mortenson and Milani (this volume) and Mackenzie (this volume). To address this changing digital landscape, I have worked with Darvin to develop an expanded model of investment that responds to the demands of a more mobile and digital world, in which language learners move in and out of online and offline spaces (Darvin and Norton 2015). This model recognises how the skills, knowledge, and resources that language learners have are valued differently across diverse contexts, and how learners need to navigate a range of belief systems and worldviews. To capture this complex learning terrain, the model locates investment at the intersection of identity, capital, and ideology.

Darvin and I refer to 'ideologies' as 'dominant ways of thinking that organise and stabilise societies while simultaneously determining modes of inclusion and exclusion' (Darvin and Norton 2015: 72). As all contributors to this section of the Handbook indicate, ideological assumptions about gender and sexuality, whether in the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, the

Middle East, or Australia, guide the choices people make until these assumptions become ‘common sense’. At the same time, ideologies are not entirely determined, and forms of resistance, such as those of Fatimah in the UK (Weedon and Hallak, this volume) and Julia Gillard in Australia (Appleby, this volume), are powerful examples of human agency in the face of discrimination and marginalisation. From an identity perspective, it is intriguing to ask, ‘What was Fatimah’s investment in discourses on the burkini? How was this investment implicated in her acts of resistance?’ Similarly, ‘What investment did Julia Gillard have in debates on her leadership style? How was this investment implicated in her 8th October 2012 address to parliament?’.

Poststructuralist research and methodologies

As indicated in the discussion above on poststructuralism and subjectivity, feminist scholars advocate research on gender and sexuality in local contexts so that educators, policymakers, and community members can challenge the reproduction of gender inequity in these contexts. At the same time, such research seeks to make visible larger ideological practices in the wider society that are not necessarily self-evident. It follows that poststructuralism’s understanding of identity as a negotiated social practice, always embedded within networks of power, has methodological implications. Researchers adopting a poststructuralist lens to investigate the intersections of language, gender, and sexuality pay particular reflexive attention to the entanglement of their own subjectivities in those local contexts and the research process in general (Norton and Early 2011). The researchers’ own multiple and shifting identities shape the particular research questions they ask, the methods used to answer them, and the kinds of stories participants share with them. For example, Takahashi (2013) reveals that, as a then-novice researcher, her implicit ideas about the sorts of issues researchers and participants should discuss and what could constitute a serious research study initially constrained her. It was only once she had relinquished this identity and its imagined practices that she could embrace her landmark ethnographic study of gendered and racialised language desire among heterosexual Japanese women sojourning in Australia. In Moore’s (2016) study of a community English class for queer learners in Japan, he enhances his thematic analysis by foregrounding his position as one of the volunteer teachers of the class, critically exploring the tensions emerging from competing interpellations of queer identities by the teachers and students. In subsequent work investigating the classroom identity management strategies of queer language learners, Moore (2019) concludes that some of his participants used the discursive space offered by the research interview process to carry out self-affirming identity work. Recent innovative work by Prior (2016) combines conversation analysis with a discursive constructionist approach to investigate how he, as the researcher, and his participants – many of whom identified outside of heterosexuality – discursively co-constructed and co-managed emotions as social actions through their talk-in-interaction.

Each of five chapters in this part of the Handbook describes a case study that raises pressing questions about gender and sexuality in a given local context, with reference to the particular investments of the researchers. Weedon and Hallak address the 2016 burkini ban in France and its treatment in four UK newspapers, focusing on a personal account of a disturbing UK incident in which a Muslim woman called Fatimah wore a burkini to a public pool. Mortensen and Milani examine heterosexual desire through an analysis of the face-to-face interaction of two young adult Danish women, Stine and Louise, as they navigate a heterosexual online dating site. Of particular interest is the way in which the features of the digital site make visible Stine and Louise's perceptions of what constitutes a desirable male partner. Mackenzie, also drawing on the affordances of digital technology, examines contrasting views of what constitutes a 'good mother' in contemporary UK society. Drawing on her larger study of Mumsnet Talk (Mackenzie 2018), she highlights the respective discourses on 'child-centred motherhood' and 'individuality', which has traces in the data on the working immigrant mother, Martina, discussed above. The last two chapters in this section, by A'ali and Appleby, respectively, address the intriguing position of women in positions of leadership in Bahrain and Australia.

Reading across these five chapters, there are a number of compelling findings that speak to questions of gender and sexuality across global sites. Most studies found that women are faced with contradictory pressures and expectations, in Bahrain, Britain, and beyond – what Appleby calls the 'double bind'. Such contradictions include the view that women must be effective leaders, but not be 'bossy'; women must be good mothers, but also pursue independence; women must adapt to new societies, but not reject pre-existing cultural practices. What is evident from the studies is that while patriarchy remains a powerful force across global sites, other forms of discrimination, including those based on race, religion, and social class, need to be incorporated in intersectional studies of gender and sexuality. What is also evident is that women across each of these local sites did not acquiesce to the dominant ideologies of marginalisation, but creatively and actively resisted those practices that sought to silence and demean them.

The chapters also provide a window on the range of methodologies associated with poststructuralist research. All of the authors would agree with Weedon and Hallak's central argument that feminist poststructuralism is not a theory or methodology in the conventional sense. Rather, 'It is a series of critical positions on language, subjectivity, the body, discourse, and power that provide the grounds for mapping and analysing how relations of gender and sexuality are socially constituted, lived, and reproduced'. In this view, poststructuralism does not prescibe specific methods for studying language, but draws on a range of different approaches to research, consistent with the questions asked and the resources available to carry out the research. The methodologies used in the five studies discussed included, but were not limited to, critical discourse analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis (FPDA), and document analysis. Methodologists who were particularly influential included Baxter (2003), Bucholtz and Hall (2015), Gumperz (1999), Jaspers (2012), and Wetherell (2012). A'ali provided a particularly comprehensive account of the FPDA associated with the work of Baxter (2003), which enabled her to present a compelling analysis of leadership language practices used by Bahraini senior women.

Conclusion: poststructuralism and the future

Authors in the Handbook were invited to comment on future directions in language, gender, and sexuality research, particularly from a postructuralist perspective. It is appropriate to conclude this introduction by reflecting on the hopes and predictions of the scholars in Part VI. All the authors take the position that poststructuralism is committed to analyses that contribute towards improving social relations, and would agree with A'ali that FPDA would be useful in such research, since it transcends the polarity of micro- and macro-analysis. For Weedon and Hallak, what remains a concern in British society is the way racism, Islamaphobia, and ethnocentricism are produced, naturalised, and reproduced, and they advocate for a research agenda that addresses the often irreconcilable position of Muslim women in Western society. Like Weedon and Hallak, Appleby notes that future research should continue to interrogate the way language is used in social media to shape the politics of gender and sexuality, and also recommends that poststructuralist researchers draw on posthumanist ideas about the ‘liveliness of matter in the more-than-human world’. Such advice would be welcomed by Mackenzie, as well as Mortensen and Milani, whose research projects address the interaction between humans and the digital world. However, while Mortensen and Milani take the position that research on desire, and affect more broadly, would contribute to an enhanced understanding of the ‘body’ in this posthumanist world, Mackenzie remains focused on people and parents, suggesting that fathers, same-sex parents, and working-class parents on online parenting sites would be very fruitful areas of research. There is no doubt that the future of poststructuralist research on language, gender, and sexuality will continue to be bright and bold in the years to come.

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27

Analysing gendered discourses online

Child-centric motherhood and individuality in Mumsnet Talk

Jai Mackenzie

Introduction

In this chapter, I aim to show that the concept of gendered discourses continues to be highly relevant for the study of language, gender, and sexuality and to illustrate some of the processes by which these discourses can be identified and analysed. Drawing on my own study of Mumsnet Talk, an online discussion forum that targets female parents, I will show how I have brought feminist poststructuralist theory (Baxter 2003; Weedon 1997) together with positioning theory (Davies and Harré 1990) in order to understand and analyse Mumsnet users' online interactions in relation to wider social forces, and to consider what options are available to them: as individuals, as women, as parents, and as mothers. I suggest that this approach is particularly relevant in busy, relatively unregulated digital contexts, which provide spaces for multiple voices to be heard.

Discourses, in the Foucauldian sense of 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault 1972: 42), have been a focal point for a great deal of research in the field of language, gender, and sexuality, particularly in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Much of this work has focused on 'gendered discourses' (Sunderland 2004), also known as discourses of 'gender differentiation' (Baxter 2003) or 'gender difference' (Baker 2008). This collective name takes in a range of overlapping and interrelated discourses that work to position 'men' and 'women' in distinct and binary subject positions, or 'ways of being an individual' (Weedon 1997: 3). A focus on gendered discourses offers a way of conceptualising and drawing attention to the profoundly gendered nature of our social world, and naming specific ways in which individuals are positioned as gendered subjects. For example, Sunderland (2000, 2004) has identified the complementary discourses 'Father as mother's bumbling assistant' and 'mother as manager of the father's role in childcare' in parentcraft texts. Coupland and Williams' (2002) exploration of a range of media texts includes analysis of three discourses of the menopause: the 'pharmaceutical', 'alternative therapy', and 'emancipatory feminist' discourses. In Baker's (2014) corpus study of news articles from the *Daily Mail* and the *Mail on Sunday*, he identifies discourses of homosexuality such as ‘gay people are effeminate’ and ‘being gay is a secret shame’. The work of these authors suggests that discriminatory practices, such as excluding fathers from the role of main parent, valuing women exclusively for their youth, beauty, and fertility, and restricting the rights of same-sex couples, are enabled through restrictive discourses of both gender and sexuality.

Identifying and analysing discourses, however, is not a straightforward process. This is perhaps because of a lack of clarity around the term ‘discourse(s)’ itself, which can sometimes be used in a rather vague and uncritical way, as I will show in this chapter. Identifying discourses is also a subjective process (Reisigl and Wodak 2009; Sunderland 2004), leaving attempts to name and analyse them vulnerable to criticism about the reliability of the findings. Further, the interconnected, shifting, and unstable nature of discourses makes them difficult to identify and delimit (Baxter 2003; Reisigl and Wodak 2009). Finally, language, gender, and sexuality researchers may be reluctant to name specific discourses because to do so may give the impression that certain forms of knowledge are fixed, and therefore make them even more difficult to challenge. This point echoes some of the criticisms levelled at much early language and gender research that focused on the *differences* between language used by and about men and (especially) women, by scholars such as Bing and Bergvall (1996), Cameron (1996) and Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992). However, in this chapter I will show that the identification and analysis of discourses from a feminist poststructuralist perspective remains extremely valuable because it can support an appreciation of multiple power relations and competing forms of knowledge, as well as the emergence of new and transformative meanings in relation to gender and sexuality. I will also show *how* such an approach can be realised in practice, with reference to my own research exploring constructions of motherhood in the Mumsnet Talk discussion forum.

Discourses and feminist poststructuralist theory

In this chapter, I approach the concept of discourses from a feminist poststructuralist perspective. Feminist poststructuralism, in brief, interrogates concepts of gender, sexuality, and identity, facilitating the exploration of what it means to be, for example, a woman or a man, both or neither, feminine or masculine, straight, gay, or bisexual (Mills and Mullany 2011; Weedon 1997). The theory is well positioned to examine the ways in which individuals are defined by gendered terms like these and the dominant forms of knowledge that constitute their meanings. Feminist poststructuralist theory has an explicitly political agenda, contributing to the disruption and continual redefinition of dominant norms, expectations, and meanings, and the gradual erosion of grand narratives around gender and sexuality (Baxter 2003; Weedon 1997). Its focus on resistance, struggle, difference, and diversity supports the emergence of new and transformative meanings that can contribute to a rich diversity of ‘ways of being an individual’ (Weedon 1997: 3). Feminist poststructuralism’s reluctance to settle on fixed, unitary forms of knowledge and subjectivity make it markedly different from ‘modernist’ (Baxter 2003) or ‘second wave’ (Mills and Mullany 2011) feminism, which tends to treat ‘men’ and ‘women’ as universal, stable groups (Baxter 2003).

The influence of Foucault (1972, 1978) brings to feminist poststructuralism an appreciation that, whilst social life is complex, heterogeneous, and replete with possibilities, and whilst meaning is shifting and unstable, powerful forces still work to fix meaning; to construct the social world in specific ways. These forces can be conceptualised as ‘discourses’; regulated groups of statements that constitute knowledge, position subjects, and inscribe power relations. In Foucault's (1972, 1978) view, some discourses gain the status and currency of 'truth', coming to dominate how we define and organise both ourselves and our social world. In other words, certain discourses can become synonymous with popular conceptions of what is 'everyday' or 'normal', acquiring a 'very special kind of obviousness' (Althusser 1971: 139) that makes them difficult to escape. Discourses that have acquired such 'common sense' legitimacy can be described as dominant, and they often work to marginalise other discourses that are not institutionally legitimised or widely recognised as the 'norm'. Our sense of who we are and what we know is thus regulated *through* discourses, especially dominant discourses that are entrenched in social structures and institutions such as hospitals, schools, and prisons (Foucault 1967, 1972, 1977).

The relationship between knowledge, power, and subjectivity within Foucauldian and poststructuralist theory raises questions about whether we have any control at all over our conception of our world and ourselves. The way this relationship is understood will depend, to a degree, upon the analyst's interpretation of *power*. In this chapter, commensurate with the work of poststructuralist theorists who avoid defining power in terms of stark contrast or rule (Bakhtin 1981; Foucault 1978), I conceptualise the relationship between knowledge and subjectivity in terms of power relations that are plural and competing (see Baxter 2003). From this perspective, some discourses may be identified as 'dominant' or 'marginalised' in a particular culture or context, but this does not mean they are universally dominant or marginalised, that the forms of knowledge and subjectivity they legitimise are fixed, or that they cannot be challenged. Such a relational view of power can allow language, gender, and sexuality researchers to move away from binary, 'top-down' perspectives that position women as oppressed and constrained within a patriarchal system, and towards an approach that can emphasise silenced, suppressed, and marginalised voices, allow for the possibility that discourses can be negotiated, contested, or resisted, and thus give rise to new and transformative meanings, behaviours, or ways of being an individual (Baxter 2003; Mills 2003). Some recent studies of language and gender that achieve these goals include Corwin's (2017: 272) analysis of the speech of 15 genderqueer individuals, which focuses on how gender emerges in interaction. In this study, Corwin (2017: 273) shows how one of her participants makes flexible use of a range of embodied signs such as voice pitch and gestures towards different parts of the body to both draw on indices of binary gender, but also to resist them, and thus to create 'new gender expressions'. In a different context, Baxter's (2018: 3) study of the way women leaders are portrayed in the UK press provides readers with a toolkit for deconstructing and challenging stereotyped and sexualised portrayals of these leaders, by reading news media 'against the grain'.

Placing discourses at the heart of language, gender, and sexuality research can enhance explorations of what might be called cultural 'norms' or 'expectations' around gender, sexuality, and identity. By identifying and naming discourses, and deconstructing the ways in which they operate through language, analysts can specify the forces that may both enable and restrict different ways of understanding issues of gender and sexuality. As noted above, however, discourses are complex, unstable, and shifting entities. This may explain why the ways in which they are defined and identified are so rarely made explicit in research across the social sciences. For example, sociologists exploring norms and expectations around gender and parenting – the theme of the Mumsnet study that will be detailed below – have named a range of discourses of parenthood such as 'intensive mothering' and 'child-centredness' (Wall 2013), 'equality', and 'involved fatherhood' (Miller 2011), without making the means by which they come to name these discourses explicit. Readers are consequently relying on the authors', as well as their own, intuitions and assumptions in order to understand what it is that reveals the presence of these discourses, and indeed, why they are 'discourses' at all: they might just as usefully be called 'themes' or 'ideas'. Analyses like these will often raise important issues, but they are unlikely to reveal very much about exactly how forms of knowledge about gender and parenthood are recognised in the first place, how they operate, compete, merge, and combine and, importantly, how they can be negotiated and challenged.

To offer (or follow) a prescribed, definitive method for identifying discourses, however, would be counter to poststructuralist principles in many ways: the very nature of poststructuralist thought encourages the analyst to embrace multiple perspectives; to resist prescription and claims to 'truth' or 'objectivity' through 'scientific', 'precise' methodologies (Graham 2005: 3). However, several discourse analysts, especially *critical* discourse analysts, have offered some guidance by describing their methods for discourse identification and analysis in detail. For example, van Leeuwen (2009) focuses on a text's representation of actors, actions, times, and places, through markers such as lexical choice and verb type. Baxter (2010) examines lexical choices, turn-taking, and verb tense, whilst Reisigl and Wodak (2009: 94) locate what they call 'discursive strategies' such as nomination and predication, whereby people, objects, phenomena, and processes are named and characterised, or intensification and mitigation, whereby the force of a statement is heightened or reduced (Reisigl and Wodak 2009: 93–95). A range of factors inform the choices these scholars make about which linguistic features to explore or emphasise, including their own perspectives and the nature of both the context and the issues they investigate. For example, Baxter's (2010) attention to turn-taking practices is particularly appropriate for the analysis of spoken interaction. Fairclough's (1992) focus on transitivity, theme, and modality reveals his commitment to the systemic functional linguistic approach and its applicability to written discourse. What these analysts have in common, however, is their systematic evidencing of discourses through close scrutiny of language. This is based on the principle that, although we may not be able to 'see' an entire discourse on the page, what we *can* see are the linguistic practices through which discourses operate. It is through language, after all, that discursive struggles are acted out (Mills 2004), and so it is through an analysis of language that discourses can be reconstructed.

Sunderland's (2000, 2004) inductive, 'bottom-up' approach to identifying and naming discourses has been particularly influential in the field of language, gender, and sexuality. In her analysis of gendered discourses in parentcraft texts (leaflets and books about pregnancy and child care), Sunderland (2000, 2004) works to recognise and name discourses by identifying their linguistic 'traces'. As she explains, discourses are not concrete entities, waiting to be 'spotted', and are never truly present in a text in their entirety. But linguists *can* pinpoint linguistic features which hint at the existence of a particular discourse, and treat those features as a starting point in the reconstruction of that discourse. For example, through her scrutiny of the way the recurring linguistic items 'play', 'fun', 'help', and 'share' are attributed to male and female parents, Sunderland (2000, 2004) uncovers some of the gendered discourses at work in parentcraft texts. So, she suggests, the 'Part-time father/Mother as main parent' discourse 'is realised through the recurrence of *help*', which is largely attributed to fathers, and the 'Father as baby entertainer' discourse 'is realised through recurrences of *play*, *fun and enjoy*', again attributed largely to male parents (Sunderland 2000: 265, her emphasis). In keeping with Foucauldian poststructuralist theory, Sunderland pays attention not only to what is present in the text, but also to what is absent. For example, the absence of the linguistic items 'share' and 'paternity leave', as well as the backgrounding of fathers through lack of specific reference to men as parental subjects, also points to the 'Part-time father/Mother as main parent' discourse. Sunderland (2000: 255) develops her exploration of the ways in which discourses operate and her identification of the discourses themselves concurrently, so that discourses are 'both the object and the result' of her analysis.

Despite the examples that have been offered above, there still appears to be relatively little methodological guidance on the identification and analysis of discourses in an otherwise extensive field of language, gender, and sexuality studies. In this chapter, I aim to address this problem by outlining my own approach to identifying and analysing discourses of gender and parenthood in Mumsnet Talk interactions. This approach is aligned with Sunderland's (2000, 2004) in many respects, as well as sharing a similar research context and aims. For example, I take an inductive approach, which involves identifying discourses and analysing the mechanisms through which they operate concurrently. I also pay attention to both recurrent and absent linguistic features, taking the view that it is not just what is *said*, but what is *not said*, that can point to the presence of discourses. However, I take the discursive analysis of language, gender, and parenthood to a new context, that of an online discussion forum for parents, in which there is more space for a diverse range of voices to be heard than in the relatively fixed content of parentcraft texts. The digital context of this forum also means that it is not only linguistic but visual and other typographical features that are of interest; accordingly, my approach is able to incorporate a range of semiotic forms. Finally, my commitment to feminist poststructuralist theory, especially the Foucauldian perspective, leads me to place more emphasis on the discursive nexus of knowledge, power, and subjectivity than Sunderland (2000: 261), who tends to treat discourses more as groups of ideas or values that recur in texts, and 'ways of looking at the world', than as powerful regulatory practices that work to govern their subjects' minds and bodies.

The Mumsnet study

This section turns to my study of multi-party interactions within the Mumsnet Talk discussion forum, which aimed to explore how Mumsnet users negotiate discourses of gender and parenthood in this context (Mackenzie 2017, 2018, 2019). This study was conducted in two stages: 'data construction' and 'identifying and analysing discourses', which are detailed in full in Mackenzie (2019). In this section, I focus on the main part of the second stage, explicating the iterative process of exploratory linguistic analysis, discourse identification, and discourse analysis that is shown in Figure 27.1.

The thematic coding and categorisation of 50 Mumsnet Talk threads in the first stage of this study, and focused coding of two selected threads in the second stage (see Mackenzie 2019), led me to identify a number of potential discourses at play in these digital conversations. As the second stage of analysis developed, I further investigated the presence of these potential discourses in two Mumsnet Talk threads. This exploratory analysis focused, following Sunderland (2000, 2004), on identifying 'traces' of these discourses. As well as identifying *linguistic* traces, I also paid attention to *digital* aspects of Mumsnet Talk interactions, paying equal attention to the meanings produced through the use of non-linguistic features such as images, emoji, and strikethrough text. This analysis was not bound by a predetermined framework; I did not set out to investigate any specific linguistic and digital features, but to discover which features emerged as significant in relation to my aims.

In order to operationalise an analysis that was consistent with feminist poststructuralist theory, I drew on Davies and Harré's (1990) positioning theory, which considers how individuals are positioned as subjects through social interaction. This conceptual framework facilitated a two-sided approach that focused not only on identifying traces of discourses,

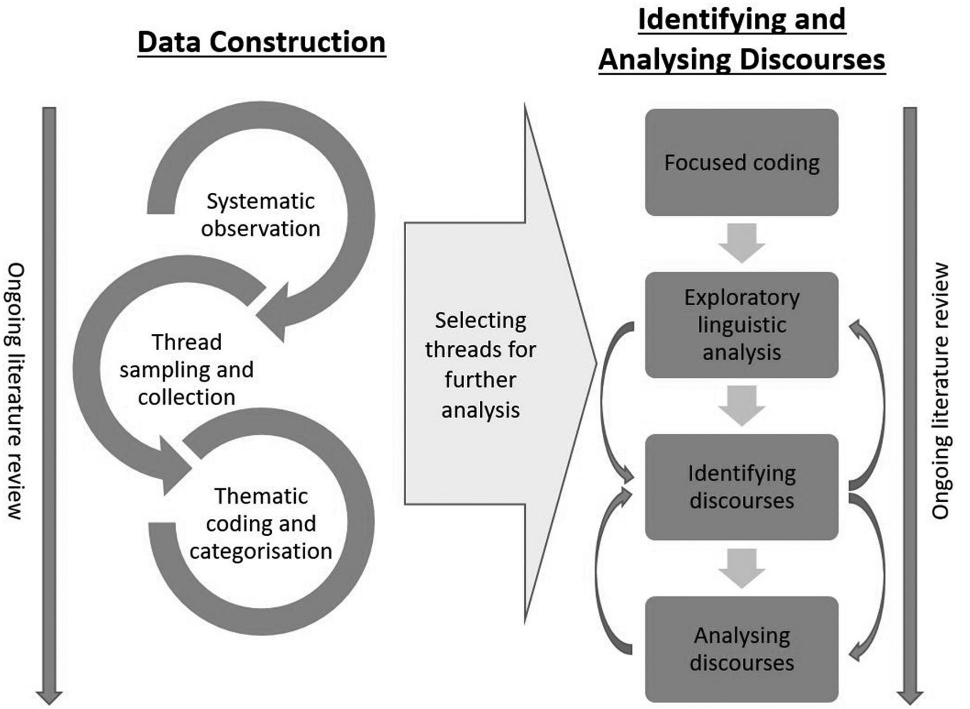

Figure 27.1 Research design for the Mumsnet study.

but also analysing the way these discourses operate through the discursive nexus of knowledge, power, and subjectivity. From this perspective, I explored what meanings about gender and parenthood were taken up and legitimised at different moments, through an exploration of how contributors' use of particular linguistic and digital resources worked to legitimise or challenge particular forms of knowledge and/or position them in particular ways. I also considered what power relations were inscribed by those forms of knowledge and subjectivity, including considerations of whether they were dominant or marginalised, empowering or restrictive. Some of the results of this analysis will be exemplified in the section that follows.

Identifying and analysing discourses of 'child-centric motherhood' and 'individuality' in Mumsnet Talk

This section details part of my analysis of a single thread posted to Mumsnet Talk in the summer of 2014: 'Your identity as a mother'. In this thread, multiple relations between gender and parenthood are explored and negotiated as participants openly discuss their sense of self, particularly in relation to the category 'mum'. The title and opening post of this thread (Extract 1) sets out the agenda: to explore people's experiences of motherhood, especially how motherhood changes them, and their view of themselves. In this section, I pinpoint some of the linguistic and digital traces that led me to identify the presence of two discourses in this thread: 'child-centric motherhood' and 'individuality'. I also consider how these linguistic and digital forms work as discursive resources that contributors draw on to position themselves in relation to these discourses.

Extract 1. Opening post to 'Your identity as a mother' (all extracts are reproduced as they appear in the original posts)

pandarific Sun 01-Jun-14 14:43:17

I've been reading a lot of fiction that deals with motherhood and family relationships and I'm curious as to how it changes people, and their view of themselves. Has your perception of who you are changed since you had children? How much of your identity is bound up with being a mum? Do you think the strength of your desire to be a mum/what stage in your life you had them affected the degree of the changes?

For some reason this has come out reading like an exam question – it's not meant to be! Just curious about people's experiences.

'Child-centric motherhood'

The first linguistic trace of the 'child-centric motherhood' discourse in 'Your identity as a mother' is a construction that includes the category 'mum' (an extremely common category across the thread), qualified by an intensifier, as in the examples shown below.

Post 3. c*akesonatrain.* I think I am almost *entirely* Mum.
Post 11. *EggNChips.* As soon as I became a mum, I was *100%* mum and loved it…
Post 16. *cakesonatrain.* I am almost *wholly* Mum,
Post 18. *Kath6151.* I have been *so intensely* mum for the last 10 months

In these examples, contributors' use of the intensifiers 'almost entirely', '100%', 'almost wholly', and 'so intensely' conveys a sense that it is difficult for them to be anything other than a 'mum'; that their sense of self is intensely bound up with the subject position 'mum'.

Traces of a discourse of 'child-centric motherhood' can also be found in the 'Your identity as a mother' thread where participants express positive feelings for and commitment to their children. In the following examples, contributors employ a range of linguistic and visual resources that suggest their love and care for their children is obvious and certain; that their feelings are just 'common sense'.

Post 18. *Kath6151* My priority is now 100% my DS [darling son] though
Post 21. *PoundingTheStreets.* I love my DC ☺ [darling children]
Post 34. *AssertiveDecorations.* I feel I barely identify as a parent at all even though I love the DC to death

Contributors again employ intensifiers in these posts; '100%', the smiling emoji ☺, and 'to death'. Rather than qualifying the nature of their position as 'mums' (or indeed 'parents'), however, in these instances they are qualifying the nature of the love for their children (Posts 21 and 34), and the extent to which their children are a 'priority' (Post 18). Indeed, AssertiveDecorations rejects any self-identification as a parent, but balances this assertion with a hyperbolic statement of love for her children. These contributors also draw on a range of other resources to confirm their position as child-centric mothers. For example, PoundingTheStreets' monosyllabic sentence 'I love my DC' is positioned in a separate line at the end of her post, making her unmitigated declaration of love even more emphatic. The smiling emoji implies certainty that her statement of love will be well received by readers. All of the above examples are taken from the final line of posts, adding to the force and finality of these statements. These linguistic and digital resources suggest that mothers loving their children and putting them first is a form of knowledge that has common sense legitimacy in this context.

Close analysis of Post 23 (Extract 2) further evidences the presence and dominance of a discourse of 'child-centric motherhood' in the 'Your identity as a mother' thread, and shows how one contributor positions herself in relation to this discourse.

Extract 2. Post 23 to 'Your identity as a mother'

Queen of Louisiana Sun 01-Jun-14 23:33:27

1. It was DS's [darling son's] birthday yesterday, so I was taking stock of life. I always do
2. when that date comes around!

3. I am still very bound up in being a mum although that role is now more about
4. promoting self reliance and supporting his independent skills. There is now a greater
5. balance of give and are [*sic*] between DS and I, I enjoy his company and we do
6. things together that we love. However, I am still astonished at times that I give up so
7. much time to encourage his interests (hours at the edge of a rugby pitch, early mornings
8. at a swimming pool) and I can only assume that this is pure maternal love!

In this post, QueenofLouisiana (henceforth 'Queen') draws on a range of linguistic resources to position her son at the centre of her life, and thereby herself as a 'child-centric mother'. Between lines 6 and 8, she makes it explicit that she puts his needs before her own, for example through her use of the verbal phrase 'give up' in line 6, which implies that she is not only passing time, but that this is a selfless act that results in loss of time for herself. Queen also suggests that she goes to extreme lengths in her commitment to her son, using the intensifying qualifiers 'so much' and the potentially limitless descriptor 'hours' and 'early mornings' (line 7) to emphasise the amount of time she has given to him and the extreme nature of her commitment. The adverbs 'always' (line 1) and 'still' (line 6) suggest that her commitment to her son is ongoing. Queen's post also suggests that this child-centred behaviour is involuntary. For example, from lines 6 to 8, she expresses surprise at, and lack of understanding of, her own behaviour through the subordinate clause 'I am still astonished at times' (line 6). The metapragmatic function of this clause, in which Queen reflects on her feelings about her own actions, can be interpreted as unease with her position as a child-centric mother, but at the same time implies that her actions are instinctive and 'natural', thereby reinforcing the common sense status of this subject position. When Queen goes on to attribute her behaviour to '*pure* maternal love' (line 8, my emphasis), she seems to settle on the latter interpretation; that her actions are part of the 'obvious' behaviour of a mother. However, in line 8 she mitigates her explanation with another metapragmatic clause: 'I can only assume'. Here, the adverb 'only' suggests that this explanation still does not sit easy with her; that 'assumptions' are all she can make, in the absence of any rational explanation.

My identification of a discourse of 'child-centric motherhood' in the 'Your identity as a mother' thread echoes the findings of previous studies of motherhood in Western contexts. Sociological studies by Hays (1996), Lawler (2000), Lowe (2016), and Wall (2013), for example, all point to pervasive expectations that being a mother, and especially a 'good' mother, is often conflated with being completely child-centred and self-sacrificing. My analysis of the ways in which this discourse is taken up and negotiated in 'Your identity as a mother' demonstrates how forms of knowledge that emphasise the imperative positioning of mothers in relation to children are mapped on to the subject position of the 'child-centric mother'. The positioning of self exclusively in relation to children, however, is often challenged in the 'Your identity as a mother' thread through an assertion of a self that is distinct from the subject position 'mother', and the needs of children. The following section turns to this site of opposition, in the form of a discourse of 'individuality'.

'Individuality'

Just as a discourse of 'child-centric motherhood' is realised partly through participants' self-identification as child-centric mums, a discourse of 'individuality' is repeatedly taken up in 'Your identity as a mother' through participants' self-identification as individuals. This is apparent in the following excerpts, where participants all employ a variant of the clause 'I am me', in which a personal pronoun takes both grammatical subject and object position.

Post 12. *IdealistAndProudOfIt.* I am me as I have always been
Post 14. *Casmama.* I am me.
Post 44. *catsrus.* I am who I am.
Post 72. *museumum.* I am totally me.. the same me as before..

Through this double reference to self, participants make their claim to individuality. These claims are made particularly emphatic in Posts 14, 44, and 72, where the clause stands as a complete sentence, and in Post 72, where the participant uses the intensifier 'totally' to make explicit her statement that she is 'completely' herself.

Further microlinguistic analysis of whole posts suggests that 'individuality' and 'child-centric motherhood' often compete in the 'Your identity as a mother' thread. For example, in Post 13 (Extract 3), these discourses seem to be at the centre of Crazym's struggle to define her own subjectivity.

Extract 3. Post 13 to 'Your identity as a mother'

Crazym Sun 01-Jun-14 19:07:32

1. Hate being identified as " mum".
2. I was a person before I became a mum and that person still exists.being a mum is
3. just a part of who I am, not the whole.
4. Used to hate the silly bint at nursery who, when I went to collect the Dcs would say
5. " and how are you today, mum?"
6. I have a name!!!! I am a person!!

By opening her post with the negative evaluation 'hate', Crazym resists being subject positioned exclusively as a 'mum' in favour of a more individualistic subject position; the 'I' introduced in line 2. The opening and closing statements of her post capture her emphatic resistance by presenting the subject positions ‘mum’ and ‘person’ as oppositional: ‘Hate being identified as “mum”… I am a person!!’ Her use of six exclamation marks in two declarative four-word sentences in line 6, furthermore, suggests that she is fighting to express her individuality, and that by positioning herself as an individual, she resists being positioned exclusively as a mum. Crazym’s rejection of being identified as a mum suggests that, for her, this subject position restricts her access to other ways of being – especially as an individual; a person in her own right. Despite Crazym’s emphatic resistance to ‘being identified as “mum”’, however, she positions herself in this way through the relational processes ‘became a mum…/ being a mum’ in line 2. She works to avoid positioning herself as a ‘child-centric mother’, however, in the statement ‘a part of who I am, not the whole’ (line 3), which reiterates her *partial* identification with this subject position.

The oppositionality between ‘individuality’ and ‘child-centric motherhood’ is also evident in Post 59 (Extract 4).

Extract 4. Excerpt from Post 59 to ‘Your identity as a mother’

Viglioso Wed 04-Jun-14 08:26:39

1. Can you guess some have been a PITA [pain in the arse] already lecturing me (good
2. mums don’t, apparently, wear make-up: that money/time could be spent on PFB
3. [precious first born]).

4. Interestingly one of the most devoted mum in terms of practical things and
5. passionate adoration of PFB I know (of child with a disability requiring lots of care and
6. special input) is very much - and vocally - her “own woman” *with* her child by her side
7. IYSWIM

8. I’m actually a bit terrified of the “if you have any time for yourself you’re neglectful”
9. brigade. As I mentioned above, if anything I’ll end up accidentally attached ~~or just~~
10. ~~spoilPFB~~ due to PFB being a bit of a miracle... but I would like to be *allowed* to be me. ☺

In this post, Viglioso draws on a discourse of ‘individuality’ as part of her resistance to a discourse of ‘child-centric motherhood’. The discourse of individuality is voiced here through the ‘devoted mum’ she describes between lines 4 and 6. The self-possessive ‘own’ within the label ‘her “own woman”’ (line 6) works to suggest that this individual is in control of her life; that she is able to determine her own subjectivity and is not controlled by others. The way Viglioso positions *children* in relation to the ‘devoted mum’ also points to a discourse of ‘individuality’. Where, in lines 1–3, the child (‘PFB’ – ‘precious first born’) is positioned in a passive role, the child of line 6 is positioned as co-existing *alongside* the ‘devoted mum’, through use of the prepositions ‘with’ and ‘by [her side]’. This positioning of adult and child points to their co-existence as separate individuals, with neither being entirely reliant on the other. Viglioso shows that she approves the 'individuality' discourse by aligning with this 'devoted mum', through positive evaluations such as 'devoted', 'passionate adoration', 'care', and 'special input'. Viglioso also positions herself more explicitly as an individual through her use of the personal pronoun 'me' in her closing statement 'I would like to be *allowed* to be me ☺', (line 10; her emphasis). As with PoundingTheStreets' post (see above), Viglioso's use of a smiling emoji at the end of her post seems to function as an emphatic full stop that gives a sense of finality to her statement of individuality. As noted by Gibson et al. (2018), the function of emoji is highly context-dependent and variable. Given Viglioso's complex negotiation of 'child-centric motherhood' and 'individuality', in which she both relies upon, but also resists, the position of the 'child-centric mother', the placement of the smiling emoji at the end of her post could also be read as a resource for mitigating this final statement and encouraging others not to read it too seriously.

The above analysis shows how the discourses of 'individuality' and 'child-centric motherhood' can compete in the context of the 'Your identity as a mother' thread, with contributors such as Crazym and Viglioso working to position themselves within a discourse of 'individuality' as part of their resistance of a discourse of 'child-centric motherhood'. At such moments, the subject position 'me' can become powerful and transformative, offering Mumsnet users control over their sense of self and access to multiple possible ways of being an individual, as well as contributing to the gradual erosion of what seems to be a dominant discourse of 'child-centric motherhood'. It is partly *through* the analysis of these struggles to define forms of knowledge and subjectivity that 'individuality' and 'child-centric motherhood' are more confidently identified as discourses.

Discussion

This chapter has shown that the study of language, gender, and parenthood in a digital context can be enriched through a focus on identifying and analysing discourses from a feminist poststructuralist perspective. I have shown both how discourses such as 'child-centric motherhood' and 'individuality' can be identified through examination of the linguistic and digital traces of these discourses, and how the forms of knowledge, power, and subjectivity that operate through these discourses can be further analysed by drawing on Davies and Harré's (1990) positioning theory. For example, my analysis reveals that a discourse of 'child-centric motherhood' can work to position Mumsnet users entirely in relation to their children, as devoted, loving parents, to the exclusion of other potential subject positions. On the other hand, I also show that many Mumsnet users work to resist this dominant discourse by drawing on a competing discourse of 'individuality' to position themselves as individuals, rather than members of a generic category of 'mothers'.

The insights from this analysis reveal some of the demands, expectations, and restrictions that are placed on parents, especially mothers, in contemporary British society. For example, the oppositional relations between 'child-centric motherhood' and 'individuality' point to the struggles and frustrations for some Mumsnet users at being unable to escape gendered subject positions such as the 'child-centric mother', and show that notions of child-centric love and devotion are intricately bound up with their sense of what it means to be a mother. Such persistent expectations that mothers will be entirely child-centred will make it difficult for male parents to adopt child-centred roles within the family, and difficult for female parents to adopt valued and legitimised roles outside of their relation to children. However, this analysis has also pointed to the emergence of new and transformative meanings that can contribute to more richly diverse ways of being a parent.

Future directions

Digital contexts such as the Mumsnet Talk forum can offer interesting and relevant sites for exploring, challenging, and destabilising dominant discourses of gendered parenthood such as 'child-centric motherhood', providing unprecedented access to the perspectives of individuals in diverse family groups, as well as the discursive struggles and transformative practices in which they may be involved. The Mumsnet study has revealed some important insights in this area, but issues around language, gender, and parenthood are equally likely to be relevant to groups who are not adequately represented within this forum, such as fathers, same-sex, and/or working-class parents. Indeed, there is a pressing need to explore the experiences and struggles of these groups, who have often been marginalised both in academic research and in society more generally. I therefore suggest that constructions of parenthood in a wider range of contexts, and by different groups of parents, are an important area for future research in language, gender, and sexuality, as they may be able to raise awareness of the many ways in which it is possible to be a parent, carer, or family in a contemporary context.

Research that explores the particular methodological challenges of conducting discourse-theoretical work in digital contexts is unfortunately still relatively scarce in the field of language, gender, and sexuality. In the sample analysis offered above, the function of digital resources (namely emoji) is considered as part of an analysis that focuses mainly on linguistic features. This is appropriate for analysing digital interactions that primarily rely on the written word. However, the analysis of language, gender, and parenthood online may include the examination of media that are more reliant on other forms of expression, such as images or videos. Zappavigna and Zhao's (2017) analysis of 'mommyblogging', for example, explores selfies posted to Instagram with the hashtags #motherhood and #momlife. Their article stops short of in-depth theorisation about what these selfies communicate about discourses of motherhood, and Instagram users' self-positioning as 'mothers', but it does offer a new framework for categorising and analysing selfies as 'metafunctional resources' for presenting an individual's perspective on the world. Future explorations of language, gender, and parenthood online will benefit from this kind of research. By paying attention to these and other insights from the field of language and new media, analysts will be well placed to conduct comprehensive analyses of the ways in which parents draw on multimodal resources to navigate their own position in relation to wider discourses.

Further reading

Angermuller, J., Maingueneau, D., and Wodak, R. (eds.) (2014) *The Discourse Studies Reader: Main Currents in Theory and Analysis*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

This edited collection offers a comprehensive overview of recent theoretical and methodological developments in discourse studies. Its introduction provides clear and concise definitions of key terms, concepts, and outlines the nature of the emerging discipline of discourse studies itself.

Leppänen, S., Westinen, E., and Kytölä, S. (eds.) (2017) *Social Media Discourse, (Dis)identifications and Diversities*. New York, NY and London: Routledge.

Contributions to this collection are united by a linguistic focus on identity constructions in social media contexts, including several contributions that explore the negotiation of gender roles online.

Poveda, D., Jociles, M. I., and Rivas, A. M. (2014) 'Socialization into single-parent-by-choice family life'. *Journal of Sociolinguistic*, 18(3), pp. 319–344.

This article contributes to a currently marginalised but emerging area of research that explores alternative kinship structures from a sociolinguistic perspective.

Related topics

Digital ethnography in the study of language, gender, and sexuality; leadership language of Middle Eastern women; doing gender and sexuality intersectionally in multimodal social media practices; poststructuralist research on language, gender, and sexuality; gender and sexuality in discourse: semiotic and multimodal approaches.

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28

Leadership language of Middle Eastern women

Using feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis to study women leaders in Bahrain

Haleema Al A'ali

Introduction

This chapter gives a comprehensive account of feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis (FPDA) as a method of linguistic enquiry, and explains the reasons behind using FPDA in my research of female leadership in Bahrain. It starts with an overview of the study and the context, followed by a review of the basic principles of FPDA and how they were applied to a selected case study of leadership language of a senior engineer in a Bahraini company.

FPDA is a self-reflexive, multi-perspectival method of linguistic analysis with a deconstructionist approach to discourse and gender, developed by Baxter (2003) in her study of classroom discourse. It is based on the premise that speakers do not exist outside discourse, and that ideas, concepts, identities, relationships, and so on are in constant flux and their meaning is constantly changing; therefore, any FPDA analysis deconstructs a text through offering in-depth multiple interpretations of it (Baxter 2003). With an eye on epistemological enquiry and roots in the works of Bakhtin (1981), Derrida (1987), Foucault (1980), and others (e.g. Walkerdine 1998; Weedon 1997), FPDA is concerned with studying intertextualised discourses and the interplay between power, knowledge, subjectivity, and discourses in any given context. Foucault defines discourses as 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (1972: 49). Discourses are always interwoven and intertexualised in the sense that every discourse can have traces of one or more different discourses. In any given speech event, speakers are constantly shifting their subject positions between powerfulness and powerlessness. Studying these critical moments in interactions and exposing dominant discourses in the context, especially as they relate to gender, is the goal of any FPDA research, and it is precisely the goal of my research on female leadership in Bahrain.

The case study in this chapter is of an exploratory nature and it examines the linguistic practices senior women employ while 'doing' leadership in the context of corporate meetings in one of the largest, most prominent corporations in Bahrain. In line with FPDA, I adopt a social constructionist perspective which perceives workplace interactions as social practices in action (Holmes and Marra 2004). Within this framework, gender and leadership are similarly regarded as social constructs. Butler's (1990) view of gender as 'performative' is also central here where individuals are thought to 'do' or 'perform' being a 'man' or a 'woman' by displaying language and behaviour which conform to/resist the ideal or perfect model perpetuated by the dominant 'gendered discourses' in a particular organisation or community of practice. According to Sunderland (2004: 6), gendered discourses are 'ways of seeing the world' through a gendered lens. Various dominant gendered discourses are identified in the research literature. Drawing on Walsh (2001), Mullany (2007: 35) argues that there are persistent 'hegemonic discourses' of masculinity and femininity that are embedded in the discursive practices of any community. An example of such discourses is the discourse of gender differentiation, a masculinist hegemonic discourse through which differences between men and women in society are emphasised (Sunderland 2004).

Along the same line and based on the the social constructionist framework, leadership is also perceived as 'performed' through language. When interacting with colleagues and subordinates, leaders use language to perform, construct, and negotiate leadership. Holmes (2006) posits that men and women leaders select from a repertoire of conventionally masculine and conventionally feminine linguistic strategies to enact power and authority. Conventionally masculine strategies (such as use of aggressive and competitive language, controlling of the topic, interrupting, and issuing direct unmitigated orders, assertive statements, bald on-record humour, and so on) correlate with a transactional style of leadership which places more emphasis on solving problems and achieving work-related tasks. On the other hand, conventionally feminine linguistic strategies (such as issuing indirect mitigated orders, sharing power and authority, listening, giving compliments, using collaborative language, and so on) correlates with a relational style of leadership which prioritises fostering workplace relationships. Marra, Schnurr, and Holmes (2006) further note that effective leaders, regardless of their biological sex, are linguistic experts who are skilled at deploying a range of strategies to achieve the various goals of leadership. In this research I use the term 'practices' rather than 'strategies' or 'styles' because it is more compatible with the post-structuralist view of language as a social practice.

Feminist research in the West has shown wide evidence of the 'double bind' (see also Appleby, this volume) where women leaders are viewed as incompetent and are condemned for their choice of either type of linguistic practices: they are deemed 'unfeminine' if they use traditionally masculine language, or 'unprofessional' if they use traditionally feminine language (Alvesson and Billing 1997; Brewis 2001). I believe that the validity of these findings should be questioned when applied to the Arab Middle Eastern context. Middle Eastern workplaces are significantly different from Western models. Weir (2003: 10) argues that 'the very texture and processes of management in this region remained different from their Western models'. Therefore, the case study in this chapter will contribute to the growing body of research that focuses on the regional context.

What's more, Middle Eastern women's experience in the public sphere is relatively new compared to their Western counterparts, hence there is a noticeable lack in role models for women aspiring to reach higher management and leadership positions. The case study offers models of good practice in Middle Eastern women's leadership, by acquiring an insider's knowledge of context and a deeper understanding of the women leaders' backgrounds, intentions, agendas, and the linguistic practices they use to achieve their goals. For this, FPDA, alongside other qualitative methods, is utilised to give a multidimensional and multi-perspectival analysis of the data.

Backround and methodology of the study

Bahrain is an Arab Middle Eastern country and a leading example of women's empowerment in the region (Gharaibeh 2011; World Economic Forum 2017). The country has been experiencing growth and diversification in the economy and some shifts in the political scenery. These changes, accompanied with the government's grand plan towards the inclusion of women in the public sphere of politics and the workplace, have resulted in a shift in society in relation to gender ideologies and gender roles (Metcalfe 2007). The gender system in the region is primarily shaped by Islamic principles and long-standing Arab cultural values. Traditional Arab societies are patriarchal; gender and age are determinant factors for the amount of power an individual enjoys in the community; the most powerful members are men and elders (Sabbagh 2005). The traditional gender system in Islam is grounded on the principle of biological difference between men and women. According to this principle, men and women should be assigned different but complementary roles, rights, and responsibilities in society (Metcalfe 2011; Muhdina 2017). In traditional Arab-Islamic societies, Islamic and Arabic values permeate all aspects of the private and public spheres; women are typically associated with the private sphere and men with the public (El-Rahmony 2002). This is reflected in the segregation between men and women's jobs in the workplace; until recently, female employment in the region had been clustered in traditionally 'feminine' jobs such as teaching, nursing, and other care-taking professions, which were perceived to be in alignment with their 'maternal nature' (Metcalfe 2007). Metcalfe (2011: 133) further argues that while governments are making tremendous efforts to promote women in the public spheres of politics and the workplace, it is still in the context of the 'Islamic gender regime'. Equally, management and gender studies in the Middle East (e.g. Ozbilgin and Healy 2003) reveal that even when women 'shatter the glass ceiling' and become leaders and managers, they are often 'constituted along patriarchal lines with women's role as Mother emphasised' (Metcalfe 2007: 58).

Nowadays Bahraini women's work is no longer restricted to certain fields nor is it viewed as marked or unnecessary; on the contrary, women are encouraged to enter the workforce and are given the opportunities to excel and reach leadership positions. To empower Bahraini women in the workplace, the government (represented by the Supreme Council of Women and led by Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, the King's wife) has been supporting and monitoring women's progress in all public and private companies. Most recently, numerous Arab and Bahraini business women have been featured in *Forbes* magazines as top influencers in the region and in the world. According to *Forbes Middle East* (2017), women in the Arab world are finally 'breaking the glass ceiling', especially in the banking sector. Forbes' list for the most powerful Arab women includes 15 Bahraini women who made significant contributions locally and internationally in different fields, mainly politics, business, and management; they are ministers, business leaders, and influencers of all types. With the recent dramatic changes in the region, I consider that there is a dire need for research that explores in depth the repertoire of leadership language practices available for senior women in the region, and also to present examples of effective leadership that may differ from the western models.

Feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis (FPDA)

FPDA is primarily interested in studying the interplay of discourses and exposing power relations in any given context. It doesn't pursue a political agenda or a theoretical mission.

Rather, it supports social transformations in small-scale, localised contexts (Baxter and Al A'ali 2016) Moreover, FPDA views gender as a 'site of struggle', therefore, FPDA research always has a specific feminist focus. It supposes that women can be both momentarily powerful and controlling or powerless and marginalised in the same interaction or event. Herein lies the goal of my research. My study is not seeking emancipation for women in the workplace nor is it interested in solely studying interactional patterns in conversations. Rather it seeks to reveal the diversity and complexity of women's positioning in Middle Eastern workplaces. Typically, Middle Eastern women are viewed and portrayed as victims, powerless and marginalised in Western research and media (Abu-Lughod 2002; Qutub 2013). As a linguist and as a Middle Eastern woman, I am aware of this narrative, yet I also realise that this is a rather naive and simplified view of a widely diversified and constantly changing demographic. I opted for FPDA in order to contest this view and shed light on the complex and competing aspects unique to the Middle Eastern context. Along the same lines, rather than assuming that women are positioned powerlessly within patriarchal discourses, I intend to show that women in my study can indeed be more powerful than their male counterparts and that there are many ways in which positions of power can be achieved, however momentary.

FPDA analysis is executed on micro and macro levels, and it has many other dimensions. These are presented next.

FPDA as a method of analysis

Any textual analysis using FPDA should take into account the following elements, dimensions, and processes (Baxter 2003):

- The synchronic-diachronic dimensions:

  FPDA analysis requires a synchronic 'detailed micro-analysis of stretches of text' (Baxter 2008: 251), which involves identifying critical moments in conversations where a power shift may occur. This is quite different from the diachronic dimension which usually requires the use of ethnographic methods to observe and study the change in the linguistic practices of members of a certain community over a longer period of time. Owing to the limited access I was granted to the company, I was unfortunately unable to achieve the diachronic dimension in this study.
- Micro–macro levels of analysis (denotative–connotative analysis):

  Analysis using FPDA is executed on two levels, micro and macro. Starting at the micro-linguistic level, the researcher identifies the significant moments in the interaction where speakers shift subject positions. This is based on the premise that in any speech event, speakers constantly shift their positioning between powerfulness and powerlessness. These positions are made available by the competing discourses in the context. Therefore, at the macro-discoursal level, the researcher looks for evidence of the prevailing, competing discourses and explains the shifts in power through examining the interplay between these discourses.

  Therefore, during the process of data analysis, the researcher utilises tools from discourse analysis methods (for instance, conversational analysis or interactional linguistics) necessary to conduct a descriptive non-evaluative micro-analysis on the data; this is referred to as the denotative analysis, which also forms the basis for the connotative macro-discursive reading of the text. A number of important processes take place in the connotative analysis such as identifying key discourses, analysing speakers' positioning, and examining the process of negotiating power and the interplay between the competing and intertextualised discourses in the context.

- Intertextuality and inter-discursivity:

  FPDA considers that discourses are always interwoven, and analyses the ways in which every discourse contains traces of other discourses. For instance, a discourse of gender differentiation can also be interwoven with and work alongside other discourses to enhance the positioning of a certain individual in an interaction, or it can be contested or undermined by another discourse in the context (see analysis).
- Self-reflexivity:

  One of the most crucial aspects of the use of FPDA is researchers' commitment to being self-reflexive, constantly revaluating their position and questioning their own values and assumptions and how these may affect the process of analysis.

In the following section I present the case study along with example extracts from the meeting and interview data and their FPDA analysis.

Hanan's case study

The study is set in a large company in Bahrain (Bahrainco, a pseudonym), known for its traditionally masculine environment due to its history and the nature of its business. The participant of the study is a woman who had recently been promoted to a managerial position after climbing the professional ladder for over 20 years. Hanan is a senior support engineer in the engineering division who has spent her entire career experience in Bahrainco. Despite the traditionally masculinised nature of the department where men are exceedingly higher in number and career opportunities, Hanan has managed to receive recognition for her hard work and has been entrusted to lead important and critical national projects.

The study primarily sought to examine the leadership language practices that Bahraini senior women use with colleagues and subordinates within the context of corporate meetings in addition to the significant interacting discourses at play in the context and how they shape the leadership and language practices of the senior women.

For the purpose of data collection, multiple qualitative methods were utilised: attending and recording corporate meetings, interviewing Hanan and some of her colleagues and subordinates who attended the meetings, and shadowing her outside the meetings, observing her, taking notes, and listening to the small talk and casual conversations in and outside the office (for instance in the cafeteria or in the parking lot).

Around the time of the data collection, Hanan was leading a team of engineers (all males) in a nationwide project of a critical nature. The circumstances of the meeting were peculiar; the language in the meeting was full of jargon which presented a challenge to my analysis. Besides this, I accompanied her to the meeting which was scheduled at noon in a cabin situated in a gas field in the middle of the desert. Upon entering the cabin, I felt awkward and self-conscious because we were the only women in the cabin. Hanan's body language showed confidence. She greeted everyone with a smile and even a little bit of banter; and she kept the small-talk short. Everyone seemed to be engaged despite her characteristically low-pitched voice. In a later interview with Hanan, she informed me that it took her a while and a great deal of courage to overcome this feeling of intimidation to always be the only woman in the meetings and field sites. Even more, it took a great amount of effort for her to be taken seriously.

This is one of a series of meetings Hanan has had with her team members for the purpose of following up implementation and work progress, and solving any arising problems along the way. She heads a team of three engineers, none of whom is her direct subordinate: Ameer is a senior engineer in Bahrainco; he is around ten years younger than Hanan, hence less experienced. Raj and Vivek are junior engineers who work at an Indian contracting company; they are in Bahrain for a short period of time to work on this particular project for Bahrainco. During the course of the meeting, Hanan and her team members engage in the joint construction of talk, where Hanan goes through a check-list of action plan and Amir, Raj, and Vivek cooperate and alternate in answering her inquiries and updating her with the work progress.

Denotative analysis

Hanan starts the meeting unofficially during the process of seating by explaining the agenda of the meeting. In the first extract, the team are discussing the implementation of a new system (ATG1), most specifically, the message that should be displayed to operators. Hanan thinks that providing the term (ATG1) only is likely to stir some confusion among the operators because they are not familiar with the system. Transcription conventions are provided at the end of the chapter.

Extract 1: 'Even I will forget'

(H=Hanan; Chair; A=Amir; engineer, male; R = Raj; contractor engineer, male; V= Vivek; contractor engineer, male; ATG=operation system; K40=radar detector; FAC= field advanced controllers)

1		
2	**R:**	yeah basically ATG1 (.) yeah the only controllers come in
3		particular ATG only (.) so (.) what we are describing here is (.)
4		it is ATG1 and the corresponding loop controller (.) that is say
5		(.) ATG1 K40(.) ATG1[(-)
6	**H**:	[(-) you mean this message will be displayed to
7		operators↑
8	**R**:	yes
9	**H**:	you think operators will understand ATG1↑
10	**A:**	it is confusing
11	**V:**	that's ok [we will
12	**H:**	[but it is er in a way (.) it's it's good as a
13		maintenance er (.) when the maintenance guy come (.) he will interpret
14		it he will say yeah this is coming from ATG1 (.) so yes maybe the
15		message is not (.) cannot be fully interpreted by the operator (.)
16		eventually I think (.) we need the word ATG (.) I guess in the er
17		message (.) we need it=
18	**A:**	= we need it
19	**R:**	we get it↑
20	**A:**	yes in case that you say that all the the controllers are off then we
21		will display a message [say that ATG

22	**V**:	[no we will (--) we will educate the operator
23		that (.) er it is in the model (.) already it has been (-) under the
24		FAC FAC the controller (.) you have to see that alarm (.) based on that
25		controllers (.) yeah otherwise we will educate the er operators
26	**H**:	emm
27	(After *55 lines of a discussion between Amir, Raj and Vivek about the best*	
28	*way to implement the new system without confusing the operators*)	
29	**H:**	well er (0.3) (*looking at some papers*) ATG1 because I am a system
30		person (.) I understand [ATG means something to me=
31	**R:**	[yeah =meaningful
32	**H:**	meaningful (.) but as long as we will get an alarm (3)
33	**R:**	but we can educate them (.) it's very
34	**H:**	you forget (.) even me after a while I will forget (.) ATG1 (.) it is
35		connected to controllers or to BMS (.) I will forget (.) I [will forget
36	**A:**	[you have to
37		go back to the drawings=
38	**R:**	=yeah exactly (.) so it's better to have ATG1
39		and AC00

The extract begins with Raj explaining an earlier suggestion he made about providing a simple description of the new ATG system to the operators. Hanan seems surprised and asks for further clarification using a string of statements with a rising intonation: 'you think operator will understand ATG1 ↑' (line 9), which indicates her initial disapproval of the idea. Amir takes Hanan's side and issues a criticism using a negative evaluative adjective in line 10: 'It's confusing'. Just when Vivek takes the floor to express his compliance to act upon Amir's criticism – 'that's ok we will' (line 11) – Hanan interrupts him, this time with a rather mitigated monologue in which she weighs the pros and cons of Raj's suggestion and builds up her argument, stating at first that 'it's it's good as a maintenance' (lines 12–13) followed by more explanation of why it is a favourable idea, and that despite her earlier concerns, she is considering this suggestion. To wrap up her argument, she uses multiple hedging devices: 'maybe', 'I think', 'I guess' to show that she understands Raj's point of view and partially agrees with him. Finally, she uses the inclusive pronoun 'we' and deontic modal verb 'need' to draw on a conclusive decision – 'we need the word ATG' (line 16); her intention is perhaps to strengthen the sense of collective work and shared responsibility. Amir immediately seconds Hanan's decision by echoing her statement 'we need it'. This time, Raj shows his direct compliance and readiness to follow Hanan's orders by issuing a question: 'we get it↑' (line 19). Here, Amir takes the floor and responds to Raj with an affirmative 'yes' followed by an order to carry on the implementation process. Vivek contributes with more explanation of the particulars of the operation from his point of view (lines 22–25). During this exchange, Hanan stays silent except for the minimal response 'hmm' to indicate that she has been attentively following the conversation.

The discussion of the implementation of the process between Amir, Raj, and Vivek takes a few more minutes, and Hanan, who has been attentive the whole time, finally takes the floor using the discourse marker 'well' to establish her turn (line 29). She examines the papers in her hand for few seconds, perhaps to gather her thoughts or to prepare the team for her counter argument. She revisits her earlier concern over the ATG message being incomprehensible to the operators, this time by using a more personal approach and referring to her experience and expertise in 'systems'; in fact, she defines herself as 'a system person' (lines 29–30), identifying with a community of engineers and disassociating herself from operators who have less expert knowledge: 'I am a system person I understand ATG means something to me' (line 30). Raj uses the minimal response 'yeah' and the paraphrase 'meaningful' to show his total agreement with Hanan, who then echoes him with the word 'meaningful', and continues her turn (line 32). When she stops, Raj allows a few seconds to pass by before he makes further suggestions, also using the inclusive 'we' to stress the joint endeavour: 'we can educate them' (line 33). Before he carries on with his proposition, Hanan interrupts and disagrees with the words: 'you forget', and 'even me after a while I will forget'. Here, Hanan seems to be generalising about people's abilities to remember difficult acronyms. She is also revealing her own weakness here in order to soften the force of her disagreement with Raj. She clarifies her point further and finally repeats 'I will forget' twice for the purpose of emphasis (line 35). Amir uses a cooperative overlap to build on her argument, adding more reasons why he is not in favour of Raj's suggestion. Faced with such opposition, Raj immediately shows his total compliance – 'yeah exactly' – and modifies his proposition.

The next extract takes place towards the end of the meeting; before wrapping up, Hanan stresses the importance of meeting the deadlines and working within the specific time frame; she criticises Raj and Vivek for lacking time management strategies.

Extract 2: 'Your visa is valid until 29'

(H=Hanan; Chair; A=Amir; engineer, male; R = Raj; contractor engineer, male; V= Vivek; contractor engineer, male; HMI= Human machine interface)

40	**A:**	you have to do the description (.) for the controller and pop ups
41	**R:**	description (.) it's both er finished up already
42	**H:**	everything will be↑
43	**R:**	no no the er (.) ok (.) this er (.) no this I know I will complete it
44	**H:**	yeah but (.)£ tell me when (I mean) £
45	(*everybody is laughing*)	
46	**H:**	£what's the time now£↑
47	(*more laughter*)	
48	**H:**	I don't want you to die [hehehehe
49	**V**:	[£(---)£
50	**R:**	[£ if this guy er this guy (says) today means
51		till tomorrow 12 till tomorrow morning£
52	**H:**	tomorrow (-) till tomorrow morning 6 am (.) and you will come tomorrow
53		morning (.)
54	**V:**	HMI I can er work on (.) job design I can work on
55	**R:**	no actually (.) once we complete this er dryer testing and the fixing
56		of the small er that (.) HMI things (---) and myself and Amir (.) we're
57		concentrating on the 39 and those communication and testing so [I thi-
58	**A:**	[we
59		don't need the N44 for testing IL (.) two days↑
60	**R:**	in fact (.) he was asking me if I will do the er 39 communication (-)
61		but I told him you have (.) any work here [so
62	**H:**	[£you ha- there are other

63 work [I haven't spotted (.) your visa is valid until 29
64 **A:** [hehehe
65 **V:** yeah 29
66 **A:** today is 22
67 **V:** some er
68 **H:** you have how many hours until 29↑
69 (*Laughter from all*)

The extract commences with Amir issuing a directive to Raj and Vivek about some implementation detail; for this purpose he uses a deontic modal expression 'you have to do the description' (line 40). Raj echoes Amir 'description' and states, with some hesitation ('er'), that it was finished. Hanan senses his reluctance and issues a checking statement – 'everything will be↑' (line 42) – to which Raj, taken aback by her intuitive remark, responds with a number of hedges ('no no the er (.) ok (.) this er') and a promise to complete the task. Hanan doesn't seem to be fully convinced of the sincerity of Raj's promise and continues to put him 'on the spot' by issuing a series of exaggerated questions, mitigated by a wide smile on her face: 'yeah but (.) tell me when' (line 44), and 'what's the time now' (line 46). With everyone laughing (either out of embarrassment or because they are amused), the banter carries on as Hanan ironically states that she doesn't want Raj to die out of hard work, apparently to imply that he is in fact a lazy procrastinator. Raj instantly tries to deflect the blame by referring to Vivek's lack of time management strategies (lines 50–51), yet Hanan ignores his defence and keeps the exaggerated questioning going ('tomorrow (-) till tomorrow morning 6 am (.) and you will come tomorrow morning' (lines 52–53)). While Vivek responds to Hanan's questioning with a number of promises about finishing some tasks (line 54), Raj's strategy is less direct as he positions Amir as a partner or an accomplice when he mentions other tasks that they are working on together: 'and myself and Amir (.) we're concentrating on the 39 and those communication and testing so' (line 57). Amir interrupts him to show his instant resistance to this positioning and challenges him in lines 58-59 'we don't need the N44 for testing IL (.) two days↑'.

As Raj continues his attempts to deflect the blame from himself, he accidently reveals other unfinished tasks that were not known to Hanan and Amir. Hanan's first response is to smile and interrupt his turn to show her surprise at this new revelation '£you ha- there are other work I haven't spotted' (lines 62–63). Hanan starts a banter sequence about Raj and Vivek's visa expiration date – 'your visa is valid until 29', 'you have how many hours until 29↑' (lines 63 and 68 respectively). Amir cooperates with Hanan to co-construct the banter by laughing throughout the sequence and issuing a supportive comment, 'today is 22' (line 66). All participants in the meeting laugh at Hanan's humorous remarks even though they clearly realise that it is embedded with criticism.

The next extract is taken from the interview data. Hanan talks about gender equality in Bahrainco.

Extract 3: 'This is your culture here'

70 H I mean up to (.) last year for example (.) they wouldn't really recruit
71 er females for engineers they don't trust them as er engineers (.)
72 especially in engineering er (.) so many graduates (.) from (.) Bahrain
73 University from outside univ- sure they apply (.) I mean and they are
74 very good and distinguished (.) but you hardly see I mean them recruit
75 (.) anyone (---) we have I mean myself I (.) initially I didn't think

76		(.) of that (0.1) and then er (.) believe it or not I mean one of the
77		Westerners he brought that up to me (.) he said I mean err (.) he spoke
78		to all those Bahrainis who are higher than him (0.1) and he said er
79		(0.1) they don't er because you you are a female (.) they don't (0.1) I
80		mean they put some (0.1) (cap) on your er (0.1) advancement (.) this is
81		they say this is your culture here (.) °and errr° I cannot change it

Hanan explains that she believes the reason behind the lack of women in the engineering department lies within the discriminatory recruitment process. She starts by giving examples of actual events which are indicative of such discriminatory practices: 'last year for example (.) they wouldn't…' (line 70). As she narrates a recent incident where professional women engineers were denied the chance to compete for jobs in Bahrainco, she refers to the management and decision-makers in the company vaguely as 'they'. This is perhaps to hedge her further accusations of Bahrainco's decision-makers as sexist: 'they don't trust them as er engineers' (line 71). Hanan emphasises that such discrimination is especially practiced in the engineering department and gives more examples to confirm her claim that the engineering profession is being gendered and as a result, women are being excluded (lines 72–75).

In line 75, Hanan shifts to the inclusive pronoun 'we' then the singular pronoun 'I' to refer to her personal experience with the 'glass ceiling' as a woman engineer in the male-dominated company of Bahrainco. She claims that she was oblivious to the actual reasons behind deferring her promotions despite her expertise and her long years of experience, and that her superior, a Western expat is the one who brought it to her attention (lines 77–81). According to him, despite his efforts, it is the wider Bahraini patriarchal culture that is behind the gendered inequality and 'glass ceiling' in the company.

Despite the existence of the glass ceiling, Hanan is still considered an expert and is trusted to lead national wide projects. In an interview with Amir, he repeatedly refers to Hanan's expertise and length of experience as the reason behind her seniority. In the next extract, he is asked about her leadership style.

Extract 4: 'She has experience more than me'

82	A	and that's natural (.) she has experience more than me (.) for example
83		I do it some- in a way (.) she says ok (.) you have done it in a right
84		way but it's better to do it like this (0.2) she's she's a senior
85		engineer I am an engineer so (.) I I was working on a differen- not
86		different department I was looking after a different system (.) I
87		recently joined this err (.) supporting this system for the past two
88		three months so (.) I am little bit new in this field (.) err she was
89		looking after this for for I donno (.) few years

Amir refers to any disagreement between himself and Hanan as 'natural', given the fact that she is more experienced than he is (line 82). The specific example he gives does not indicate any type of argument though, just a reference to the effect of his lack of experience in some aspects and the indirect, face-saving way she deals with such mistakes. Then he immediately shifts to focus on Hanan's and his different areas of expertise: 'I was working on a different department I was looking after a different system' (lines 85–86). He emphasises his recent involvement in the project by using the adverbials of time 'recently' and 'three months ago' (lines 87 and 88 respectively).

According to the principles of FPDA, the denotative analysis of the data is the basis for the macro-discoursal analysis; in the next section this will be reviewed.

Connotative analysis

There are many discourses at play in the context. The first dominant discourse that I have identified is the discourse of masculinisation, which according to Baxter (2003), normalises conventionally masculine leadership practices such as aggressiveness, competitiveness, assertiveness, boldness, dominance, and so on. This discourse is manifested in a number of ways. As analysed above, Hanan often resorts to such linguistic strategies to enact power and authority and to get the job done even if it is at the expense of her team members' 'face needs' (Brown and Levinson 1987). Hanan and Amir's co-construction of the on-record banter in Extract 2 is an exemplar of the normalcy of this behaviour. The extracts provided in this review and many other parts of the meeting and interviews indicate the critical and task-oriented nature of work in the engineering department, which, according to Hanan, requires her and her team members to be fairly formal and direct with each other, and most of all, prioritise task accomplishment over other relational goals. Baxter (2010) notes that in such male-dominated workplaces, display of traditionally feminine language and practices may be viewed as a weakness in character and even a waste of valuable company time. Accordingly, Hanan, may feel pressurised to acquire the mainstream traditionally masculine language in order to be recognised and appreciated.

While Hanan is potentially disempowered by the gendered discourse of 'masculinisation' which, according to the interview data, may have worked against her work progression, there are a number of competing discourses which can be detected in the context that work to empower her such as the discourses of 'historical legacy' and 'expertise'.

According to Baxter (2003), historical legacy favours employees with seniority who have worked in the company for a considerable amount of time and have built long-standing relationships and connections. Hanan is one of the employees who have spent their entire career in the same department; over 20 years in Bahrainco has awarded her with a sense of familiarity with the company and its practices and has granted her a certain amount of power and privilege. This is evident in the interview with Amir, her male subordinate, where he referred multiple times to her years of experience (Extract 4). It can further be indexed through the length of time Hanan spent in the company and also the amount of confidence she carries as she walks in the all-male cabin and how she greets everyone with a sense of familiarity. It is also reflected linguistically through her use of strategies with her team members which index confidence and self-assurance such as direct unmitigated language (e.g. 'you have to do the description' (line 40)) and contested humour (e.g. 'yeah but (.) tell me when' (line 44), and 'what's the time now' (line 46)).

Another discourse which is manifested throughout the data is the discourse of expertise. Working and progressing through the ranks in the same department for over 20 years has given Hanan a great amount of experience and expertise, therefore, she is entrusted to lead nationwide projects despite her middle-management status. In the meeting, Hanan's expertise is evident; when she speaks about processes, her team members listen attentively (lines 11–16); also in Extract 2, she refers to herself as 'a system person' who knows all about specialised technical concepts and processes such as ATG1. In Extract 4, Amir admits that Hanan has more expertise than he does – 'I am little bit new in this field (.) err she was looking after this for for I donno (.) few years' (lines 88–89).

The dominant corporate discourses detected in the context compete at times and interact at others to variably position Hanan between powerfulness and powerlessness. The discourse of masculinisation dominates the engineering department, overpowering the other discourses most of the time. This is evident in the all-male environment and other discriminatory practices against Hanan and other female employees as shown in Extract 3 (for example, despite her expertise and her long working experience, she is yet to be promoted to a manager). However, in the meeting itself, Hanan is shown to use conventionally masculine language (e.g. direct unmitigated orders, banter, etc.) especially in critical moments such as the possibility of missing deadlines or delay in accomplishing tasks, perhaps to lessen the limitation imposed by the discourse of masculinisation on her as a female.

On the other hand, while the discourse of masculinisation seems to have hindered Hanan's career progression, it is her long experience and expertise that distinguish her from her male counterparts and position her powerfully. When discourses of historical legacy and expertise interact, the discourse of masculinisation is undermined and Hanan is entrusted to handle critical projects, and she feels confident enough to do so using linguistic strategies that index power and authority. There are critical moments in the meeting where Hanan is positioned powerfully by the discourse of expertise; she refers to herself as a 'system person', uses technical jargon throughout the meeting, and shows her apparent expertise as she evaluates and assesses her subordinates' work.

Conclusion

Through this research study I hope to present examples of good practice in a context where women are new to power and authority. With the recent trend in the Middle East of women entering the workforce and occupying jobs that are traditionally associated with men, women in the region, and particularly in Bahrain, are in need of role models. Therefore, it is necessary to give voice to senior women who have achieved a certain degree of success and progressed to senior roles in workplaces that have a prevailing traditionally masculine culture. FPDA seemed an obvious choice because it aims to bring to the surface the silenced voices, expose the hidden aspects of the context, and bring about social transformations. Women in the Middle East are still fighting a battle their Western counterparts fought decades ago. They are still struggling to prove that they are eligible to work alongside men in certain professions. In this case study, women are being overshadowed in the engineering department, as Hanan puts it 'because you you are a female (.) they don't (0.1) I mean they put some (0.1) (cap) on your er (0.1) advancement'. Hers is the minority voice which needs to be heard so that change can take place and the situation can be corrected in a way that is congruent with the social and cultural peculiarities of the society.

Future directions

FPDA's reflexive approach to data enhances the quality of today's research and should be considered as a main method when researching language and gender. It can be used alongside other methods at the micro and macro levels; in fact, it transcends the polarity of micro and macro analysis and focuses on providing a thick description of the data that would ultimately enhances the understanding of the context. Hence, I believe FPDA should be utilised in a wider range of geographical contexts in order to produce fine-grained analysis of unique localised settings where generalisations are not applicable and change is essential. While this study tackled leadership and women in Bahrain, research is needed to explore Middle Eastern women of other countries in the region, given the vast economic, social, and ideological differences between the countries under the umbrella of the Middle East.

Transcription conventions

This transcription key is mainly based on the "Jefferson system"[1]

1, 2	Line numbering
A, B, C	Name of speaker (anonymised and abbreviated)
Word	Translated talk
((word))	Transcriber's comment on what happened
(word)	Transcriber's guess at what have been said
()	Unclear talk
(-)	Omitted talk
(.)	Noticeable pause
(0.2), (2.5)	Example of timed pauses
↑word, word↓	Rising and falling of intonation
WORD	High volume, loud
°word°	Low volume, attenuated speech
[word	
[word	Overlapping talk
=word	
=word	Latching, simultaneous talk
wor-	Sharp cut-off
Wo:rd	Prolonged sound
£word£	Smiley voice, humorous tone

Note

1 Jefferson, G. (2004) 'Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction', in Lerner, G. (ed) *Conversation analysis: studies from the first generation.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 13–31.

Further reading

Baxter, J. and Al A'ali, H. (2016) *Speaking as Women Leaders: Meetings in Middle Eastern and Western Contexts*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave McMillan.

This book examines the leadership language of six senior business women from the UK and Bahrain; it challenges the preconceived notions about the discrepancies in the challenges faced by women in the West and the Middle East. The use of feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis (FPDA) has revealed that senior women in both cultural contexts are constrained, positioned, and influenced by similar discourses such as 'masculinisation' and 'hierarchy and status'.

Mullany, L. (2007) *Gendered Discourse in the Professional Workplace*. Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan.

This book uses sociolinguistic data to analyse workplace interactions taking place in two companies, and explores the underlying gendered discourses at play in the context and their role in perpetuating discriminatory practices.

Metcalfe, B. (2011) 'Women, empowerment and development in Arab Gulf States: A critical appraisal of governance, culture and national human resource development (HRD) frameworks'. *Human Resource Development International*, 14(2), pp. 131–148.

The article addresses gender issues and human resource development (HRD) in three Arab Gulf States (Bahrain, UAE, and Saudia Arabia), particularly the social and cultural factors that shape women in the region and their livelihood. It assesses the current HRD frameworks and calls for tailored and localised strategies based on a better understanding of the social and cultural context in order to support and empower women and help them develop their own version of Islamic feminism.

Related topics

Poststructuralist research on language, gender, and sexuality; feminist poststructuralism – discourse, subjectivity, the body, and power; identity construction in gendered workplaces; leadership and humour at work: using interactional sociolinguistics to explore the role of gender; language, gender, and the discursive production of women as leaders.

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29

Feminist poststructuralism: discourse, subjectivity, the body, and power

The case of the burkini

Chris Weedon and Amal Hallak

Introduction

This chapter takes the example of the 2016 burkini ban in France and its treatment in four UK newspapers to explore how feminist poststructuralism can be used to better understand questions of power and representation. The key focus of feminist poststructuralism is the relationships between discourse, subjectivity, the body, and power. It is concerned with identifying the assumptions and power relations that underpin different forms of gender and sexuality. It analyses language as social, political, and ideological discourses, showing how these reproduce and sometimes challenge specific social practices. It is concerned with where and how individuals and groups are produced as embodied subjects within the discursive fields that constitute and reproduce social relations of power. Understanding of this is crucial to social change.

Feminist poststructuralism is not a theory or methodology in the conventional sense. It is a series of critical positions on language, subjectivity, the body, discourse, and power that provide the grounds for mapping and analysing how relations of gender and sexuality are socially constituted, lived reproduced and challenged. Language is central to these processes. Feminist poststructuralism assumes that all theories are partial, constituting their objects of study in particular ways that necessarily exclude other possible ways of interpreting gender and sexuality. In practice, they are also partial in a second sense of serving historically specific, social interests.

Poststructuralism assumes that language constructs rather than reflects reality and that the meanings of experience are constituted within language. Thus language works by temporarily fixing meaning, but this meaning is constantly open to resignification and contestation. Meanings are produced within discourses, which are more than spoken or written language. They have a material dimension that helps shape subjectivities through relations of power. For example, discourses of gender, sexuality, race, and religion are realised in individual bodies, identities, material culture, and institutional practices. Discourses shape bodies, mind, and emotions and produce and reproduce forms of agency, subjectification, and relations of power (Butler 1990; Foucault 1981). Deeply ingrained cultural assumptions about the meanings of women's 'nature' or, in the case of this chapter, what it means to be a Muslim woman, belong to wider discursive fields that have specific histories. The multiple discourses, institutions, and social practices that constitute discursive fields produce meanings, subject positions, and forms of subjectivity. They consist of competing and contradictory meanings structured through relations of power according to which some forms of knowledge have more power and status than others. Understanding ideas of women's 'nature' as part of much wider discursive fields, grounded in a range of social institutions and practices such as science, medicine, religion, philosophy, the law, education, marketing, literature, media, and the arts, opens up new understandings and possibilities of resistance and change.

In the 1970s and 1980s, feminist discussions and activism gave rise to new ways of thinking, speaking, and performing gender and sexuality that highlighted not only similarities in women's experience but also differences. The powerful feminist language of sisterhood, and the theories of patriarchy on which it was based, had immense emotional power, but tended to mask real differences between women, rooted in class, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, location, and disability (Weedon 1999). The many forms of theory and identity politics that developed gave a voice to women who were often subject to multiple forms of oppression. Thus feminist poststructuralism broadened its focus to encompass an intersectional approach in which power relations of class, race, disability, ethnicity, and religion are recognised as crucial components of feminist analysis.

Feminist poststructuralism seeks to understand how existing and new meanings, and the power relations that they support, emerge and are internalised, embodied, performed, reproduced, and challenged. Drawing on the work of Foucault (1981) feminist poststructuralism sees discourses of gender and sexuality as produced within social structures, institutions, and practices, and in opposition to them. Discourses are structured by power relations and produce subject positions of both subjectification and agency. The meanings that they produce and reproduce need to be understood in relation to their specific historical and cultural location and the interests that they serve. In the twenty-first century the meanings of Muslim women's bodies, subject positions, and identities in the West have become a site of struggle between multiple interests, as can be seen, for example, in the arguments used to justify the War on Terror, constructions of the British or French 'way of life', or debates on Jihadism, Islamism, fundamentalism, and social cohesion.

Language and subjectivity

Subjectivity is a crucial concern of feminist poststructuralism (Weedon 1996). According to this theory, language works through the illusion of the sovereign speaking subject. Speakers and writers see themselves as the origins of the meanings they produce, but these meanings are always social. Put simply, language speaks us. Subjectivity is assumed to be sovereign, but is defined by lack, an effect in part of the structures of language that produce subjects who function as if they themselves are the source of the meanings that they speak. Language constructs identities and subject positions. These have relative degrees of power. Gender and sexual identities are assumed by taking up positions within social discourses and living the identities that they offer (Butler 1993). Unlike many other forms of feminism, feminist poststructuralism does not signal a particular politics, beyond the general principle that power inheres in language and in all discursive practices, which are also material practices. It serves as a way of analysing and identifying social networks of power and how they work discursively to produce and reproduce forms of agency and subjectification.

Whose freedom? The case of the burkini

Muslim women in Western societies often face irreconcilable discourses of gender in which their identities and agency are put into question. These discourses not only produce the meanings by which we live but also the forms of embodied subjectivity that we inhabit. They are not all socially accepted or valued. This can be clearly seen in the case of religiously observant Muslim women who choose to cover up and whose agency is questioned by many feminists as well as by mainstream society. In this section we turn to recent debates in Britain and France about the meaning and acceptability of the burkini – a type of sportswear not unlike a wetsuit with a hood – that was originally designed in 2003 for Muslim women. It aims to show how feminist poststructuralist insights might produce politically useful analyses. This case study was chosen because it questions what is often understood as freedom within feminism in different contexts and cultures and shows how Islamophobia often takes a gendered form 'which targets and affects women uniquely, adding to their misogynistic oppression and religious victimisation' (Jawad 2016). It suggests that, in any feminist analysis, all founding assumptions need to be made explicit in order to understand what they exclude and how they reaffirm or challenge existing power relations, which encompass disability, race, ethnicity, and religion, as well as gender and sexuality. The importance of recognising where one is speaking from is central to feminist analysis and as authors we were positioned very differently. One of us is a Syrian Muslim who wears hijab. The other is white British with no religious affiliation who has worked on multi-ethnic Britain, including discourses about Muslims, since the 1990s.

Questions of method

Feminist poststructuralism is primarily a tool kit of theoretical principles with which to approach how signifying practices function in society. It does not prescribe specific methods of studying language but draws on different approaches including deconstruction, critical discourse analysis, close reading, semiology, and symptomatic reading. It is composed of analytic principles drawn from a range of theories, including Saussurean linguistics, Lacanian psychoanalysis, continental philosophy (Foucault, Deleuze, Guattari, Lyotard), and Marxism (in particular Althusser). Poststructuralist insights have been taken up and developed in different ways by feminist theorists including, for example, Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Gayatri Spivak, Judith Butler, and Liz Grosz (see Weedon 1999). They are widely used by scholars working on gender and sexuality in colonial and postcolonial contexts.

Whatever critical analytic techniques they use, poststructuralist readings question apparently natural meanings and show them to be effects of power that privilege certain interests. They may also offer oppressed subjects ways of resisting victim status. The analytical mapping of press coverage of the burkini in this chapter examines the structure and functioning of language and its manifestation in discursive practices that are part of wider discursive fields and suggests some of the ways in which power functions and where and how resistance and change might be possible.

This case study of newspaper coverage of the burkini looked at over 60 articles published in online editions of the *Guardian*, the *Telegraph*, the *Daily Express*, and the *Independent* in August 2016 when the banning of the burkini from Cannes beaches hit the international headlines. Analysis of the articles was conducted following Baxter (2018) via a process that involved micro-linguistic, textual, representational, and discourse analysis. The analysis of the language of the newspapers looked for linguistic evidence of stereotyping, for underlying assumptions about Muslim women, for whose voices were represented, and for the textual strategies employed to normalise particular meanings and encourage the reader to accept specific versions of reality as true. The analysis also looked for gaps, ambiguities, and contradictions in the texts that might offer readers ways of contesting the positioning of subjects. In poststructuralist terms, the readings were deconstructionist and attempted ‘to make the not-seen accessible to sight’ (Derrida 1967: 163). The focus on four different newspapers aided the identification of the dominant messages in circulation and the binary oppositions and stereotypes on which they rely. The articles were coded for stereotypes and repeated linguistic tropes. The lexis used was analysed along with strategies of normalisation, (making things appear normal) found for example in the use of verbs, evaluative adjectives, and adverbs and leading to ‘linguistic stance taking’ (Baxter 2018: 35). The use of direct or indirect reported speech threw light on questions of whose voices are heard and how voices are variously used to affirm, neutralise, or contest particular stereotypical representations. Newspaper images were looked at in terms of their denotative and connotative meanings (Barthes 1977, 2009) with attention to the ways in which the newspapers anchored specific readings of images and ruled out others.

A key issue in this project was the question of voice, in particular the absence of Muslim women’s voices from press coverage. In order to sharpen our analysis, we listened to accounts by 15 Muslim women who have worn burkinis in public swimming pools of their experience. We selected one story representative in terms of issues it raises to illustrate the key concerns of a poststructuralist mode of reading and bring to light aspects of the wider discursive field within which the newspaper case study is located.

Fatimah’s story

> I’m 33. I’m a Syrian Muslim. I have a BA in sociology. I came to the UK in 2007. I have a fair complexion and green eyes and I used to think that I’m lucky; I could pass for a Brit if I kept silent and smiled. Unfortunately, I found it difficult to navigate through my daily life wearing a headscarf. I had no idea how much prejudice it would attract. Occasionally I would be harassed or insulted in the streets by boys and young men. Although my spoken English was good, I would sometimes be neglected or met with impatience by shop assistants when I asked for help. I started having social anxiety.
>
> After I fell and broke my leg, I put on weight, which made my social anxiety worse. I used to be active and sporty, but the bigger I got, the more anxious I became about going to the gym. My physiotherapist encouraged me to go swimming but the last time I went to a women’s session, I had a panic attack because I felt fat and exposed. Then a friend gave me an M&S gift card. Although I have come to hate shopping because it provokes my anxiety, I gathered my strength and went. I was more than surprised to come across what looked like a wetsuit for women with a head covering attached to it called a ‘burkini.’ For a moment, I forgot about my anxiety and the prejudice my headscarf attracts and decided to buy the burkini and go swimming.
>
> Days later I went to my local swimming pool. As I was about to dip into the water, an instructor yelled at me and told me that I couldn’t swim in that section of the pool adding aggressively I might not be allowed to swim at all while wearing ‘that’ pointing to my burkini. I was really upset, but decided I wasn’t going to let him discourage me; I had come this far and was determined to have my swim. I went into a different section of the swimming pool and started swimming.

> By the time I finished, I'd recovered some confidence and decided I wasn't going to let the instructor's behaviour go unreported. Before I got a chance to make my complaint, the manager told me that a parent had come to him to complain about me pulling their kid's hair, and that the parents felt unsafe with me around. I was mortified and outraged. First, I was nowhere near any children (the rude instructor made sure of that), and second, and more importantly, I would never ever do such a thing. I tried to tell the manager that that was simply not true, but he wouldn't listen to me and instructed me to wait for the police to arrive because he couldn't leave the incident unreported upon the insistence of the parent.
>
> To say that I was shocked by the accusation is a gross understatement; I was shaking with disbelief, anxiety, panic and rage. 'They felt unsafe around me!' What about me? I did nothing to deserve such false accusation or unjustified treatment. All I wanted to do was to get back to swimming and exercise. I should've known that something of the sort would happen. How could I fool myself into believing that my headscarf would ever cease to provoke unwarranted hostility? To think I was willing to believe that seeing the burkini being sold in a respected store like M&S meant that the public is ready to accept people like me! Even worse, to think I was going to complain about the instructor's behaviour! I should've kept my head down. I should've adhered to my 'remain silent and smile' policy. If I'd done so, I could've probably escaped unnoticed and unscathed. I should've known that wearing a burkini was going to cause trouble. All these thoughts and more were raging in my head while I had to wait for the police to arrive.
>
> After a couple of hours – my husband had long since arrived to pick me up – the manager came to let me go. He wouldn't let me talk to the police. He told me that the parent had agreed to drop the matter if I were banned from the swimming pool. When we got home, my husband and I were shaking. I had what was the worst anxiety attack of my life. I had reluctantly gotten used to being ignored, neglected, or harassed because of my headscarf, but I had never ever in my life been criminalised for wearing it. What else would've made the manager quick to believe such false accusation?
>
> Once I calmed down, I thought something simply didn't add up. There must be security cameras everywhere in the swimming pool and it would've been easy to make sure I wasn't near any kids. If only the manager listened to me. Also, how come the police didn't want to talk to me? I told my husband I wasn't going to be bullied into silence. I wanted to report the matter to the police, and he called them. The police told him that they would conduct a blind investigation to avoid any prejudice.
>
> A few days later we received a phone call from the swimming pool's manager to apologise about the whole thing, claiming that there must have been 'some sort of misunderstanding'. He told us that they had revoked the ban on me going to the swimming pool. We weren't satisfied with a phone apology and my husband demanded a formal written one. I would be lying if I said that the written apology magically made things better. I was traumatised, but the one good thing that came out of the whole matter, I suppose, was my decision to never remain silent again when it came to how I was constantly mistreated because of wearing my headscarf.

In a close reading of this narrative, we focused on voice and subjectivity and how this is established by choice of content and tone. The first person narrator begins by establishing her class and education and her awareness of racism expressed in her references to her silence and fair complexion. She describes her confrontation with everyday Islamophobia for which she is ill-prepared and which produces social anxiety augmented by Fatima's internalisation of discourses of the slim female body. The narrative describes emotional responses and stresses the subject's positive sense of agency and capacity for resistance that is repeatedly undermined both by the response of others to her body image and her own internalisation of repressive norms of beauty. The chance nature of her acquisition of a burkini shows both how prejudice can be temporarily forgotten and niche markets misread as acceptance or normalisation. The narrative also points to the mixed effects of Islamophobic and sexist behaviour by the swimming pool staff and their assumptions about what they can get away with.

At the level of subjectivity, the text signals how the narrator moves through a range of emotional states and related subject positions. Everyday manifestations of Islamophobia are shown to have reduced her to a strategy of trying to be as invisible as possible. With the burkini incident, she moves from outrage to self-blame and then via rational reflection from victimisation to anger and resistance. She is far from the oppressed Muslim woman of Western media constructs and indeed it is aspects of Western society not Islam that are shown to be oppressive.

Fatimah's story offers insights into interrelated discourses of Islamophobia, subjectivity, body image, self-blame, and white male power and their effects; yet it is also a story of resistance and individual change. It raises a number of important issues about being a Muslim woman in Britain today. The narrative details some of the effects of Islamophobic discourses and practices on individual subjectivity with specific attention to its gender dimensions. It shows how the practice of hijab co-exists with discourses of the desirable female body and how both produce social anxiety in a patriarchal, Islamophobic society. Fatima is forced to recognise that inclusion is not just a matter of pale complexion and class in an Islamophobic society. If she continues to wear Muslim dress, she will meet rejection. At the same time, she also comes to realise that she has agency, can contest Islamophobia, and can use the law to do so. The tone of the narrative is descriptive and reflective rather than emotive. It suggests how just being herself in any uncomplicated way is impossible unless she relinquishes one of the mainstays of her identity, that is, wearing 'hijab' or modest Muslim dress.

Contested meanings and the importance of historical specificity

Fatimah interprets seeing the burkini on sale in a major UK store as signifying that her desire to integrate into British society is not only welcome but also encouraged. The fact that her individual need to cover up while swimming is met by the market seems to her to signify acceptance of difference. Yet for those with Islamophobic views and feelings, and the power to act upon them, the values according to which Fatimah lives, expressed in her mode of dress, are confronted as in some way threatening and incompatible with a 'British way of life' that is based on ethnocentric, often romanticised, partial reconstructions of a largely white and Christian Britain before major postwar immigration and globalisation. Yet as cultural and social history suggest, the British 'way of life' has never been singular or static and has changed continuously due to many complex factors that include race, ethnicity, and religion.

Resistance

Resistance is a key component of Foucault's theory of discourse, subjectivity, and power and it is widely used in feminist poststructuralism (Foucault 1981). For Foucault, power inheres in discourses and the subject positions that they produce. It has multiple forms and effects, yet wherever it comes from, it has the capacity to produce resistance. Thus, Fatimah's negative experience leads to a transformation in her subjectivity. In an act of agency, as she resists her subjection to Islamophobia, she determines never to be silenced again.

Muslim subjectivity is an issue that goes far beyond dress codes and has entered the mainstream political agenda in the UK in response to social unrest, the effects of Islamophobia on individuals, and the turn by a small number of young British Muslims to extremism and terrorism (Weedon 2016). Social research and Muslim writers have voiced the effects of Islamophobia and racism on individuals and communities (Omaar 2006). These may be far-reaching, especially for the young and vulnerable, as can be clearly seen in the case of French Muslims and the ban on wearing hijabs in public places (Gemie 2010). At the swimming pool, Fatimah's dress seems to give non-Muslim men the licence to vent their Islamophobic attitudes and even to ban her from the facility. Why is this the case? Here we need to look to the wider discursive field and in the next section of this essay we draw on examples of press coverage of the French burkini ban in the summer of 2016 as a pointer to this discursive field and the power relations and interests structuring it.

Contested terrains: the burkini

Since its launch in 2003 the sportswear item, designed and marketed as the 'Burkini' by Australian fashion designer, Aheda Zanetti, has attracted much media attention. In her analysis of press coverage of the burkini up to 2007, Fitzpatrick (2009: 2) describes how:

> Around January 2007, a bathing suit designed for Muslim women became a media sensation. The multi-piece, water-repellent suits, designed especially for women who practice sartorial hijab, cover all of a woman's body except the face, hands, and feet. Although multiple companies sell these swimsuits, which retail for \$100-\$200, the one that has received the most media attention is the Australia-based brand Ahiida, which trademarked the name 'Burqini.' The press around the world eagerly adopted this portmanteau of 'burqa' and 'bikini,' and generally refers to all full-body swimsuits marketed to modestly-dressing women as 'burkinis'.

The burkini hit the international headlines again in August 2016 and *Debating Europe*, a website supported by the European Parliament, which initiated a debate on 'Should the burkini be banned?' on 5th December 2016, summarised the affair as follows:

> In summer 2016, the mayor of Cannes banned the burkini. Over two dozen other French towns soon followed suit, many of them along the French Riviera. The mayor of Nice supported the ban, arguing that its wearing was a 'provocation' in the aftermath of the terror attack on his city in July 2016.
>
> Photographs soon emerged of women being fined by police for wearing the burkini, including one controversial set of pictures seemingly showing armed police forcing a Muslim woman to remove her long-sleeved clothing (not a burkini) on a beach in Nice. Witnesses allege that bystanders were shouting for the women to 'go home'.
>
> The ban was soon overturned by France's highest administrative court.
>
> *(Debating Europe 2016)*

Events in the South of France prompted social, cultural, and political debate and controversy in the press internationally, on the internet and in social media where films of the forced removal of both items of clothing and of Muslim women themselves from beaches are available on YouTube. Many of the arguments in play had been widely discussed in France and internationally when France banned the hijab in public places in 2004. A reading of British newspaper coverage of the burkini ban suggests that while the focus of this debate was the meaning and connotations of the burkini, as with Fatimah's story above, the debate was infused by deeper forms of hostility and power rooted in a discursive field in which the long history of colonialism and Islamophobia has portrayed veiled women as other and a threat to Western societies and values (Gemie 2010). In the burkini affair, multiple, often contradictory, discourses can be identified in which the burkini is defined by French politicians as:

- A challenge to the French secular state;
- he free expression of religious belief;
- A threat to security;
- A statement of support for terrorism;
- A symbol of the silencing and oppression of Muslim women;
- An example of women's choice and agency.

As Dearden (2016) argued in the *Independent* online edition on 24th August 2016, interpretations of the ban include arguments that it 'preserves "security and secularism"', alongside those of more liberal critics who condemn it as a 'sexist attack on human rights and a valuable recruiting tool for Isis and other jihadist groups propagating the idea of a war on Muslims in the West'.

Detailed attention to the issues outlined above in the section on questions of method suggests that much of the British press coverage was concerned not just with factual reporting but with interpretations that signal the wider discursive field within which the burkini debate is located. For example, Dearden (2016) describes how the ban had become:

> a lightning rod for a multitude of divisive issues. The imposition of local by-laws on swimwear may seem minor but the 'burkini bans' have tapped into division over immigration, sexism, religion and extremism as the country continues to reel from a series of deadly terror attacks by Isis supporters.

Both terrorism and secularism are central to the French sources quoted in the British press. Here the widespread binary opposition in Western discourse between religion and secularism slips into an opposition between secularism and terrorism in which the positions of the majority of Muslims who do not support radical Islamism become invisible. This points to the power relations in play in the debate. Ironically, religious beliefs and practices become politicised precisely in a way that most Muslims reject. In the process, mainstream Muslim religious beliefs about female modesty are largely silenced and subsumed by a discourse that insists on hijab as a political statement. Thus at one end of the mainstream political spectrum, the *Daily Express* highlights statements by local politicians describing burkinis as 'beachwear ostentatiously showing a religious affiliation' and 'clothing that refers to "terrorist movements"' (Moore 2016). Analysis reveals how this article fails to offer any alternative positions on the burkini or question the statements by French politicians but implicitly reaffirms the implied connections between all Muslims and terrorism. In contrast, Dearden in the *Independent* reports how French Prime Minister Manuel Valls told the *La Provence* newspaper that he was not in favour of a national law but condemned burkinis:

'"The burkini is not a new range of swimwear, a fashion," he said. "It is the expression of a political project, a counter-society, based notably on the enslavement of women"' (quoted in Dearden 2016). Like other less right-wing papers, the *Independent* reports the events and French sources but places them within the broader debate on the meanings and implications of the ban. A close reading of these newspapers also points to the spectre of specific political agendas, foremost among which in the UK is the need for inclusion, social cohesion, and the fight against both Jihadism and Islamophobia.

Women's bodies, modesty, sexuality, and the male gaze

In their article 'Reflections on the participation of Muslim women in disability sport: hijab, Burkini, modesty and changing strategies,' Limoochi and Le Clair (2011: 1300) point out how: 'The inclusion of women and girls in sport has been contested for centuries, tied to differences in the gendered view of what is seen as "suitable" or appropriately "modest"'. Indeed the history of women's participation in sport in Western Europe since the end of the nineteenth century shows how much women's sportswear has changed with challenges to norms of femininity. While today Muslim men participate widely in sport at all levels, the participation of Muslim women remains contested in many contexts. At issue are codes of behaviour and dress. As Limoochi and Le Clair (2011: 1310) explain, for many Muslim women:

> there are special circumstances related to the importance of tradition, and religious and cultural values in the context of Islam that influence specific rules about the presentation of the female self and Islamic dress (hijab). These values impact on the participation of Muslim women in sport, and the different requirements for appropriate 'modest' dress which vary by country and by region, as well as by varying religious and cultural values, and class/socio-economic factors.

The differentiation made here between different groups of Muslims on the basis of location, religious and cultural values, and class/socio-economic factors is distinctly lacking in the media where ideas of 'modest dress' have been widely satirised and attacked as an extreme form of the oppression of Muslim women. As Fitzpatrick (2009: 77) points out:

> Media stories persistently ignore the fact that for many Muslim women outside of the Middle East, hijab is not a tradition that they are forced to follow, but a conscious decision that they made as young women or adults meant to be a cultural, political, and even feminist statement. The possibility that some women wear burkinis as a bold rejection of the dominant culture's conception of what constitutes 'progress' is left conspicuously unexplored by the mass-media.

The absence of such readings in the press points to questions of power as they affect whose voices are included in public debates. They also signal questions of readership and point to discourses about the 'British of way of life' that are widely used to contest multiculturalism and religious diversity and are variously rooted in ethnocentrism, racism, and Islamophobia. Yet, this absence of Muslim women's voices can also be seen as part of the broad-based ongoing struggle over control of women's body images. As Fitzpatrick argues 'the burkini's media popularity is rooted in its constructed identity as a visual symbol that refracts multiple overlapping contemporary debates about immigration, feminism, "culture-clashes," and national identity'. She adds that her 'analysis contributes to a body of scholarship that examines the ways in which women's fashion and female bodies persistently serve as discursive sites of meaning and arenas of contestation in the construction of national and international imaginaries' (Fitzpatrick 2009: 3). The meanings and uses of the burkini are multiple: designed to meet the needs of Muslim women to dress modestly and counteract the male gaze, it also sells widely to non-Muslim women who wish to cover up for a variety of reasons. The burkini is also under challenge from Muslim fundamentalists who prefer women to be absent from public life.

Writing in the *Guardian* in August 2016, Zanetti describes how it was her niece's desire to play netball that motivated her to design and market the burkini, along with her wish to diversify the ethnic makeup of lifeguards on Australian beaches by creating a uniform that Muslim women could wear.

> After September 11, the Cronulla riots, the banning of the veil in France, and the international backlash that came with it – about us being the bad people all because of a few criminals who do not speak on behalf of Muslims – I really didn't want anyone to judge girls wearing these. It's only a girl being modest.
>
> *(Zanetti 2016)*

Zanetti argues that the burkini was:

> about integration and acceptance and being equal and about not being judged. It was difficult for us at the time, the Muslim community, they had a fear of stepping out. They had fear of going to public pools and beaches and so forth, and I wanted girls to have the confidence to continue a good life. Sport is so important, and we are Australian! I wanted to do something positive – and anyone can wear this, Christian, Jewish, Hindus. It's just a garment to suit a modest person, or someone who has skin cancer, or a new mother who doesn't want to wear a bikini, it's not symbolising Islam.
>
> *(Zanetti 2016)*

In our view, these meanings have very little institutional power and while they have been recognised as signalling a marketing opportunity by retailers, they remain largely invisible in mainstream public debate.

Agency and voice

Newspaper coverage of the burkini ban raises questions of agency and voice. With a few exceptions, Muslim women's voices are absent from articles and they become victims with little agency or individual power who need rescuing (see, for example, Pearson 2016 writing in the *Telegraph*). News articles concentrate on the competing meanings attributed to the burkini rather than their implications for women or how the women in question understand or experience their involvement. A notable exception is an article by Fishwick (2016) in the *Guardian* in which five Muslim women speak confidently about why they wear the burkini. For the most part, Burkini-clad women become the target of a range of attitudes, fears, and anxieties that draw on Islamophobia and a range of other contingent national and international issues linked to Muslim minorities in the West or to Muslim majority societies. As Fitzpatrick (2009: 3) points out, press representations require location 'within the historic context of recent increased Muslim immigration to Christian-majority nations where ideals of multiculturalism have existed alongside realities of cultural conflict, segregation, suspicion, and racist nativism, especially in the wake of the terrorists' attacks of September 11, 2001'. By 2016, repeated terror attacks by al Qaeda and Isis supporters had become another significant contingent factor.

The analysis of press coverage of the burkini points to the multiple interests at stake in the debate. In the context of the French Riviera, for example, unspoken economic interests tied to Islamophobic views feature strongly, if often masked by appeals to preserving the 'French way of life'. Thus the insistence – addressed by French politicians and publicised by the media – on excluding burkini-clad women from 'Western' beaches can be read as in part attempting to maintain a specific image of glamour, wealth, and prosperity, underpinned by Islamophobia. As Gemie (2010) argues of the French context, women in Islamic dress are trying to integrate into public life but their efforts are rejected if they do not integrate in a form considered acceptable. Writing in the *Guardian* on 25th August 2016, Farrer and Chrisafis (2016) suggest that if Muslim women in France insist on hijab, their presence is viewed as a contamination and a warning, which former President Sarkozy described as 'provocation'.

A key issue raised by this brief examination of press coverage of the burkini affair is the need for a full analysis of the genealogy of the interpretations of the burkini, the power relations structuring them, the contingent factors provoking them, and their effects on Muslim and non-Muslim subjectivities and behaviour. A more extensive feminist poststructuralist analysis of the burkini ban would require detailed empirical research that takes us beyond the immediate language of the case study into the structure and genealogy of the wider discursive field within which Muslim women in the West are located. It would raise further questions of Eurocentrism and the assumptions underpinning the common sense idea that the discourses produced from Western human rights organisations and Western feminism are best.

This chapter has briefly examined the example of the burkini to argue that a feminist poststructuralist focus on the discursive production of meanings and subjectivity offers a useful approach to understanding the constitution of meanings, subject positions, and the power relations in play. As suggested above, reading newspaper articles from this perspective involves identifying stereotypes, inconsistencies, and contradictions, and examining the language used to encourage the reader to accept specific truth claims. These are inherent in the range of meanings and the broader cultural assumptions and binary opposition used to establish a particular version of reality as true. Detailed textual analysis points the way to identifying the social discourses reproduced and occasionally contested within the text. It also enables the analyst to identify the subject positions in play and how they might be resisted and transformed. As the case of the burkini shows, language constitutes conflicting and contested meanings that produce and reproduce forms of subjectivity, subjectification, and relations of power, empowering some groups and individuals while silencing and excluding others. These meanings have real effects in the world. The interests and motivations behind the ways in which discourses function are multiple and complex and draw on both contingent and historical meanings. Yet these meanings are constantly open to resignification, and resistance to power can produce new and empowering forms of subjectivity and voice. Institutions such as, in this case, the media and local and central government play crucial roles in articulating and affirming discourses that victimise minorities and legitimate sexism, racism, and Islamophobia, affecting individual bodies, identities, material culture, and institutional practices as well as individual and group life chances. Often women's bodies become metaphors in discursive conflict over issues that go way beyond questions of gender or sexuality yet this discursive conflict still shapes bodies, minds, and emotions within social networks of power and works to produce and reproduce forms of subjectification.

Future directions

Feminist poststructuralism is committed to analyses that might contribute towards improving social relations. The future agenda for this approach to language, gender, and sexuality studies is necessarily given by the social issues of the day. In the case of representations of Muslim women, the analysis and contestation of the ways in which minority ethnic and religious communities are discursively constructed via representations in the media, including the press and social media remains a pressing concern. This work needs to locate the discourses in play in the broader history of representations of others in British society and to identify how racism, Islamophobia, and ethnocentrism are produced, naturalised, and reproduced. In particular, such work needs to look at the power relations in play in determining which voices and points of view are heard and which are excluded. Writing about the burkini ban in the *Independent*, Jawad (2016) commented: 'What hurts the most is the silence of fellow mainstream and "western" feminists whose voices would have a significant impact on how these issues are framed and articulated'. This is a challenge that needs to be taken seriously. The critical positions on language, subjectivity, the body, discourse, and power that feminist poststructuralism opens up raise a challenging agenda of important issues that have material social effects. While drawing on individual acts of speech and writing and seeing discourse as performative, this approach allows us to begin to access the power relations that structure the discursive field and gain useful insight into how power functions in Western societies in relation to Muslim women. This is an important step towards change.

Further reading

Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., and McEnery, A. (2013) *Discourse Analysis and Media Bias: The Representation of Islam in the British Press*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This book combines corpus linguistics with critical discourse analysis to look at how the lives of Muslims and Islam are represented in the British press between 1998 and 2009.

Baxter, J. (2018) *Women Leaders and Gender Stereotyping in the UK Press*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book offers an excellent guide to press analysis.

Poole, E. (2002) *Reporting Islam*. London: I. B. Tauris.

This book analyses media representations of British Muslims.

Said, E. (1997) *Covering Islam*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Vintage Classics.

A classic analysis of press representations of Muslims.

Weedon, C. (1996) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell.

An introduction to postructuralist theory.

Related topics

Language, gender, and sexuality: reflections on the field's ongoing critical engagement with the sociopolitical landscape; poststructuralist research on language, gender, and sexuality; performance in action; multimodal constructions of feminism; leadership language of Middle Eastern women.

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30

Affect in language, gender, and sexuality research

Studying heterosexual desire

Kristine Køhler Mortensen and Tommaso M. Milani

Introduction

Over the last 30 years or so, poststructuralism has become a key paradigm of thought in critical feminist scholarship on language, gender, and sexuality (see Bucholtz 2014 for an overview). Within this tradition, a large body of work has offered convincing evidence that gender and sexual identities are not natural givens, but are 'social constructions' that are produced, negotiated, and contested through discursive means, and are bound up with power and control (see Ehrlich, Meyerhoff, and Holmes 2014). In this chapter, we take such a post-structuralist approach to identities, but we also add another dimension, one that accounts for the realm of the *affective* in relation to gender and sexuality. Bringing affect into the analytical repertoire means paying attention to the 'role of fear, desire, anger and other powerful feelings in shaping forms of action' (Lemke 2007: 23). Of these, heterosexual desire is put under the analytical spotlight in this chapter.

With regard to the remit of this section of the Handbook, it is important to state upfront that our interest in affect is neither at odds with the role of language, gender, and sexuality scholarship as a feminist practice, nor is it at variance with a poststructuralist interest in the role played by discourse(s) in the production of identities and subjectivities (Norton 2000; Weedon 1987). Quite the contrary, we argue that an affective lens allows us to achieve a more nuanced understanding of meaning-making practices, and, gain deeper insights into the ways in which *felt* subject positions are constructed in discourse and are linked to power negotiations.

While there are of course many different emotions that may be relevant in relation to gender and sexuality (see Milani 2015 and Milani et al. 2018 for analyses of shame in sexual activism), this chapter focuses on the discursive construction of heterosexual desire in a particular context: online dating. Empirically, we study heterosexual desire through an investigation of two female friends browsing, reading, and commenting on male online dating profiles. By analysing these meaning-making practices, we demonstrate how desire is what lies 'beside' (Sedgwick 2003) and enables the discursive construction of identities in a homosocial context. At this juncture it is important to clarify that homosociality should not be confused with homosexuality: it refers to the construction of 'affiliation' and 'bonding' in peer groups consisting of individuals of the same sex. While the notion of homosociality has been particularly popular in the study of heterosexual male friendships and heterosexual male bonding (see e.g. Hammarén and Johansson 2014; Kiesling 2005), we concentrate here on heterosexual women (see also Coates 1996). Moreover, while homosociality is often employed to indicate non-romantic connections, we highlight in our analysis how the non-sexual desire to connect with persons of the same sex goes hand in hand with the production of erotic desire for a person of the opposite sex, and vice versa (see Kiesling 2005, 2011; Milani and Jonsson 2011; Mortensen 2015a; Sedgwick 1985).

As we explain in more detail in the following section, the analysis in this chapter is grounded on a key principle of poststructuralist thought, namely that both identity and desire take shape and gain meaning *through* discourse; they are something we *do* with the help of meaning-making resources: language understood as spoken and written code as well as visual and embodied means, such as the arrow of a mouse on a computer screen. However, poststructuralist theory does not translate into a distinct method or a single technique that can be applied to any context (see the breadth of methodologies in the chapters in this part of the Handbook). In other words, there is no recipe for how one goes about analysing identity and desire. In the case of the data presented below, we operationalise poststructuralist thinking by paying attention to *practices*, that is, what people do with language and other meaning-making resources in relation to online dating. In such an analytical enterprise, we are guided by the following research questions:

How is desire brought into being in a same-sex peer group?
What kind of identity work is enabled by desire in such a group?

Postsructuralism and affect

Any research project and concomitant publications are based on specific assumptions about the world. Because of various constraints, authors often do not have the space to spell out such presuppositions. In contrast, we want to present the two main assumptions that underpin this chapter.

Assumption one: we take a poststructuralist approach to language. This means that we do not view language as a mirror of a pre-existing world. Instead we see language as 'performative', that is, constituting the world. To take gender as an example, Butler cogently argues that gender is 'a performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed' (Butler 1999: 33). This means that gender is not a 'thing' we have that causes a particular behaviour. Rather, it is the discursive effect of socioculturally situated discourses and meaning-making practices. In other words, gender is something human beings do with the help of meaning-making resources, which comprise language, body, dress code, make-up choices, and so on. If one takes a poststructuralist approach to language, it is impossible to distinguish between what counts as 'speech' and what counts as 'action', because speech and other meaning-making practices are themselves acts. In this way, poststructuralist thinking destabilises the very foundations upon which many commonsense assumptions rest, such as the distinction between reality and representation.

Assumption two: similarly to how we view language, we believe that emotions are also performative: they are not states lodged somewhere in people's minds or bodies, and therefore invisible, but are social forces that are produced, circulated, and materialised through discourse. Analytically, a performative view of affect requires us to pay attention to the practices through which emotions materialise. These practices can be linguistic – what people say to each other e.g. the utterance 'I love you', visual – which pictures people exchange with each other, for example on online platforms in order to generate desire, or embodied – what people do with, say, the computer mouse when scrolling through online personal profiles in order to indicate their attraction (or lack thereof) to the person in the profile. Moreover, the analysis below illustrates how heterosexual desire does not simply romantically connect people of different sex, but also 'sticks together' (Ahmed 2004) people of the same sex, in this specific case, two heterosexual women, creating a sense of momentary coherence among them.

Crucially, our study of affect is part of a larger feminist project of relevance for scholarship on language, gender, and sexuality. Emotions have problematically been viewed in the Western tradition as 'less valuable' elements of the private sphere – women's realm – as opposed to rationality, which characterises the male space of the public sphere (Cvetkovich 2007; Gal 2002; Johnson and Ensslin 2007). In light of this, bringing affect into the scientific spotlight can be seen as part of a feminist endeavour of valuing areas of human experiences that have historically been devalued or even dismissed by male rationalist discourses. A focus on affect seeks to debunk another widespread common-sense distinction – that between 'reason' and 'emotion' – and forces us to resist the temptation to treat emotions as less important 'debris' to be filtered out of social interaction.

Desire and discourse

Desire is a form of affect that has been discussed at length within language, gender, and sexuality research. Interestingly, however, such debates have been rather disconnected from the theoretical developments within the so-called 'affective turn' in the humanities and social sciences. Against this backdrop, this chapter aims to partly redress this disjuncture. It does so by showing how a performative approach to affect demystifies the view of desire as belonging to an unreachable psychic inner life, a view that has caused discomfort among some sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists (see e.g. Bucholtz and Hall 2004; Eckert 2002).

For example, in their ground-breaking collection entitled *Language and Desire* Harvey and Shalom's (1997) seem to presuppose that desire is a pre-discursive phenomenon, an inner force that comes from the inside:

> While uncompromising in its demand for attention, desire is also elusive and destined to fade. To attempt to encode it – to write it, to speak it – is a way of capturing it, of attempting to delay the onset of its decline, and in providing us with a trace of the vividness of our experience once it is past. But to give linguistic form to our desires for another human being is also, importantly, to try to understand an experience that overwhelms us and thereby threatens constantly to outmaneuver and outclass our verbal resources, the principal means at our disposal for ordering and making sense of our lives.
>
> *(Harvey and Shalom 1997: 1)*

This quote touches upon one of the key challenges that desire has brought to the linguistic study of gender and sexuality. If desire points to an internal psychic dynamic that is prior to language, it is contradictory to poststructuralist thinking about the linguistic construction of sexual and gendered subjects. By describing desire as a phenomenon with the capacity to 'outmaneuver' and 'outclass' language, Harvey and Shalom implicitly position linguistic analysis as not fully adequate to grasp the workings of desire. If desire is something that exists in some prior form and can only tentatively be captured by language, how can a linguist or discourse analyst study this phenomenon? Harvey and Shalom (1997) seem to get around this challenge by categorising language as the individual's primary resource for 'ordering' and 'making sense' of the world, desire included.

Although Harvey and Shalom (1997) introduced the notion of desire into sociolinguistics, it was not until the publication of Kulick's (2000) provocative review of research on gay and lesbian language that an emotionally laden academic debate broke out. According to Kulick (2000), language and sexuality scholarship had paid too much attention to issues of sexual *identity*, and as a result failed to account for a key aspect of sexuality, namely the realm of the erotic. As Cameron and Kulick explain,

> […] sexuality is a social and psychological phenomenon that often exceeds, and sometimes contradicts, the sexual identities people consciously claim or disclaim. What people desire often clashes with, undermines or disrupts who they consider they are or ought to be.
>
> *(Cameron and Kulick 2003: 113)*

Methodologically, they suggest creating a 'map' of desire, showing not only how desire is produced, circulated, but also on how it is blocked. A challenge to this mapping exercise lies in the lack of more precise guidelines about how to go about operationalising desire in linguistic analysis. Even though Cameron and Kulick's (2003) proposal appears to be practice-centred, issues of method are not resolved; they are rather formulated as questions to the reader and the research community more broadly: 'How do we do the mapping?' (Cameron and Kulick 2003: 113).

Several studies have tried to answer this question by employing a variety of approaches such as corpus linguistics (Bogetić 2013; Milani 2013), textual analysis (Barrett 2003), conversation analysis (Korobov 2011; Speer 2017; Stokoe 2010), as well as ethnography and interactional analysis (Kiesling 2013). In what follows, we zoom in on the case of online dating in order to demonstrate step-by-step how an analysis of desire in interaction can be pursued.

Unpacking the language of desire: the case of online dating

We already mentioned in the introduction that we operationalise a poststructuralist approach to language and desire by paying attention to *practices*, what people do with linguistic and other meaning-making resources in the context of online dating. In order to understand these practices, we first want to present online dating platforms; we then move on to discuss the issue of 'browsing together' profiles on a Danish dating site, before offering a detailed analysis of the ways in which heterosexual desire and homosociality are produced in the interaction between two female friends.

Collecting data on online dating

Online dating sites are discursive platforms that foster initial communication between potential romantic/erotic partners, thus providing internet users with various tools for conveying and negotiating their identities and desires. In contrast to offline dating such platforms expand the romantic market by offering a large network of potential partners literally with the tap of a finger. Additionally, they can improve partner-seeking through the use of romantic compatibility algorithms. Online dating websites typically require members (1) to construct a profile containing texts and/or photographs that convey personal information (e.g. height, body type, age, occupation, etc.), and (2) identify the qualities they desire in a potential partner. Moreover, most online dating services provide communicative tools such as email and messaging, as well as lists of 'favourites'. Once initial contact has been established, members of the dating platform need to determine whether to pursue other forms of communication outside the online context.

Browsing together on dating.dk

The dating website in the examples in this chapter is dating.dk, which is the first Danish online dating site, founded in 1998. In 2011 when the data was collected, dating.dk was the largest online dating platform in Denmark. The examples presented below are a very small portion taken from a larger qualitative research project on heterosexual online dating among young adults in Denmark conducted by the first author of this chapter (Mortensen 2015b). Methodologically, how was the data collected?

The first step consisted in ethnographic style interviews and participant observation (for more detail and ethical considerations see Mortensen 2015c). Participants in the study were recruited through personal networks, as well as through interactions on the online dating site dating.dk. Through ethnographic observations, it became clear how important it was for the participants to *share* online dating activities with friends. A typical way of engaging friends in one's romantic life included showing them the user profiles that one found attractive. Thus, online dating was not a solo activity that participants carried out while on their own in front of their screens.

The second step of data collection emerged out of the ethnographic insights, and was geared to better understanding the shared aspect of online dating. Recordings were made of joint browsing practices among three pairs of friends with varying levels of online dating experience. This chapter focuses on one of these conversations with two participants who were the most experienced online daters. Experienced online daters in the project typically spent less time talking about the online platform compared to their more inexperienced peers; instead they dedicated more time negotiating their stances towards the profiles they were browsing through. Thus, the conversation below was selected because it contains a high degree of assessment talk – an interactional phenomenon, which we argue is a rich 'epistemological site' (Sunderland 2004) for the discursive construction of desire. The participants were asked to sit together and browse while being recorded. The interactions were arranged and cannot, therefore, be considered spontaneous. However, they simulate a type of activity that had been naturally occurring among these friends. The recordings lasted between one and two hours, and took place in the participants' homes, a setting that was chosen in order to make them feel as comfortable as possible. The screen-tracking software 'Hypercam' was used in order to capture footage of the screen movements as well as record the sound in and around the computer.

Building desire through collaborative assessment

Stine and Louise – the names are pseudonyms – have been close friends since their teenage years. At the time of the recording they were in their late twenties/early thirties and often met to discuss all sorts of private matters. Ever since their teenage years, romantic relationships had been a common topic of their mutual conversations. In the extract below, the women are sitting together in Louise's living room and are logged onto Stine's online dating profile on dating.dk. Contrary to what one might expect it is not Stine who controls the mouse when browsing through her profile but Louise. This is because the device they are using belongs to Louise, and they are in Louise's home. Thus, Louise embodies an authoritative position with regard to the hardware. The women check the list of 'interested male users' who have visited Stine's profile and have clicked on the 'interested' icon. They go through these men one by one in order to decide whether to reciprocate interest. Figure 30.1 illustrates the configuration of a male dating profile as seen from Stine and Louise's viewpoint.

From the profile layout it is evident that the photo is highly salient. It is therefore no surprise that when reading the profiles, the female friends pay most attention to the pictures. In order to read the profile text, the reader has to make the effort of scrolling down the page. The profile additionally includes a photo album that requires additional movements of the mouse in order to access it. Throughout their browsing the women choose mainly to view the photographic archive (the main profile photo and the photo album) and only engage with the profile texts if they find the visual appearance attractive. Thus, the women to some extent follow the reading path laid out by the design architecture of the dating site.

Going through the men's profiles the women assess the profile owners. In conversational interactions, assessment can be defined as 'evaluating in some fashion persons and events being described within talk' (Goodwin and Goodwin 1992: 154). By analysing how assessment is carried out and which elements are evaluated as attractive and unattractive we show how desire comes into existence. Linguistically, desire, pleasure, and affect more broadly, are not exclusively articulated through explicit statements such as 'I love …', 'I hate', or 'response cries, i.e. exclamatory interjections' (Goffman 1978: 800) such as 'mmh' or 'eeuw'. Such overt formulations are obvious discursive formulations through which affect is produced. However, affect is also materialised discursively through more implicit meaning-making processes (Besnier 1990; Irvine 1982) such as prosodic means (voice quality) and laughter, as will become evident in the analysis below.

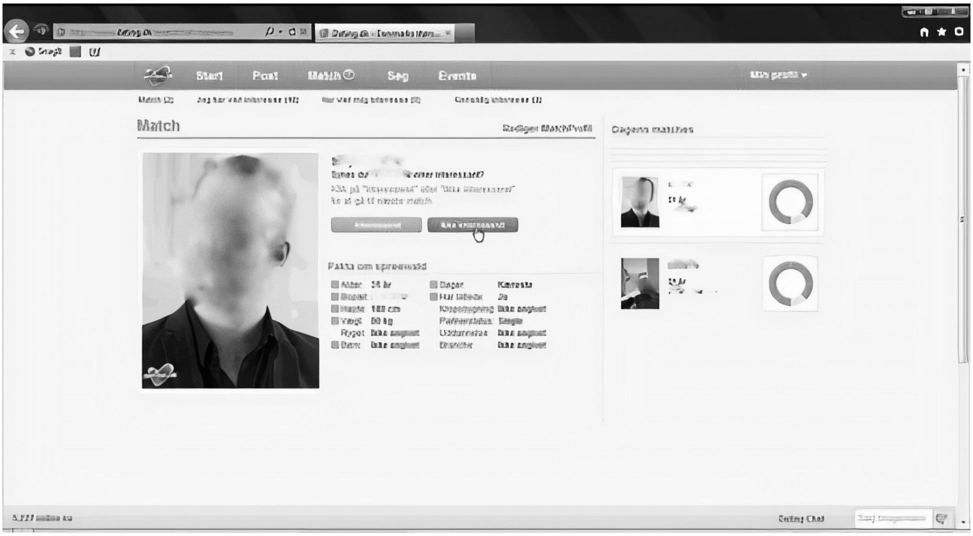


Figure 30.1 Configuration of a male dating profile.

Extract 1[1,2]

Louise	01	°excuse me° but isn't he a little bit pop-eyed
Stine	02	yes then it's just- he's really got a bit-
	03	a very round head
Louise	04	@[@@]
Stine	05	[@] @ isn't he [lacking-]
Louise	06	[without being] fat
Stine	07	lack[ing]
Louise	08	[he's] actually quite-
Stine	09	isn't he lacking a bit of cheekbone
	10	and a bit of [u:h]
Louise	11	[JAW] he's lacking jaw
Stine	12	and jaw
Louise	13	but he's also lacking cheekbones
	14	and then a bit argh I do:n't-
	15	°and then a bit retardo eyes°
Stine	16	yes
Louise	17	cuckoo ((animated))
Stine	18	@ @[@@ @@@]
Louise	19	[@@ @@@]@

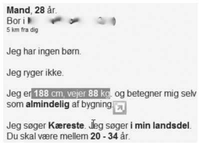
In this excerpt Louise starts by giving a negative assessment of the man's looks (line 1), which sets off an evaluation of a series of attributes. Stine introduces a specific assessment object, the man's round head (3), which generates simultaneous laughter. In the following turns (6–17), the women further construe the man as laughable and deviant by pinpointing several deficiencies (jaw, cheekbones). Interactionally, assessment is achieved through overlappings (4–5, 5–6, 7–8, 10–11) and co-produced turns (10–12). According to Goodwin overlapping turns are a '[…] way the participants can display that their minds are together' (2008: 202). A similar effect is produced in this excerpt by the mutual usage of 'a bit' (2, 9, 10, 14, 15). Overall, the women construct shared agreement about every detail in the man's appearance, and finally Stine clicks the 'not-interested' icon thus ending the assessment activity.

Laughter serves two functions in the extract above. It builds up an affective affiliation in the homosocial relation between the two friends. Put differently, laughter is a way of showing enjoyment in the browsing activity at the same time as building rapport. Moreover, it serves the function of devaluing the Other, that is, the male profile owner. In this sense, laughter has the function of ridicule in this context. Louise further strengthens the ridicule by adding the problematic expression 'retardo eyes' to her initial observation about the man's eyes. By being compared to a person with disabilities, the man in the profile is positioned by Louise as an unsuitable object of desire. Research within disability studies has demonstrated that disabled men and women are most often viewed as asexual (Gartner and Joe 1987; Kulick and Rydström 2015). Since gender and sexuality are bound together, the expression 'retardo eye' in this interaction not only contributes to desexualising the man in the profile, but also to demasculinising him (Robertson 2004). In such a way, he is discursively relegated to a position of marginalisation in the heterosexual marketplace (Eckert 2011). The women's negative assessments can be interpreted as an act of ableism; it is an alignment to ideologies according to which only abled bodies are legitimate objects of desire. In dismissing the man as unattractive, the women position themselves as legitimate subjects with the authority to pass judgement and laugh at the deviant ‘Other’, at the same time as they reinscribe the ‘Self’ as normal and attractive subjects within the same heteronormative ideology. In their collaboratively produced assessment, they affirm each other’s positions as abled and hence appealing heterosexual women and acknowledge their co-performed non-desire as normative. The pinpointing of unattractiveness plays an important function in producing heterosexual desire in the homosocial context. Display of non-desire is part of the coordinated development of intelligible erotic taste, which ultimately solidifies the women’s homosociality.

In the second excerpt we shall see how, over a longer stretch of talk, Stine and Louise negotiate desire and non-desire through their collaborative assessments. In this extract we have included illustrations of the screen as well as descriptions of the mouse movements. By studying the movements of the cursor on the screen it becomes evident how desire is not simply brought into being through spoken discourse in this particular setting but also through the dynamic interplay between embodied acts and verbal assessments.

Extract 2

Louise	01 02 03	@@[@@@@@@@@ oh just take a look at his nose there]	moves the mouse towards the man’s nose	
Stine	04 05 06	[@@@@ it’s just about switching something around @@@]		
Louise	07	[@@@@@@@@@@]		
Stine	08 09	[@@@@@@@@] [@]	moves the mouse to the photo album index and clicks on the next photo	
Louise	10 11	[@] @@@ @[@]		
Stine	12	[oh] I don’t know		
	13	(1.4)		
Stine	14 15	[oh it’s a <u>freaking</u> conk he’s got]		
Louise	16 17	[oh it’s <u>freaking</u> big] (2.0)	clicks on the next photo	
Louise	18	from the front[he’s really-]	clicks on the next photo	

Stine	19	[what what] was his	clicks on the next photo	
	20	height and so on by the		
	21	way		
	22	he looks quite u:h	clicks on the next photo	
			moves the mouse to the man's username and clicks on it - leads back to the profile overview	
Louise	23	he looks quite big		
Stine	24	quite big yeah		
Louise	25	no he's not really it's		
	26	really pretty normal		
	27	(1.39)		
Stine	28	oh well still almost one		
	29	ninety		
Louise	30	yeah yeah but but and	moves the mouse across the physical information and marks height and weight	
	31	then u:h in terms of		
	32	weight		
Stine	33	yes		
Louise	34	it's well quite nor-		
	35	really		
	36	(1.55)		
	37	*normal*		

Aligning assessments are produced in several ways in this excerpt. The women employ similar prosodic and lexical features in order to create affiliation. In response to a photo, they say in overlap: 'wow it's a *freaking* conk he's got' and 'wow it's *freaking* big' (14–16). The turns are synchronised with the explicitly affective exclamation 'wow'. Wordings are repeated in overlap and with identical prosody. Deployment of identical intensifiers further displays reciprocity. Thus, the two women create affective affiliation in turn taking, lexis and prosody. Moreover, they incorporate the mouse into their activity and make use of it for interactional purposes, underscoring verbally uttered assessments and information. In lines 1–3 the cursor is moved directly to the man's nose and in lines 30–32 it is used to point to the information about height and weight. In a sense, the mouse becomes a prosthetic device with which the women can touch the male faces and point out specific attractive or unattractive features. Additionally, the mouse is the tool through which they can act upon their desire, since pressing the ‘interested’ icon is itself an act of desire in that it communicates romantic/erotic interest to the receiver.

After agreeing on a man’s attractiveness, the women have to decide whether to click interested/not interested and thereby initiate or close down further contact. In this case, Louise takes the lead on making a decision.

Extract 3

Louise	01	there’s a perfect match ((soft voice))	Moves the mouse to the ‘perfect match’ icon	
	02	(1.25)		
Louise	03	and he’s online ((soft voice))	draws the mouse back to the profile photo	
	04	sure you’re not interested	draws the mouse towards the centre of the page and further up to the right corner	
	05	no I’d better not control		
	06	the mouse		
Stine	07	no uh uh if just press		
	08	interested but [if you-]		
Louise	09	[°it’s		
	10	yours°]		
Stine	11	he writes then you’ll		
	12	answer		
	13	(2.19)		
Louise	14	that’s ok	moves mouse to the ‘interested’ icon and clicks	
	15	is that allowed		
Stine	16	well I guess we are		
	17	allowed to make our own		
	18	rules		
Louise	19	well okay	returns to visitor overview	

Through simultaneous linguistic utterances and cursor movements, Louise draws Stine’s attention to the fact that the man is a ‘perfect match’, and that he is online, thereby implying that communication in real time is possible (1–3). At this point, the prosodic softening of her voice works as a discursive device that marks a shift in terms of both identity and affect in the interaction: from laughter, ridicule, and the production of the undesirable Other to complicity and the discursive framing of a potentially desirable partner.

After a pause with no response from Stine, Louise withdraws from her attempts to convince Stine to approach the man: ‘no I’d better not control the mouse’ (5–6). By manoeuvring the mouse, Louise is able to act upon her own desire for the man as if she were Stine. She then offers Stine the opportunity to take over the control of the mouse and choose whether to approach the man or move on to the next one on the list. Stine turns down Louise’s offer but does not fully dismiss the man as undesirable. Rather Stine involves Louise in the co-construction of desire by instructing her to answer if he returns the interest with an email (6–7, 10–11). At first Louise accepts, but after a pause she questions the proposition they have agreed upon (15). By requesting an account from Stine on this matter, Louise seems to imply some set of norms about how ‘proper dating’ should be conducted. However, Stine opposes such a normative stance by suggesting that they should make up their own rules. The women eventually engage in collaborative email correspondence with a male user and compose responses together. Unbeknownst to the man in question, Stine’s romantic interest is not an individual emotional status but is the result of the homosocial activity between Stine and Louise. On the basis of this, it could be suggested that heterosexual desire and homosociality are ‘sticky feelings’ (Ahmed 2004): they are glued together and stick different people together.

Discussion

In this chapter, we have argued for an approach to desire that is not concerned with its psychic origin or locus, but focuses on meaning-making practices in social interaction. By paying close attention to situated contexts, we have stepped back from scholarly work taking desire as naturally given; we have instead teased apart the ways in which desire is articulated through meaning-making practices. The main point we made is that heterosexual desire is a social phenomenon accomplished in interaction. Establishing a romantically intimate heterosexual relationship does not exclusively involve interaction between two potential partners of different sex, but, in the case of our example above, it also involves interactions in same-sex peer environments. Hence, in this case, heterosexual desire is a collaborative undertaking generated through homosocial bonding.

In considering desire as a social phenomenon, the analysis has also touched upon issues of gender and heterosexuality. Female friends produce a body-centred desire in which they split men into body parts, to which they attach different values of desirability. This can be interpreted as a contestation of a hegemonic system of heterosexual desire in which men typically value female partners according to physical attributes and women assess men on the basis of socio-economic status (Coupland 1996). While the women’s emphasis on physical features may be read as an agentive act against gendered expectations of ‘proper’ female desire, it may at the same time be seen as an internalisation of what film scholar Mulvey (1975) calls the ‘male gaze’, a male-centred way of desiring through looking. It could be argued that the physically focused desire that Stine and Louise are practising in their reading of the male profiles is forced upon them by the very design of this online dating site, which gives great prominence to personal pictures (see Figure 30.1). In other words, the visual salience on the website may be viewed as a technological materialisation of the ‘male gaze’ with its requirement of public display of female attractiveness. One could go as far as to suggest that the visual architecture of dating.dk structured the desiring paths – or at least some of them – of the women in this study. However, as can be seen in Extract 3, Stine and Louise creatively negotiate expectations about heterosexual desire practices; they exploit the technological affordances of the website in ways that allowed them to engage homosocially in their male-oriented desire. In a sense, Stine and Louise made up 'their own rules' (Extract 3). Thus, the analysis gives visibility to the complexity of women's discursive positions. While deeply involved in compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 1980), the women in this study challenge it as an exclusively two-party (female–male) relationship of desire. By allowing the intimacy of the homosocial relation to play a managing role in acting their desire online, the women's practices illustrate heterosexual desire is a homosocial collaborative endeavour.

Future directions

With the help of an approach informed by poststructuralism, this chapter has aimed to demystify the 'naturalness' of desire, or any other affect for that matter. This has been done through an analysis of the situatedness of heterosexual desire in a homosocial context. The search for distinctive linguistic features and patterns denoting desire touches upon the question of accessibility: do all people have access to the same meaning-making resources? Not necessarily, we would argue (see Bucholtz and Hall 2004). Moreover, historically entrenched social structures have a bearing on who can say what to whom; they also work as normative frameworks about what people are expected to desire (or not) (cf. Milani 2013; Piller and Takahashi 2006). These semiotic, ideological, and institutional constraints are exciting topics of investigation in future research because they help us to unveil the often subtle ways in which discipline and control operate not so much through the mobilisation of individuals' 'rational capacities to evaluate truth claims but through affects' (Isin 2004: 225; see also Wetherell 2012). That being said, 'where there is power, there is resistance' (Foucault 1978: 95), even when affect is concerned. Existing studies about the political implications of affect-laden stances illustrate how different emotions can be harnessed as powerful weapons in the subversion of hegemonic discourse (e.g. Frederiksen 2012; Milani 2015).

Suggesting that desire, and any other affect, are socially constituted through linguistic practices should not lead us to lose sight of bodily matters. Our analysis illustrated how female users overwhelmingly focus on attaching desire and non-desire to the face and body features of male users. Thus, this study demonstrates that, no matter how problematic this might be, the body is a key locus of desire, being continuously inscribed with cultural values. However, the body that we meet in the domain of online interaction is not a fixed entity, subject to the rules of biological science, but an unbounded object that can be fragmented in the stimulation of desire. The body is made meaningful through talk as it is dissected and carved up in particular ways. Outside the realm of the virtual, the body similarly persists as an important locus for affective articulation. A burgeoning body of scholarship in linguistic/semiotic landscape has demonstrated how the strategic placement of the body in space, such as in the case of political demonstrations, can be powerful ways of creating affective responses and consequently bring about political change (Milani 2015). Such research has also shown how the skin is a fruitful site for the study of affective trajectories (Peck and Stroud 2015).

In conclusion, by studying affect it is possible to bring to the fore what has previously been viewed as 'hidden', belonging to the 'private sphere' or the realm of an 'inner psychic life', and therefore dismissed as too slippery a terrain for scholars of language. It is our hope that this chapter has demonstrated that what is 'hidden' is actually in plain sight. One needs to read the data with an affective eye!

Transcription conventions

°	lowered volume
CAPITAL LETTERS	raised volume
[ ]	overlapping speech
@	laughter, each token marks one pulse
(( ))	transcriber comment
:	length
-	self-interruption

Notes

1 The extracts throughout the chapter have been translated into English from the original Danish.
2 Transcription conventions are provided at the end of the chapter.

Further reading

Ahmed, S. (2004) *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

This book offers an in-depth discussion of how affects such as love, disgust, fear, hate, and shame circulate and create problematic groupings of people in contemporary societies.

Cameron, D. and Kulick, D. (2003) *Language and Sexuality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This book mounts a fully-fledged argument about the importance of desire in language and sexuality research. It gives detailed summaries of different theories of desire as well as a comprehensive overview of discourse-oriented studies of sexuality.

Leap, W. L. (ed.) (2018) *Language/Sexuality/Affect*. Special issue of *Journal of Language and Sexuality*, 7(1), p. 300.

An important special issue that showcases the relationship between affect and sexuality through a variety of empirical examples, from New Orleans bounce music to Black queer spaces, from the novel *Fifty Shades of Grey* to university classrooms and Argentinian cinema.

Wetherell, M. (2012) *Affect and Emotion: A New Social Science Understanding*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

This book gives a comprehensive presentation of the social study of affect and offers examples of the different approaches to emotions in social psychology and discourse studies.

Related topics

An ethnographic approach to compulsory heterosexuality; analysing gendered discourses online; gender in interaction: ethnomethodological and CA approaches to gender; poststructuralist research on language, gender, and sexuality; analysing gendered discourses online.

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31

Language, gender, and the discursive production of women as leaders

Roslyn Appleby

Introduction

In this chapter I adopt a poststructuralist approach to understanding the ways in which language, gender, and sexuality come together in the discursive construction of women in political leadership. As an illustrative example, I focus on the media coverage of Julia Gillard, Australia's first and only female Prime Minister (2010–2013). Poststructuralism, in the sense that I use the term in this chapter, views gendered identities as constructed or enacted through discourses, which in turn are produced through language, text, and social practices. Discourse is used here in the Foucauldian sense to refer to 'practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault 1972: 49); that is, discourses give rise to particular and situated constructions of reality, thereby reproducing forms of knowledge that entail particular relations of power (Litosseliti 2006). When used in this critical theory tradition, and with a focus on language in use, 'discourses' refer to conventional patterns of speaking and writing about any given topic in ways that uphold and give expression to a powerful set of social and institutional values, beliefs, attitudes, and practices (Cameron 2001).

When individuals – including politicians and media commentators – talk about a topic or a person, they draw from shared resources, and through such talk a particular version of reality is constructed (Cameron 2001). Following from this understanding, discourse analysis is concerned with how people and all aspects of social life are labelled and categorised (Lee and Petersen 2011). Gendered discourses thus position women and men in certain ways, as particular types of people. In political leadership, a woman may be constituted by her colleagues and by the media as a particular type of person through the deployment of normative discourses of gender and sexuality that circulate in society and serve to maintain broader, structural relations of power.

My poststructural analysis also draws on related understandings of gender as a fabrication, rather than a fixed, pre-given entity, and a 'performative accomplishment' that is enforced through social sanctions (Butler 1988: 520). Within this rigid regulatory framework, individuals identifying as women are subject to discourses of femininity that promote particular ideals and norms of physical appearance, speech, and behaviour (Baxter 2018).

These discursive frameworks define the ways in which we can be seen as intelligible gendered beings (Mills 1997). For individuals, a recognisable, credible, conventional performance of gender is therefore ‘a strategy of survival’, and ‘those who fail to do their gender right’ through the performance of interrelated socially accepted discourses ‘are regularly punished’ (Butler 1988: 522).

On the basis of this theoretical understanding, the particular methodology I use to investigate the construction of gender and sexuality is informed by the framework proposed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) for analysing linguistically produced identity. This framework explains how identity emerges in linguistic interaction through the roles and orientations assumed by participants, and through the evaluative social category labels used to describe, position, and differentiate self and others. The particular identities – or rather subjectivities – that emerge through these linguistic means may be temporary, shifting, and deeply embedded in specific localised contexts and domains, and yet they also function to link individuals (self and others) to broader macro-categories including gender, age, sexual status, profession, and social class.

Women leaders and the news media

One important public domain in which language, gender, and sexuality have been studied from a poststructuralist perspective is that of political leadership. As Baxter (2018: 5) has pointed out, despite women’s significant progress in politics over recent decades, political leadership is still primarily defined as a masculine domain in which women are positioned as outsiders. Working with a normative model of leadership, news media often represent women politicians in essentialised or sexualised ways that foreground physical appearance, and women who do not meet stereotyped modes of sexualised attractiveness are often subjected to vicious attacks in the media.

Making a Prime Minister

To illustrate the theoretical framework discussed so far, I turn to an exploration of the ways in which normative discourses of gender and (hetero)sexuality were deployed in the political arena and in the media to depict Julia Gillard, Australia’s first female Prime Minister (2010–2013), as a particular type of gendered subject. On the one hand, Gillard’s appointment was initially celebrated as a sign of progress in gender equality; on the other hand, she was repeatedly ‘punished’ as one who had *failed* to ‘do [her] gender right’ (Butler 1988: 522). Her lack of conformity with normative gender regimes, primarily to do with her unmarried and child-free status, had a significant deleterious effect on perceptions and evaluations of her performance as Prime Minister.

Gillard was initially elected to the House of Representatives in the Australian parliament in 1998. As a member of the (social democratic) Labour Party she was committed to social justice and had a special interest in education and workplace reform. With the Labour Party then in opposition, Gillard was recognised as a talented debater on the floor of the parliament and was seen by some as a potential future party leader. In December 2007, Gillard became Australia’s first female Deputy Prime Minister when Labour won the general election and in this role was again recognised as a popular and consummate performer.

By mid-2010, a decline in Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s popularity in the opinion polls and dissatisfaction with his leadership style prompted a change in leadership. Gillard was elected unopposed as party leader and thus became Australia’s first female Prime Minister in June 2010. In order to legitimise her position, Gillard called a general election that was held in August 2010. Despite her initial popularity, particularly amongst women voters, the internal political and external media campaigns against her were effective in diminishing her overall support base. In the wake of the 2010 election Gillard became the Prime Minister of a minority government and, over the succeeding years, introduced a raft of significant social reforms. However, she continued to face significant opposition from various quarters: from aggressive opposition parties, from a hostile, scandal-mongering media, and from a clique of embittered Rudd-supporters within her own party. As a consequence, her ratings in the polls declined, and defeat at the 2013 general election looked certain. Fearing electoral disaster, the Labour Party once again moved to change its leadership; in an internal ballot, Gillard was defeated and Kevin Rudd was once again elected party leader in June 2013. The Labour Party under the leadership of Kevin Rudd lost the general election in September 2013, and Tony Abbott, as leader of the Liberal Party, became Australia's twenty-eighth Prime Minister.

The reasons behind Julia Gillard's rise and fall have been widely debated, with some critics pointing to failures of leadership, and others claiming that she had been subjected to a media crusade of sexism and misogyny previously unseen in Australian political history.

Analytical approach

The data I discuss in this chapter come from my own random selection of texts that appeared in the Australian media during the years of Gillard's term in office as a Member of Parliament and as Prime Minister. Most of these texts can be accessed electronically. They comprise newspaper and television reports (including reports of debates and speeches in parliament and press conferences), media commentaries, magazine stories, images (photographs and cartoons), and radio broadcasts and interviews. The texts have been analysed to identify recurring patterns and emergent discourses, the latter term used in the sense described below.

In the following analysis, the first section focuses on the discursive dilemma that constitutes the 'double bind' (Hall and Donaghue 2012) whereby women who are leaders are not only expected to demonstrate the toughness and authority stereotypically associated with the masculine domain of political power but also, as women, expected to behave in ways that are stereotypically associated with femininity, by demonstrating practices of caring, collaboration, and consensus. The second section focuses on the question of gender 'intelligibility'. As Butler (1990: 17) observes, normative acts of gender serve to render a person 'intelligible' as an individual in contemporary culture, and if one does not conform with the normative practices that define, govern, and regulate gender (and sexuality), one risks becoming 'unintelligible' as a person, and thereby subject to the 'punitive consequences' discussed above.

The third section focuses on the ways in which Gillard eventually adopted a practice of 'strategic essentialism', demonstrated most forcefully in a key speech through which she performed as an intelligible gendered subject. The term 'strategic essentialism' was first coined by Gayatri Spivak in the context of postcolonialism and refers to the adoption of an essential identity (defined, for example by race, class, or gender) by a subordinated group in order to counter dominant colonial narratives. In feminist philosophy, essentialism has been acknowledged as descriptively false, in that it denies the real diversity of women's lives and experiences by assuming that all women share a set of invariant biological and/or social characteristics. In this light, essentialism can be oppressive because it regulates what is and is not considered appropriate for women by privileging certain normative forms of femininity (Stone 2004: 137). However, acts of strategic essentialism, whereby a speaker deliberately aligns with the discourses associated with a particular identity category, have been recognised as a practical political tool that can articulate agency, encourage shared identification, and mobilise forces for transformation.

These three sections also reference three phases in the media representation of Gillard as Prime Minister. In the first phase are press reports of her ascension to the position of Prime Minister (24th June 2010) and her subsequent attempt to secure electoral endorsement just two months later (21st August 2010). In the second phase are the increasingly virulent attacks generated by or reported in the media throughout her term in office and directed at her gender 'failings' (June 2010–June 2013). The third phase marks a turning point in Gillard's own performance as a recognisable yet resistant gendered being where, increasingly over the last year of her term in office, she voiced her objection to sexist and misogynist attacks in the media and in parliament. Throughout this analysis I have selected media reports that most clearly demonstrate the gendered discourses that circulated during Gillard's term as a Member of Parliament and as Prime Minister.

The double bind

When Julia Gillard assumed the role of Australian Prime Minister in December 2010 it was indeed an historic moment: not only was Gillard the first woman in this role, she was also unmarried (and in a de facto relationship), childless, and an atheist, all conditions that were almost unheard of amongst Australian political leaders. Her appointment ran counter to the pattern of gender inequality in Australian politics, business, and the workforce more broadly, where the gender pay gap was 17 per cent and widening, and the representation of women in politics and on corporate boards in Australia remained at dismally low levels. The difficulty of combining family and work responsibilities has been a significant problem for Australian women in a way that it never has been for Australian men, and yet women who have forged a career and – like Gillard – 'neglected' to have children are 'alternately castigated and pitied' (Summers 2013a: 4).

Barriers to women's participation in Australian politics include the persistence of long irregular working hours and a highly combative debating style. When women do appear as participants or leaders in these male-dominated communities, they find themselves in a double bind: on the one hand, in order to garner support and respect, they must exhibit leadership qualities of strength, authority, and decisiveness, traits that are traditionally perceived as masculine; on the other hand, they must contend with the prescriptive gender stereotypes which demand that women should demonstrate characteristics of warmth, nurturance, sensitivity, and self-effacement. If a woman in a leadership position demonstrates behavioural characteristics of strength, agency, and authority – which Gillard clearly did – she risks being seen as insufficiently feminine and cast as an aggressive, calculating 'Iron Maiden', one of four gendered stereotypes that render women 'unsuitable for leadership' (Baxter 2018: 23). At the same time, if she demonstrates characteristics associated with a softer femininity, she risks being perceived as lacking the qualities of toughness required to be a good political leader.

The efforts to manage discourses of gender were evident on both sides of parliament in the political campaign of 2010, during which Gillard sought an electoral endorsement for her position as Prime Minister. From the outset, Gillard's popularity amongst women voters contrasted sharply with women's lack of enthusiasm for the Leader of the Opposition, Tony Abbott, whose patriarchal stance on issues affecting women posed problems for his appeal to women voters (Denmark, Ward, and Bean 2012). Known as a 'hyper-masculine opposition leader and ironman triathlete', Abbott had habitually projected the persona of an 'action man' with a predilection for involvement in strenuous sports (Sawer 2010, para 2). Abbott's hypermasculinity inevitably cast Gillard in a contrasting role and emphasised her performance as a *female* politician, potentially incapable of tough political decisions and yet still insufficiently feminine.

Although Gillard studiously avoided gender issues in the 2010 election policies, the gendered double bind nevertheless played a key role in several campaign events that attracted a great deal of media attention. First, the way that Gillard had replaced her predecessor, Kevin Rudd, in a party-room ballot on 24th June 2010 was presented in much of the popular press as evidence of her cold, ruthless ambition, a trait typical of the Iron Maiden stereotype that was implicitly inconsistent with stereotypical feminine qualities of warmth, collaboration, and self-effacement. Two days after she assumed the position of Prime Minister *The Courier Mail*, for example, noted that 'the ambitious Gillard did not hesitate to take up the knife and plant it in Rudd's back' (Oakes 2010). Using the same metaphor, *The Age* pointed out that since 'nice girls don't carry knives', Gillard would 'have to be persuasive in explaining how she came to plunge one into Kevin's neck' (Grattan 2010). This use of colloquial terms denoting the use of weapons and extreme violence are typical of the treacherous Iron Maiden stereotype (Baxter 2018: 40). Media reports such as these, and those that appeared throughout her time in office, typically presented Gillard's ambition, authority, and decisiveness as inappropriately aggressive and evidence of her failure to meet the normative expectations attached to the category of *female* leader.

An unintelligible being

While the negative effects of the double bind clearly shaped reports of Gillard's public performance as a political leader, representations of her personal appearance and her private life produced across a range of sites and circulated by the media proved even more damaging. Gillard's private life was subjected to an extraordinary degree of scrutiny, and she became the target of an 'unrelenting campaign of vilification and vitriolic sexist abuse by a loose coalition of shock jocks, bloggers and newspaper columnists' (Sawer 2013). These attacks again centred on Gillard's supposed failure to conform to appropriate norms of femininity and cast her as an unnatural being who had refused 'conformity with recognizable standards of gender intelligibility' (Butler 1990: 16).

In common with other women in politics, Gillard's physical appearance – her hairstyle, her (red) hair colour, her clothes, her body shape, her voice – were the topic of much public discussion, consternation, and criticism in a regime of continual scrutiny rarely directed at men. Yet it was more than Gillard's personal appearance that became the object of derision. As Summers (2013b: 4) explained, her situation 'pushes all the buttons that get conservatives exercised: she is not a mother; she is not married, she lives "in sin", she is an atheist', and her former partners, invariably referred to as a series of 'boyfriends', were often named in reports of her rise to power. Gillard's private relationships clearly failed to comply with the most favoured form of heterosexuality, which is marked by monogamy (signalled through marriage), reproduction (signalled by children), and conventionally hierarchical gender roles (Cameron and Kulick 2006).

Prior to her promotion to Labour Deputy Leader, an infamous photograph published in a major newspaper in 2005 depicted Gillard in the kitchen of her suburban home, in a tableau that was described the following day in *The Sydney Morning Herald* as ‘lifeless’, with ‘bare walls’, ‘stark benchtops’, and, most notoriously, an ‘empty fruit bowl’ (Hornery 2005). According to the reporter, this was an image that sent a ‘chill wind through readers’, and it became an iconic sign that Gillard was incapable of domesticity and, by implication, proper femininity. In a similarly well-publicised interview in *The Bulletin* a senior conservative politician, Senator Bill Heffernan, claimed that Gillard was ‘not qualified to lead the country’ because she was ‘deliberately barren’ (Harrison 2007). Justifying his remarks, Heffernan explained that ‘If you’re a leader, you’ve got to understand your community. One of the great understandings in a community is family, and the relationship between mum, dads [sic] and a bucket of nappies’ (Harrison 2007). Along similar lines, a former leader of her own Labour Party, Mark Latham, in an interview in *The Australian*, observed that Gillard’s decision not to have children meant that ‘by definition you haven’t got as much love in your life’ and therefore have ‘no empathy’ (Kelly 2011).

The raft of negative images and evaluations came together in the campaigns conducted by the media during the term of Gillard’s prime ministership. An abiding linguistic theme revolved around the words used to describe Gillard. Prominent amongst these were ‘Ju-LIAR’, coined in an interview between Gillard and radio shock jock Alan Jones, and the phrase ‘Ditch the witch’, which initially appeared at an anti-Gillard protest rally and gained wide media coverage. In a parallel campaign, pornographic photoshopped images of Gillard’s naked form, as well as cartoons of her wearing a giant dildo, were published on the internet and circulated to politicians and journalists (Keane 2012; Summers 2012), and in the final year of her prime ministership, the press circulated reports of a menu at a Liberal Party fundraising dinner that included one dish described as ‘Julia Gillard’s Kentucky Fried Quail – Small Breasts, Huge Thighs, and a Big Red Box’ (Overington 2013). Through the circulation of these texts and related media commentary, Gillard became ‘the victim of appalling levels of sexism not seen before in Australian public life’ (Sawer 2013, para. 2).

It was shortly after the menu item was reported in the media, and near the end of her three-year term, that a radio interview with Perth radio 6PR shock jock Howard Sattler was broadcast, once again bringing to the surface explicit questions about Gillard’s sexuality. In the interview, reported by all major media, including *ABC News* (2013) and *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Spooner 2013), Sattler confronted Gillard with questions regarding her marital status, asking why she wasn’t married, and whether her partner, Tim Mathieson, had proposed. Sattler then turned to the question of Mathieson’s sexuality:

HS: Myths, rumours, snide jokes and innuendoes, you’ve been the butt of them many times
JG: Well I think that’s probably right (laughs). We’ve certainly seen that this week [referring to the Liberal Party dinner menu]
HS: Can I test a few out?
JG: In what way?
HS: Tim’s *gay*
JG: Well-
HS: No, somebody’s saying that- that’s a myth
JG: Well that’s ab*surd*
HS: But you *hear* it. He must be *gay*, he’s a *hair*dresser

JG: Oh well isn't that-
HS: But you've *heard*- you've heard it
JG: But ah-
HS: It's not *me* saying it, it's what people say
JG: Well I mean Howard, I don't know if every ah silly ah thing that get's said is going to be repeated to me now
HS: No no but-
JG: But ah, to all the hairdressers out there, including the men who are listening, I don't think, in life, one can actually look at a whole profession, full of different human beings and say 'gee, we know something about *every* one of those human beings'. I mean it's absurd, isn't it.
HS: You can confirm that he's not?
JG: Oh Howard don't be ridiculous-
HS: No but-
JG: Of course not
HS: Is it a hetero*sexual* re*la*tionship, that's all I'm asking

A range of discursive practices were used in the Sattler interview to generate audience consent and solidarity. One of the most salient in this extract is Sattler's adoption of the 'people's tribune' role (Talbot 2010: 192), whereby he positions himself as relaying, on behalf of the wider community, concerns about Tim's 'true' identity. This elitist role, appropriated from the genre of serious investigative interviews, enabled Sattler to engage in a form of aggressive, inquisitorial dialogue, characterised by repetition, interruption, and dogged grilling, in order to get to 'the truth'. In his public inquisitor role, the specific tactic Sattler employs is an ambiguous 'double voicing' (Talbot 2010: 193), where he claims 'It's not *me* saying it, it's what *people* say': he separates himself from the opinions he expresses by merely acting as an 'animator' of the 'myths, rumours, snide jokes and innuendoes' that he insists are circulating in the public domain. This tactic of presenting the views of others is typically used to protect the journalist's guise of neutrality, but is also used, as in Sattler's case, to insult the interviewee while maintaining a neutral stance.

Despite Gillard's typically measured and rational responses, demonstrated in the interview by her calm explanation that warns against stereotyping any particular group (including, in this instance, hairdressers), Sattler was not deterred from his thinly veiled accusations. His relentless questioning points to an obvious, yet unspoken, problem: if Gillard's partner, Tim, was a hairdresser, he must be gay, and so she must be … what? Perhaps a lesbian? Most certainly living a lie, and definitely not fit to govern the country. Although Sattler was later suspended for this line of questioning, the interview lived on, echoing across the nation and crystallising the problem of Gillard's questionable sexuality. As Cameron and Kulick (2006) point out, 'compulsory heterosexuality' plays a crucial role in the construction of gender, and Sattler's interview illustrates how normative regimes of both gender and sexuality were invoked to undermine Gillard's credibility. Together, the panoply of sexist 'myths, rumours, snide jokes and innuendoes' referred to by Sattler worked to produce a particular discursive image of Gillard as an unnatural being: not only as a person unfit to lead the country, but also as a person unfit to be a recognised as a normal woman. However, opposition to these attacks was building amongst progressive elements in the community and, in the year leading up to this interview, Gillard had also begun to articulate a different discursive practice that offered a firmer, feistier resistance to her foes.

Strategic essentialism

Having initially chosen not to focus explicitly on issues of gender discrimination, perhaps in fear of being cast as a victim and therefore too weak to govern, Gillard finally started, two years into her term as Prime Minister, making public references to the 'very sexist smear campaign' circulating against her in the media (Maley 2012). By drawing attention to the media's sexist attacks, she began to express something of her 'murderous rage' (Gillard and Summers 2013). In a widely reported press conference, Gillard named and condemned the 'misogynists' and 'nut jobs on the internet' who continued to produce and disseminate 'vile and sexist' abuse aimed at discrediting her leadership (Grattan 2012). This impassioned public address presented a dramatic contrast to the 'sanitised, well-rehearsed' speeches that had been scripted by media minders and had been criticised as stilted and inauthentic (Hargreaves 2010). These robust spontaneous statements recalled the discursive skill of her earlier, much-admired performances on the floor of parliament and, more importantly, signalled an agentive turning point in the discursive rendering of Gillard as a credible, coherent being.

In parallel with this move, an emerging grassroots campaign, operating largely in social media, began challenging the gendered portrayals of Gillard and other women in leadership positions by appropriating the sexist language used in the mainstream media broadcasts. This social media campaign was ignited by radio broadcaster Alan Jones's claim on 31st August 2012 that Australian women in positions of political power were 'destroying the joint'. In a twitter response using the hashtag #destroyingthejoint, media commentator Jane Caro mused: 'Got time on my hands tonight so thought I'd spend it coming up with new ways of "destroying the joint" being a woman & all. Ideas welcome' (see Caro 2012). The tweet elicited hundreds of humorous replies from women sharing how they were 'destroying the joint' and prompted the formation of a popular 'Destroy the Joint' Facebook community that was effective in countering various examples of sexist activities and comments in the media (see McLean and Maalsen 2013).

A month after the initial #destroyingthejoint tweet, on 8th October 2012, Gillard delivered an electrifying speech in parliament about sexism and misogyny (Gillard 2012). Gillard's speech was initially framed as a response to Tony Abbott's accusations that she had hypocritically defended the sexist behaviour of the House Speaker, but was equally an opportunity to articulate her rage at the deep-seated misogyny she had endured:

> I say to the Leader of the Opposition *I* will *not* be lectured about *sexism* and *misogyny* by this *man*, *I* will *not*. And the Government will *not* be lectured about sexism and misogyny by this *man*. *Not* now, *not* ever.
>
> The Leader of the Opposition says that people who hold *sexist* views and who are *misogynists* are not appropriate for high office. Well I hope the Leader of the Opposition has got a piece of paper and he is writing out his resignation. Because if he wants to know what *misogyny* looks like in modern Australia, he doesn't need a motion in the House of Representatives, he needs a *mirror*. *That's* what he needs. Let's go through the Opposition Leader's *repulsive* double standards, *repulsive* double standards when it comes to *misogyny* and *sexism*.

With rhetorical flair, Gillard then detailed Abbott's previous remarks about women's lesser appetite and aptitude for leadership. By turning attention to Abbott's words and behaviour, Gillard effectively refused the object position proffered by Abbott in his censure motion. In doing so, Gillard moved into the subject position, and made Abbott the object of scrutiny; her labelling of Abbott as a misogynist was strengthened by her confident stance, sweeping arm gestures, and pointing finger (see ABC News 2012). Gillard's speech then turned to the ways in which Abbott's stated views had personally affected her. In so doing, Gillard identified with a political category defined by gender and, as a woman, situated herself in 'a group with a distinctive, and distinctively oppressive, history – an ongoing history which is an appropriate target of social critique and political transformation' (Stone 2004: 137). In this pivotal speech, Gillard identified *as* a woman, and *with* women, but, at the same time, refused to conform to an oppressive gender regime that demands, amongst other behavioural norms, an essentialised, passive femininity:

> *I* was *very* offended personally when the Leader of the Opposition, as Minister of Health, said, and I quote, 'Abortion is the easy way out'. *I* was *very* personally offended by those comments. You said that in March 2004, I suggest you check the records. *I* was also very offended on behalf of the women of Australia when in the course of this carbon pricing campaign, the Leader of the Opposition said 'What the housewives of Australia need to do – what the housewives of Australia need understand *as they do the ironing*'. Thank you for *that* painting of women's roles in modern Australia.
>
> And then of course, *I* was offended too by the *sexism*, by the *misogyny* of the Leader of the Opposition catcalling across this table at me as I sit here as Prime Minister, 'If the Prime Minister wants to, politically speaking, make an honest *woman* of herself', something that would *never* have been said to *any* man sitting in this chair. *I* was offended when the Leader of the Opposition went outside in the front of Parliament and stood next to a sign that said 'Ditch the witch'. *I* was offended when the Leader of the Opposition stood next to a sign that described me as a man's *bitch*. *I* was offended by those things. *Misogyny*, *sexism*, *every* day from this Leader of the Opposition. *Every* day in *every* way, across the time the Leader of the Opposition has sat in that chair and I've sat in this chair, that is all we have heard from him.

Gillard repeated, with emphasis, the personal pronoun 'I', aligning herself personally and explicitly with 'the women of Australia' in an insurgent position of power rather than subordination. The authority she adopted in this speaking position was not only the institutionalised authority invested in the discourse of leadership (through her position as Prime Minister, speaking in parliament), but also the authority – as a 'woman' – to name and condemn the forces of sexist discrimination directed against her. In Butler's words, this subversive move demonstrated 'the performative power of appropriating the very terms by which one has been abused in order to … derive an affirmation from that degradation … [and] revaluing affirmatively the category … of "woman"' (Butler 1997: 158).

Most reporters in the Australian male-dominated parliamentary press gallery interpreted Gillard's speech as an act of political opportunism, missing the stronger emotional impact carried in Gillard's words and the significance of those words for a wider audience in tune with gender politics. The political editor of a major newspaper accused Gillard of failing to meet public expectations that she be a 'flag bearer for women'; instead, he wrote, she had proved to be 'just another politician' bent on retaining power at any expense (Hartcher 2012). Another columnist described the speech as a 'bucket of bilgewater' (Sheehan 2012) and accused Gillard of revealing her 'true nature' by 'playing the gender card', a phrase that was to be taken up in a new round of criticism across the media. Writing for a daily newspaper owned by Rupert Murdoch, a female columnist opined that 'Playing the gender card is the pathetic last refuge of incompetents … It offends the Australian notion of the fair go' (Devine 2012). Such commentary implied that it was wrong for a woman in a country like Australia (that prides itself on egalitarianism yet has deep structural problems of gender inequality) to be naming and shaming the discourses of sexism and misogyny that continue to circulate in the public domain.

Yet the significance of the speech was recognised by a more progressive media within Australia and around the world. In Australia, *New Matilda* identified this as 'the most important speech' of Gillard's prime ministership and applauded the 're-emergence of feminism in public life' (Eltham 2012). As Eltham observed, the sentiments expressed in the speech were recognisable by many Australian women who 'have experienced the dead hand of misogyny at close quarters, either through sexual harassment, routine sexual vilification in the workplace, or in the insidious "boys' club" mentality that still grips many Australian social environments'. In the USA, *Jezebel* cheered Gillard's impassioned 'smackdown', and described her as 'one badass motherfucker' (Morrissey 2012); *The New Yorker* lauded Gillard's 'genuine anger' and suggested that the 'real problem' for the opposition was simply having a woman 'running the country' (Lester 2012). *The Guardian* recognised that the event 'was seen by many women as a defining moment for feminism in the country' (Rourke 2012). Although Gillard was deposed as Prime Minister within a year, the speech stands as a testimony to the power of language in politics.

The discursive construction of gender

This brief case study demonstrates how a poststructuralist perspective can reveal a range of ways in which women in the public domain may be discursively constructed. Through the use of social category labels and evaluative positioning, Gillard's rise to power was linguistically represented in the mainstream Australian media as an act of ruthless personal ambition that would disappoint those who expected a female leader to display behaviour considered more appropriate to her gender. Her decisions in office were similarly described and evaluated according to binary gender norms, with the effect of bringing into question Gillard's capacity to perform as a leader with both toughness and compassion. As is typical of the attention applied to women in public domains, her physical appearance became the grounds for further negative appraisals, and her unmarried and child-free status was referenced to position Gillard as an abnormal outsider in terms of the appropriate performance of gender and sexuality. Through the lens of gender normativity, she was discursively portrayed by her detractors as an unnatural, unintelligible being, and implicitly judged as unfit to govern the nation.

This case has also illustrated how a poststructuralist analysis can expose the operation of oppositional discourses, such as those articulated in Gillard's misogyny speech. The discursive stance taken in this speech demonstrates that women, including those in leadership, can break institutional silence surrounding issues of discrimination with acts of strategic essentialism that name and condemn the discourses of sexism and misogyny that circulate in politics and the media. These acts of insurrection, more recently apparent in the #metoo movement, continue to divide the media and are, in turn, matched with expressions of aggrieved white male entitlement (Kimmel 2013). Gillard's misogyny speech gave voice to the rage experienced by many women who have endured sexism in silence and have observed a global re-emergence of feminism in the political and cultural landscape. In this sense, a deeply localised, contextually embedded use of language has not only offered a reconstituted discursive identity for one woman but has also indexed broader social categories and movements of gender and sexuality in contemporary times.

Future directions

One future direction for poststructural research is likely to be an expansion of studies that investigate how language is used in social media to shape, reflect, and contest contemporary politics of gender and sexuality. These practices are arguably most evident in online campaigns that highlight and denounce violence against women, such as the *#metoo* movement, and, on the other end of the spectrum, online forums that feature the aggrieved voice of ‘incels’, that is, people – usually men – who define themselves as involuntarily celibate. For an insightful commentary on language, gender, and incel discourse, see https://debuk.wordpress.com/2018/05/01/is-terrorism-the-right-word/

A second direction for future research has emerged from posthumanism and its relationship with new materialisms. This strand of research is concerned with the ways in which poststructuralist ideas about the centrality of discourse are augmented by posthumanist ideas about the liveliness of matter in the more-than-human world. Debates in this area can be seen in the work of scholars such as Barad (2003), Braidotti (2013), and Bucholtz and Hall (2016). The implications of feminist posthumanism for language and gender have also been taken up in the work of Appleby and Pennycook (2017).

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to John Benjamins Publishing Company for permission to reuse parts of my chapter ‘Julia Gillard: A murderous rage’, which previously appeared in the book *Discourse, Politics, and Women as Global Leaders* (edited by Wilson, J. and Boxer D., 2015) https://benjamins.com/catalog/dapsac.63

Further reading

Baxter, J. (2018) *Women Leaders and Gender Stereotyping in the UK Press*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book provides a useful guide to discourse analysis and demonstrates, using the tools of feminist poststructural discourse analysis, how the media constructs leading women in essentialist, sexualised ways.

Cameron, D. (May 2015 onwards) *Language: A Feminist Guide* [Web log post]. Available at https://debuk.wordpress.com (Accessed: 15th February 2019).

This series of regular blog posts is an important scholarly site that offers incisive and witty analyses of the ways in which language use in contemporary cultural and political events instantiate broader social and cultural issues of gender inequality and sexism.

Wilson, J. and Boxer, D. (eds.) (2015) *Discourse, Politics and Women as Global Leaders*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

This edited volume focuses on the discourse practices that pertain to women in global political leadership and contributes to our understanding of the way language and discourse constitute gendered identities in political domains. Each chapter investigates a particular national context.

Related topics

Poststructuralist research on language, gender, and sexuality; leadership language of Middle Eastern women; identity construction in gendered workplaces; leadership and humour at work: using interactional sociolinguistics to explore the role of gender; analysing gendered discourses online.

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Part VII

Semiotic and multimodal approaches

32

Gender and sexuality in discourse

Semiotic and multimodal approaches

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Introduction

Multimodality is a field of study in its own right (van Leeuwen 2014). However, it is a field that is 'rather fragmented and unconsolidated' (Machin et al. 2016: 302). Taken together, the two statements can be read as attesting positively to the recognition, from various quarters in sociolinguistics and discourse studies, to the fact that meaning-making in texts is a necessarily multiple and heterogeneous semiotic practice. The 'turn' towards multimodality (or sometimes referred to as multisemiotics) in linguistics signals an appreciation for the composite nature of texts, in which the meanings of a text could be realised through the integration of more than one semiotic mode (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). As such, the study of multimodality represents a significant and productive step forward for undertaking a more holistic analysis of texts and talk. It is a move which widens the semiotic lens of linguists to accept that written and spoken language are among several modes of meaning and sense-making in discourses of any kind. The pervasiveness of digitally-mediated communication nowadays makes the phenomenon of multimodality all the more pronounced and, indeed inevitable, for discourse participants and discourse analysts alike.

Historically, some perspectives within linguistics have been theoretically predisposed to the view of a multiplicity of semiosis than others. Social semiotics is one such perspective (Hodge and Kress 1988; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; and van Leeuwen 2005) – a body of work which has taken inspiration from the scholarship of Halliday. Halliday's (1978) book, titled *Language as Social Semiotic*, paved the way for linguists thinking about language as one, among several, socially embedded semiotic or meaning-making systems; others would include visual symbols and images, gestures, colour, music, materiality, and so on.

The 'turn' towards multimodality in language, gender, and sexuality scholarship, more specifically, has been comparatively slow and uneven, although the trend is gradually beginning to change, following shifts in wider sociolinguistics and discourse studies. Still, the relative infancy of multimodal research in language, gender, and sexuality studies seems to suggest that assumptions about the primacy of language in human communication has remained strong. This is perhaps quite understandable, given the core orientation of the field, attested to in the foregrounding of 'language' in the name of the field, as well as in the titles of related linguistics journals such as *Gender and Language* and *Language and Sexuality*. Widening the lens on semiosis does not eschew or undervalue research about language(s) and language-use pertaining to gender and sexuality, which are important in their own right. However, where texts are multimodal, a focus beyond the semiotics of language alone facilitates a richer and more holistic understanding of the ways gender and sexuality are represented in discourse. Depending on the contexts and communicative practices, several different multisemiotic resources could be deployed, among which language is likely to be one.

In this chapter, five selected ways to carry out multimodal research on gender and sexuality are discussed under the headings 'Goffman's approach to gender representations', 'Critical social semiotic approach', 'Approaches to multimodal digital discourses', 'Linguistic/semiotic landscapes approach', and 'Multimodal approaches to conceptual metaphor'. The term 'approaches' is used loosely to refer to a range of frameworks, perspectives, and research foci that has been pertinent to the discursive study of gender and sexuality. In this chapter, in introducing each of the five strands, two studies shall be selected to briefly describe how multimodality is used to address a variety of research questions about gender and sexuality. Among the studies described are the four chapters featured in this section of the book, namely, under the strands on Goffman, critical social semiotics and multimodal digital discourses. Although discussion of the five strands will be dealt with separately, the strands are not mutually exclusive and, in fact, may be combined depending on the nature of one's research projects. On a personal note, even though my own multimodal research falls mainly within critical social semiotics, I have drawn upon the other frameworks and perspectives as well where relevant in different research projects, and have found them to be complementary and mutually beneficial.

Before proceeding to outline the five approaches, the concept of 'affordance', which underlies any study of multimodality, needs some explanation. The social semiotic perspective provides a useful understanding of the concept, which may be applied to multimodal analyses more generally. Even though all semiotic modes can be deployed for meaning-making, they have different 'affordances' i.e. each has a different set of potentialities and limitations for meaning-making. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) explain that semiotic modes are shaped by the intrinsic characteristics and possibilities of the medium as well as by the sociocultural values, histories, and communicative purposes that strongly affect the uses of these potentialities. Not everything that can be expressed in written language, for example, can be necessarily expressed through visual images, or vice versa. Even when seemingly the 'same' meanings may be expressed in either pictorial form or in writing or speech, the meanings will be realised differently depending on the medium, which in turn will affect the actual meanings communicated in context. In multimodal analysis, therefore, the economy of meaning-making in texts and talk, contributed by various semiotic modes through their different affordances, becomes pertinent. In what follows, the five approaches to semiotic and multimodal analyses of gender and sexuality shall be presented.

Semiotic and multimodal approaches to the study of gender and sexuality

Goffman's approach to gender representations

Goffman's *Gender Advertisements* (1979) presents a classic framework for the study of visual representations of gender stereotyping in print media. Although some of the findings are now dated and his methodology is controversial (as will be discussed later), his is a touchstone framework for scholars working on hetero-gendered visual representations, particularly in advertising. Reflecting the period of study in the 1970s, Goffman identified a series of sexist representational patterns in the way white, North American women were depicted vis-à-vis their male counterparts in North American commercial newspaper and magazine advertisements.

Undergirded by an approach that could be described as social-interactional, a key concept of Goffman's study is 'gender display', which refers to ritual-like portrayals of gendered behaviours and appearances, indexical of male and female social actors' structural relationships and identities with regard to each other. Goffman notes that mediatised images of women (and men) are styled to appear 'only natural' (1979: 89) for an audience already accustomed to such routinised gender expressions in actual social situations. Congruent with contemporary social constructionist and performative theories, Goffman emphasises that both curated and actual poses are socially imbibed performances of gender: 'advertisers conventionalise our conventions, stylize what is already a stylization', the only difference being that mediatised portrayals are 'hyper-ritualised' gender displays (1979: 29). In other words, Goffman is referring to gender representations in advertisements as similar to quotidian performances of socially prevalent hegemonic ideologies, except that in advertisements the displays are even more pronounced.

Goffman's gender displays are premised upon a mutually constituted hierarchical relationship between men and women, patterned after parent–child relationships of benign dominance and subordination, respectively. His analytical framework for interpreting the social dynamics of asymmetrical gender relations relies on simple, often taken-for-granted postures and gestures involving social actors' use of hands, eyes, facial expressions and head postures, knees, and relative sizing and positioning of bodies. Based on these, he identified six categories of nonverbal gender display in advertisements: (i) relative size (women depicted smaller/lower relative to men); (ii) function ranking (men in executive roles, women in supportive roles); (iii) feminine touch (women's fingers and hands shown to lightly caress objects or themselves); (iv) ritualisation of subordination (women in submissive and appeasing postures and gestures); (v) licensed withdrawal (women as psychologically removed from situations); and (vi) family scenes (women as mothers).

Goffman's method of data collection, however, has been criticised; instead of drawing on a random sample, he had selectively chosen data from newspapers and magazines that would match his specific research objectives (Kang 1997). Notwithstanding this, his study has been widely adapted by other scholars. Subsequent studies have improved upon his sampling method, and used his framework to compare his findings with other data sets across time and audience types (e.g. Hiramoto and Teo 2015; Kang 1997), or combined his framework with other (social semiotic) approaches (e.g. Bell and Milic 2002; Lazar 2000). The two studies discussed in this section, Hovland et al. (2005) and Kohrs and Gill (in this volume), belong to the former category of studies.

Selecting a random (instead of a non-random) sample of advertisements from the highest circulating US and Korean women's magazines in the year 2000, Hovland et al. (2005) used Goffman's analytical framework to undertake a comparative study of gendered representations of American advertisements over time, between American and Korean cultures, and between differently aged women in the US and Korea. Hovland et. al augmented Goffman's six analytical categories of gender display by including a few other emergent categories from the studies of other scholars who had also used Goffman's framework. Notably, Hovland et. al incorporated the categories 'Body Display' (state of models' undress) and 'Independence/

Self-assurance' (overall impression of models' sense of autonomy and poise) introduced by Kang (1997), and 'Full Facial Prominence' (models gazing directly at the viewer) developed by McLaughlin and Goulet (1999). Their findings revealed that sexist depictions of women in American magazines had decreased significantly over time, although relative to Korean magazines, stereotypical images of women in the American sample was found to be higher. In terms of whether there would be a greater presence of racially diverse models in ads addressed to younger female audiences than an older target group, Hovland et. al found the American magazine ads to be 'disturbingly ethnocentric' in general. In magazines addressed to younger Korean women, there was a rising trend of using white Caucasian models, signalling an emphasis on a white or Euro-American beauty standard. In both categories then, white women represented normative standards of feminine beauty – a finding that is consonant with wider feminist literature on the mediatisation of feminine beauty ideals (Kilbourne 1999; Wolf 1991).

In using Goffman's framework, Hovland et. al found that the framework was weighted predominantly towards negative sexist imagery. In contrast, their study revealed the evolution of some new positive analytical categories depicting female independence and confidence which warranted inclusion in the study of more contemporary gender displays in advertising. However, they noted that Goffman's approach, which focused on visual images alone, rather than on language as well, proved suitable for undertaking cross-cultural comparisons of gender representations. The framework was evidently productive in extending beyond a focus solely on gender to investigating other intersecting social identity categories such as race/ethnicity also. In fact, Hovland et. al recommended that race ought to be investigated more systematically in regard to all of Goffman's gender display categories in future.

In a similar vein of investigating the extent to which Goffman's analytical categories and findings still apply to gender advertisements some 40 years since, Kohrs and Gill's study (in this part) is based on 200 advertisements collected from upmarket US and UK women's magazines. Using Goffman's framework as their point of departure, Kohrs and Gill identify six key units of nonverbal behaviour, which they use as their analytical lens: gaze, posture, gesture, touch, facial expression, and proxemics. The authors caution though that, methodologically, one cannot simply derive meaning from the isolated units of body 'language'; rather, the meanings should be interpreted contextually. When compared to Goffman's findings, Kohrs and Gill found that, with the exception of 'feminine touch', the rest of Goffman's categories did not apply in the present time, especially with regard to middle- and upper-class Western female audiences. Unlike Goffman's dataset, Kohrs and Gill focused on advertisements from women's magazines only, which featured women predominantly (rather than women and men), thus rendering some of Goffman's analytical categories non-applicable too. Instead, in line with some of the emergent analytical categories found in Hovland et al.'s (2005) study, Kohrs and Gill noted the rise of a bold and confident female figure in their advertisements. Referring to this subjectivity as 'confident appearing', it is expressed through a composite of visual signifiers such as an unsmiling direct gaze at the viewer, a confident stance, heads held high, and striding forward. Referring to this as a 'postfeminist' subjectivity, the authors note the representation as a far cry from the diminutive, passive, deferential gender displays of women decades ago.

In sum, these studies, which draw upon Goffman's framework, use it as a point of departure to investigate current regimes of media representation. While acknowledging that pockets of overtly patriarchal gender displays remain, newer gender tropes requiring updated analytical categories are noticed. Also, gender stereotyping in advertising, be that traditional or new, continues to be a productive area of study, especially in regard to intersectional analyses of race, class, age, sexuality, and culture.

While Goffman's framework focused solely on visual representations of gender, applicable primarily to advertising data, the next approach, critical social semiotics, facilitates a multi-semiotic analysis of a wide range of discourse types.

Critical social semiotic approach

In this section, a critical social semiotic approach, which brings together critical discourse studies and a social semiotic approach to multimodal analysis is discussed. In terms of theoretical orientation, a multimodal social semiotic approach is consonant with a critical discourse perspective. In fact, the major proponents of multimodal social semiotics, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), are also critical discourse analysts. Although another notable social semiotic framework for visual analysis by O'Toole (1994) exists, Kress and van Leeuwen's approach is better known and most frequently used in critical discourse studies (see also van Leeuwen 2014). A critical social semiotic approach (a term which, I suggest, calls attention to the social semiotic theoretical foundations applied to critical discourse scholarship) is nowadays known in critical discourse circles also as 'critical multimodal discourse analysis' or 'multimodal critical discourse analysis'. Unlike Goffman's framework, critical social semiotics or critical multimodality typically involve the analysis of language along with a range of other forms of semiosis, such as visual images, layout, typography, colour, and materiality.

Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic theory of communication offers an explicit and systematic method for analysing the meanings expressed by syntactic relations between the people, places, and things depicted in images. Kress and van Leeuwen based their approach on Halliday's (1994) notion of 'metafunctions', which Halliday had theorised in his systemic functional grammar of language. The metafunctions refer to three basic ways of using language to communicate, which Halliday termed 'ideational' (representing our experience of the world), 'interpersonal' (enacting social interactions), and 'textual' (organising messages within the text and in relation to the wider context) meanings. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) adapted the three metafunctions to apply to all semiotic modes, not only language. Accordingly, therefore, any semiotic mode can typically represent objects and their relations in the world as experienced by people; project particular kinds of social relation and truth values (modality) between the producer, the viewer, and the object represented; and make connections within the text, and between the text and its social context. Central to systemic functional theory is the notion of a system or network of semantic choices, i.e. within each metafunction is a set of choices from which producers of texts select different ways to make meaning. The particular choices made in and across semiotic modes in texts and talk are not neutral but can convey ideological meanings.

In language and gender studies, the usefulness of incorporating multisemiotic analysis into a critical discourse perspective was highlighted in an article titled 'Gender, discourse and semiotics' (Lazar 2000). In it was proposed

> the uncoupling of the two categories "discourse" and "language" in favour of discourse encompassing semiosis of various kinds (including language). A critical analysis of discourse, in other words, involves a commitment to the analysis of various strands of semiosis that configure in the realisation of particular discoursal meanings in texts.
>
> *(Lazar 2000: 177)*

More recently, a call for critical multimodality research on gender, language, and discourse was made by Machin et al. (2016) in a special issue of the journal *Gender and Language* (vol. 10, no. 3), which featured a collection of articles using the approach.

The studies by Caldas-Coulthard and McLoughlin, in Part VII, draw on a multimodal social semiotics approach in their (feminist) critical discourse analytical (CDA) perspective. Their two chapters indicate some of the types of research pursued within feminist CDA, namely, sexist ideological representations of women as well as 'newer' popular postfeminist discourses (see Lazar 2018). Caldas-Coulthard's chapter deals with gender stereotyping in representations of women criminals in public discourses. Her analysis of photographic images from the Getty image bank and the language and images in the Brazilian press, especially of white Brazilian women, reveal the sexualisation of women criminals, even though the crimes are not sex-related. The intertwining of sexuality and criminality is achieved representationally through a number of semiotic choices like visual modality and 'demand' images (represented participants looking directly at the viewer), fragmentation of the female body and sexualised poses, and the colour of clothing construed as indexing danger and sexiness. The emphasis on sexuality in the Brazilian news reports, Caldas-Coulthard observes, is intended to titillate readers, while at the same time to judge and condemn the women criminals even more harshly. More generally, she finds that when women and men are portrayed differently for similar kinds of criminal acts, women offenders are doubly condemned for their criminality and for their sexuality, or simply for the fact that they are women.

In contrast with Caldas-Coulthard's investigation of overt sexist ideology, McLoughlin's chapter examines a purportedly progressive feminist discourse promoted in the commercial media which, from a feminist critical discourse perspective, proves ideologically problematic also. McLoughlin's study shows how articles in a high-fashion magazine (*Vogue*) and an advertising campaign for a cosmetics brand by a pharmaceutical company (Boots Walgreen Alliance) marketed Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a Nigerian author, as a feminist (or, I would suggest, a postfeminist) sensation in the West. By analysing the media discourses over a period of time, McLoughlin reveals the representational transformation of Adichie from an award-winning author, a popular feminist icon arising from her TED talk on feminism, to a cosmetics brand ambassador. In the process, the focus gradually shifted from Adichie's writing to her appearance, as evidenced through her verbal represented discourse and through visual semiotic choices of modality and depictions of background settings and colourful eye-catching clothing, which simultaneously indexed trendiness as well as her African heritage. The transformation is not simply a commercial exploitation of Adichie; rather, her 'brand' of neoliberal (post) feminism based on notions of individual empowerment coupled with self-professed love for make-up and fashion are in sync with the media industries' predisposition towards a non-threatening 'saleable' feminism. While the Adichie sensation admittedly contributed towards mainstreaming feminism, her participation in commodity feminism does a disservice as well. As McLoughlin notes, Adichie's make-up–wearing stance presented as a feminist act of resistance, ironically, does nothing to address restrictive media ideals of beauty, while painting feminism in rather narrow terms.

With the arrival of new digital media technologies, and their affordances, approaches to multimodal investigations of gender and sexuality on social media have arisen, to which we turn our attention next.

Approaches to multimodal digital discourses

Although digital discourse studies is not a new development – known as 'computer-mediated discourse analysis' (Herring 2001) in an earlier period – there has been a surge of interest in this field over the past decade, with the rapid development of digital technologies (collectively referred to as Web 2.0) (e.g. Barton and Lee 2013; Myers 2010; Tannen and Trester 2012; Zappavigna 2012). The advent of newer technologies has brought about innovative possibilities for representation and has spawned an intensely interactive participatory online culture through affordances of generating, networking, and sharing user-generated content. Much of this research has focused on language on social media platforms, although studies on visual semiotics and multimodality have begun to emerge more recently (Danesi 2017; Jones et al. 2015; Page 2019, for example).

Similarly, in the field of language, gender, and sexuality, studies in digitally mediated contexts have focused primarily on language (e.g. Herring 1995, 2003; Mackenzie and Zhao 2020), with a few studies emerging recently on visuality and multimodality of gender and sexuality on social media (e.g. Thurlow 2017; Zappavigna and Zhao 2017). Given the diversity of types of online discourse and the technological and semiotic affordances, there is no singular methodological approach for the analysis of digital discourses; instead, scholars tend towards mixed methodologies (Bolander and Locher 2014). Such is the case, also, for the two studies discussed in Part VII. As the studies show, digitally mediated contexts provide individuals, as well as social groups, with a range of technological and semiotic affordances for performing, sharing, and contesting gender and sexual identities in different and complex ways

Leppänen and Tapionkaski (in this part) examine the identity work of young men in participatory online media culture. Specifically, the authors are interested in how participants mobilise a range of semiotic resources to perform and stylise gender, sexual, and other social identities of the self and others on social media platforms. Adopting a combined discourse analytical and ethnographic approach, Leppänen and Tapionkaski report on the complex ways identities are constructed by different groups of men in two of their previous studies. In one of these studies, the performance of a young alternative masculinity termed ‘bronies’ is presented on a discussion forum for young adult male fans of a children’s television series targeted at young girls. Through a combination of language styles, verbal narratives, emoji, and images, the multifaceted, lived experiences of the ‘brony’ fan identity at the intersection of gender, sexuality, and age is enacted, which eschews hegemonic Finnish masculinity. Reporting on another study, the authors discuss the multimodal social media practices of young migrant men in Finland. In this study, self-crafted video narratives by migrant men, shot through smartphones or video cameras, are disseminated on such sites as YouTube and Vimeo. The videos, which are parodic in nature, deploy semiosis such as embodied performances, multilingual language practices, cinematic devices, and music to construct narratives of ‘selves’ and Finnish hostile ‘others’ at the intersection of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and sexuality. Leppänen and Tapionkaski’s analyses of intersectional identities enacted through the multisemiotic affordances on digital media transcend binary identity categories such as female–male, feminine–masculine, child–adult, heterosexual–asexual, non-Finnish–Finnish, and humorous–critical, in showing the ways social media participants consciously transgress norms.

While Leppänen and Tapionkaski focus on how individuals using social media platforms construct identities and interact online, Lazar’s (2020) study deals with the multimodal digital discourse of an LGBTQ social movement in Singapore. Known as Pink Dot SG (Singapore), the social movement regularly uploads promotional videos featuring Singaporean LGBTQ issues and announcing its annual mass gathering, on the video-sharing website YouTube for national and transnational consumption. The study examines the multimodal construction of a homonationalist discourse in the videos. Although in its original sense ‘homonationalism’ refers to the instrumental mobilisation of queer identities to serve depoliticised neoliberal agendas of (particularly Western) nation-states, Lazar’s study takes a different spin on the concept, which shows how a disenfranchised social group consciously aligns its queer identity with nationalistic values as a resistive (albeit, assimilationist) political strategy. The enmeshing of sexual/gender non-normativity and nationalism in Pink Dot’s videos is achieved multi- and inter-semiotically through the co-deployment of spoken and written language, nationalistic songs, colour symbolism (pink to simultaneously signify national and gay identities), visual images, photographic footages of the national flag, national indexicals (national institutions that index nation-ness), iconic urban cityscapes of Singapore, and embodied performances (or ‘corporeal semiotics’) involving the aggregation of citizens to form a human ‘pink dot’.

In the next section, our focus shifts to how linguistic landscape approaches that draw on semiotic and multimodal resources are mobilised for the critical investigation of gender and sexuality concerns.

Approaches to linguistic/semiotic landscapes

Linguistic landscapes has been a burgeoning field of research for more than over a decade, drawing on a wide variety of theoretical and methodological approaches that can be quantitative as well as qualitative in nature. Shohamy and Ben-Rafael (2015: 1) define linguistic landscapes as ‘research about the presence, representation, meanings and interpretation of languages displayed in public places’. Landry and Bourhis’ (1997) work is regarded as the first major effort to refer to publicly displayed signs (e.g. road signs, advertising billboards, street and place names, signs on shops and other buildings) as constitutive of the linguistic landscape of any given place. Over the years, the field has developed in a number of ways. Although the display of different languages in physical environments has been an important focus of linguistic landscape scholarship, the scope has widened beyond a focus on multilingualism, language, and ‘languaging’ to study a range of multimodal representations, artefacts, and materialities in public spaces. In other words, the term ‘*linguistic* landscapes’ has now been extended to cover multi-semiotic landscapes as well. It could be argued that the terms ‘semiotic landscapes’ (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010) or ‘semioscapes’ (Lazar 2018) might be more appropriate or accurate descriptors to highlight the role played by all forms of semiosis in public spaces, whereby language (as one semiotic system) may or may not play a prominent role as the particular case may be. Whichever is the preferred terminology, linguistic/semiotic landscapes is not only about the study of semiotics in place but how spaces are themselves performed semiotically i.e. spaces accrue particular social meanings through the process of semiosis (Lazar 2018; Milani 2014). Places and spaces, too, have been widened in current linguistic/semiotic landscape studies to encompass the internet as a virtual linguistic landscape (e.g. Biró 2018; Ivkóvic and Lotherington 2009) as well as the body as a corporeal landscape (Peck and Stroud 2015).

Contributing to the ongoing development of the field in recent years, scholars have begun to call attention to the gendered and sexualised nature of semioticised public spaces. A special issue on ‘Gender, sexuality and linguistic landscapes’ edited by Milani (2018) in the *Journal of Linguistic Landscapes* is a case in point (see also Kerry 2017; Poseiko 2016). These studies not only contribute to linguistic/semiotic landscape studies, but enrich the field of language, gender, and sexuality by showing how power relations undergirding social orders of gender and sexuality structure, maintain, and/or contest public spaces semiotically. The two studies that will be described demonstrate this well.

In a study about storefront signages (a conventional object of study in linguistic/semiotic landscape studies), which combine words and symbols, Trinch and Snajdr (2018) focus on how gentrifying women (mostly highly educated, professional, white, and married) struggle to claim and transform the public space in Brooklyn, USA. Drawing on visual ethnography, interviews, and digital archival material, the study looks at the innovative wordplay found on shop signs catered to consumers who are mothers. The authors argue that through the creative signages, Brooklyn mothers attempt to transform traditional notions of motherhood, conservative heterosexual mores, conventional gender roles, as well as the linguistic landscape of the urban space itself. For example, a storefront signage of a local store – 'boing boing: at your cervix since 1996' – creatively alludes to sexual activity and female reproduction through wordplay as well as filling in the interior of the two 'o' graphemes in 'boing boing' so that visually the letters resemble cervical caps or diaphragms. By taking to the streets traditionally private and taboo topics, the women are seen as asserting control over their sexuality and mothering. However, as Trinch and Snajdr argue, such attempts were met with public backlash, prompting pragmatic trade-offs in later developments of signages. For instance, the authors note that the ambiguity of wordplay led to the production of a signage with racialised undertones, used as a cover by white women to challenge normative motherhood. The crux of the study is that the signages represented more than a semiotics of creativity; they were, in the words of the authors, 'formidable social acts' in a struggle over space and power.

In a different study, Milani (2014) focused on a small data set of 'banal sexed signs' or mundane semiotic aggregates, which he had observed in three separate cities. Adopting queer theory as his theoretical lens, Milani discusses the operations of power, in relation to gender and sexuality in unassuming public spaces. Queer theory problematises any form of normativity, including naturalised configurations of sex, gender, and sexuality, and as Milani's study shows, opens up interpretative ambiguity to some extent. A newsstand at a US airport constituted Milani's first set of data, in which he deconstructed the ideology of gendered difference made manifest through the spatial arrangement of magazines aimed at women and men, and their respective magazine front cover images. Interpellating browsers in distinctly gendered terms, Milani argues that the visual representations of the models on the front pages could potentially offer a 'queer hope of ambiguous desire'. The erotic ambiguity, however, was quickly dispelled through the heteronormative content of the magazines. The second data involved the window display of two T-shirts with affective statements ('I love [x]') printed on them in a retail store in Stockholm. From the outside of the shop, the words and symbols on the two T-shirts conveyed a distinctly heteronormative gender ideology. Yet, when browsing inside the shop, a more dynamic affective process is activated through the availability of T-shirts (albeit less visibly placed) that catered to non-heterosexual desiring persons. Moving from an investigation of material objects in public spaces to store owners own 'take' on space, politics, identity, and desire in relation to gender and sexuality, Milani's final data involved signage in a coffee shop in a Johannesburg suburb as well as interviews with the co-owner of the shop. The signage at the entrance of the coffee shop spelt out a list of ideologically intolerant types of persons disallowed on the premises, aimed at fostering a 'queer space' of respectful convivial debate. The queerness of the space was intended by the owners to transcend a reductively 'gay and lesbian' space, even though the owners self-identified as lesbians.

The final approach dealt with in this chapter that is useful for gender and sexuality research is multimodal conceptual metaphor analysis.

Multimodal approaches to conceptual metaphor

Unlike popular understandings of metaphor as a literary device using words deliberately to achieve some artistic or rhetorical effect, a cognitive linguistic approach to metaphors, originally developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), views metaphors as conceptual in nature, used to facilitate understanding of abstract and unfamiliar ideas in ordinary everyday situations. In fact, conceptual metaphor scholars regard metaphors as a pervasive process in human thought, action, and everyday communication (Kövecses 2002; Lakoff and Johnson 1980). According to conceptual metaphor theory, one conceptual domain is understood in relation to another conceptual domain. For example, in LIFE IS A JOURNEY, 'life' is the 'Target' domain in need of comprehension (something abstract and complex) which is understood in terms of a 'journey', the 'Source' domain (something more familiar) that helps make sense of the former. The process by which metaphoric comprehension is achieved is called 'mapping', whereby elements from the Source domain are transferred onto the Target domain, usually systematically and unconsciously. Importantly, conceptual metaphors not only facilitate understanding of a more abstract domain but also mediate and structure the experience of it (Knowles and Moon 2006; Kövecses 2002).

Linguistic, or the verbal, is the most familiar semiotic mode of metaphoric expression. However, as metaphor (following the cognitive approach) is conceptual in nature, it can be expressed nonverbally and multimodally as well (e.g. Forceville 1998; Kövecses 2002). Regardless of whether it is verbal or nonverbal, if only one mode is deployed for metaphoric expression, it is regarded as a monomodal metaphor; whereas in multimodal metaphors the Target and Source domains are predominantly presented in different modes, which can include visuals, written/spoken language, gestures, nonverbal sounds, and music (Forceville 2009).

In language, gender, and sexuality studies, a focus on verbal metaphors in discourse has been more common (e.g. Hobbs 2013; Koller 2004; Velasco-Sacristan and Fuertes-Olivera 2006) than multimodal metaphors. The latter, in fact, remains as yet an untapped research approach, which can be better utilised for investigating topics on discourse, gender, and sexuality. The two studies discussed in this section represent one of the earliest in multimodal metaphor analysis involving gender and advertising (Lazar 2009) and a more recent one on sex education material for preschool children (Liang et al. 2017). The studies will be discussed in reverse order.

Drawing on Forceville's study of pictorial and multimodal metaphors, Liang, O'Halloran, and Tan (2016) examine metaphorical representations in sex education picture books aimed at preschoolers in mainland China. The use of metaphors in this educational discourse genre ostensibly served the pedagogical objective of facilitating better understanding of scientific knowledge about sex and sexuality in a young audience. Yet, the authors argue that through the metaphorical representations deployed in the books, ideologies about gender stereotypes and traditional mainstream values on (heteronormative) sex and sexuality were being instilled in the young at the same time. One type of metaphor based on personification grafted male or female faces and traits onto the target domain concepts of reproductive organs, sperm cells, and ova, so that binary sex categories and gender stereotyping became naturalised. Another type, identified as domestication metaphors, facilitated understanding of distant and abstract biological concepts and processes by associating them with familiar and concrete objects within the worldview of children. However, the selection of source domains was sometimes ideologically laden (for example, the ovum was verbally and visually metaphorised as a treasure quest). Finally, the authors identified 'cross-experience' metaphors, which were established multimodally through what the authors describe as mind–body associations. In this way, conjugal love and procreation were foregrounded and prioritised as the driving force for the physical activity of sexual intercourse.

Set against a general observation that a ‘war mentality’ was becoming a prevalent commonsensical mode of rationality, through the utilisation of the domain of war to conceptualise a wide range of non-militarised activities, Lazar’s (2009) study focused on how the domain of banal feminine beauty practices has been metaphorised in terms of warfare in advertising discourse. Combining a critical discourse perspective with multimodal metaphor analysis, the study based on over 100 print beauty advertisements (ads for cosmetics, skin and haircare products, slimming and body modification services), uncovered the operation of the conceptual metaphor BEAUTIFICATION IS WAR, expressed through a combination of language, images, and colour. In tandem with a problem–solution schema commonly found in advertising, a multi-tiered analysis of the conceptual metaphor was systematically presented. ‘Problems’ were anything that hindered the achievement of the beauty ideal (e.g. nature or ageing), which were conceptualised as enemies. ‘Solutions’ were cosmetic brands that occupied the role of powerful allies to prospective consumers. The ‘consumers’ were women conceptualised both as fighters in the struggle and whose bodies, at the same time, were the battlegrounds. The study revealed contradictory elements in the construction of ‘modern’ femininity. While on the one hand, women were represented as ‘empowered’ subjects, on the other hand, militarisation associated women’s exercise of agency with a hegemonic mode of masculinity. With women’s own bodies cast as sites of struggle, and a concomitantly radical shift in conceptualisation from seeing the ‘enemy-as-other’ to the ‘enemy-as-self’, the study suggested the possibility that anxiety and alienation in women’s relationships with their own bodies as threats was exigent.

Conclusion

In this chapter, five approaches or lenses for the study of semiotics and multimodality were presented. These are by no means comprehensive; rather, they were selected to highlight productive ways for analysing semiotic representations and performances of gender and sexuality in a range of contexts. As the studies discussed in this section showed, perpetuation as well as contestation and subversion of gender/sexual norms and identities were enabled through the mobilisation of a number of semiotic resources (with language playing a salient or not so salient part, depending on the situations). The range of semiosis involved included gestures, colour, visual images and photography, music and song, dress and props, materialities, represented affect, typography, and embodied performances. Each contributed to the meaning-making in texts and talk, in an integrated way, based on their affordances.

Although the turn towards semiotics and multimodality in language, gender, and sexuality scholarship, on the whole, is at the stage of relative infancy, it is slowly but surely growing. Fragmentation and unconsolidation of approaches, therefore, can be viewed positively as a healthy sign of growth and maturation of any field. Messiness and mixing of approaches, I suggest, disavow foreclosing the development of diverse ideas and insights, and offer opportunities for learning, borrowing, and integrating from different perspectives. Multimodality itself, as a field, is a product of (multi-disciplinary) learning from such fields as linguistics, semiology, proxemics, art history, cultural studies, and psychology. If we extend the concept of affordances beyond semiotic modalities to semiotic and multimodal approaches, then we can say that each framework or lens has its own (theoretical and practical) affordances for apprehending the phenomena of multi-semioticity. That, I believe, can only enhance the robustness and diversity of inquiries about gender, sexuality, and other identities in texts and talk.

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33

Multimodal constructions of feminism

The transfiguration of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in *Vogue*

Linda McLoughlin

Introduction

In this chapter I outline a technique which lies at the interface of feminist critical discourse analysis and social semiotics. Its focus is on how language and other modes of communication combine to create meaning in two multimodal texts: articles in *Vogue*, a high-end fashion magazine[1] and an advertising campaign, titled 'Ready to speak up', launched by the international pharmaceutical company Boots Walgreen Alliance to promote its cosmetics brand No. 7 Match Made range.[2] Both texts feature the award-winning Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie whose TED talk,[3] 'We should all be feminists', received much critical acclaim and established Adichie as a leading feminist, according to popular media sources. The chapter will examine the global marketing of this contemporary feminist icon and consider exactly what discourses (ways of seeing) of feminism are being globally distributed and how. Following Goankar and Povinelli (2003),[4] I explore the matrix of elements that enable the transnational circulation of Adichie as a leading feminist icon. The aim is to examine the significations assigned to Adichie in these multimodal texts in order to gauge how her subject position (i.e. the way she is positioned by the text) is defined in relation to feminism. It will also make visible how feminist work has provided a way of understanding 'postfeminist' female subjectivity as mediated in mass-media texts.

The chapter is divided into four sections. In the first, the appropriation of feminism in popular culture is traced with reference to relevant literature. Next, the feminist critical discourse analysis (CDA)/social semiotics approach taken is set out. The third and largest section comprises the analysis, organised around the transformation of Adichie in *Vogue* from award-winning author to feminist icon whose model-like looks and self-avowed love of make-up helped her to secure the lucrative cosmetics deal. The analysis is contextualised by attempting to pinpoint the shift in subject positioning to the period when Adichie was announced as the 'new face' of Boots No. 7. Finally, there is a discussion which pulls together the main findings in relation to constructions of feminism in popular culture and argues that Adichie's particular 'brand' of feminism was promoted because it resonates with investments in feminism which govern commodified feminism, especially in Western locations. As Goldman (1992: 131) explains:

> The pun, commodity feminism, is a reminder that commodity relations turn the relations of acting subjects into the relations between objects. The process of turning feminism into sign values *fetishises* feminism into an iconography of things. When advertisers appropriate feminism, they cook it to distil out a residue – an object: a look, a style. Women's discourses are thus relocated and respoken by named objects like *Hanes* Hose, *Nike* Shoes, *Esprit* Jeans. Sign objects are thus made to stand for, and made equivalent to feminist goals of independence and professional success. Personality can be represented, relationships achieved and resources acquired through personal consumer choices.

Here, Goldman highlights the fact that producers of commodities have just one goal in sight, namely the sale of goods; therefore any apparent headway in improving women's position in society is merely a patina of benevolence.

The rise of commodity feminism in popular culture

This section aims to establish how commodified feminism, as represented by Adichie, is circulated and transfigured in a transnational context. Questions are considered relating to how ideals of commodity feminism shift as well as entrench, include, and exclude multicultural cosmopolitan feminism(s). I want to clarify here that I am not against make-up wearing, nor do I have anything against Adichie; indeed, I admire her writing and support many of the widely quoted endorsements of 'We should all be feminists'. What I find problematic is the amount of time and energy spent in asserting a connection between feminism, make-up wearing, and fashion. It seems the politics of feminism are transfigured in commodity feminism by foregrounding selected key tenets, for example, women's right to have their voices heard, and making modified self-presentation and aestheticisation a condition of their fulfilment. Whilst Adichie's success in generating public dialogue about feminism is commendable, her acceptance of the transformative properties of make-up may well reflect a valuing of things associated with women but is politically void as it does nothing to challenge or even subvert mainstream notions about femininity. Rather, this 'cherry-picking' from feminism, namely celebrating individual agency and disguising conformity as choice, merely encourages consumption, making women sources of profit for large corporations.

This project brings together two key sites which have been the objects of considerable attention from feminist scholars during the last four decades; the beauty industry which has attracted criticism for its exploitation of women in reinforcing male dominance and setting unattainable standards (Orbach 1978; Wolf, 1990); and women's magazines with critics 'pointing to them as a locus of ideological messages that serve to legitimise and naturalise unequal relations, and which offer a narrow and restrictive template of femininity constructed around fashion, beauty and "how to get a man"' (Gill 2009: 346–347). As Machin and Thornborrow (2003) explain, discourses are globally marketed by powerful multinational corporations. It can be no accident that two such corporations appear to have joined forces in the global marketing of Adichie. It is well documented that magazines are underpinned by the revenue from advertising space which gives advertisers a powerful voice in relation to the content and ethos of magazines (Gough-Yates 2003). There can be no doubt that Adichie's self-avowed love of make-up is receptive to advertisers because they would rather see their cosmetics advertisements beside an article that complements what they are selling.

It is difficult to pinpoint how and when feminism became entwined with consumerism, particularly as Adichie points out in an interview with vogue.com, 'it's obvious that *feminism* for many people is a bad word, even if you believe in it, the word is off-putting'. Gill (2009: 346) refers to a moment of flux and contestation in relation to constructions of feminism and post-structuralism 'in which many young women actively disavow or repudiate a feminist identity'. Popular culture's rationale for embracing what is colloquially referred to as the 'F'-word can be traced to historical shifts within feminism. A number of theorists have tracked different trajectories regarding the emergence of a global discourse of popular (post)feminism as evident in the Boots' 'Speak up' campaign and the selected *Vogue* articles. Wolf (1994), for instance, reflects on the gains brought about by the second wave of the feminist movement which took place between 1960 and 1980, focusing on the workplace, sexuality, family, and reproductive rights. This led to material changes within society that have helped to improve women's position, but Wolf now argues that women should renounce 'victim feminism' which reinforces the stereotype of them as fragile and vulnerable as outlined in her earlier work. As an alternative, she advocates 'power feminism' which sees women as equal to men, celebrates female sexuality, and encourages women to claim their individual voices through a variety of tactics. These include consumer campaigns and putting pressure on the media to alter their sexist portrayals of women. Given the period in which she was writing, her revision is devoid of any reference to the importance of intersectionality (the study of intersections between forms or systems of oppression) but her message that women are gaining power seems to have resonated with text producers of advertisements and women's magazines merely because women can now be seen as a more valuable demographic in the capitalist market place who can no longer be spoken to in patronising ways. Gill (2007) proposes a postfeminist sensibility to analyse contemporary cultural products. She goes on to explicate the themes that characterise this sensibility and 'to emphasise the contradictory nature of postfeminist discourse and the entanglement of both feminist and anti-feminist themes within them' (2007: 148). Gill's identified themes are relevant to this chapter, particularly those relating to self-surveillance, individualism, choice and empowerment, the dominance of a makeover paradigm and an emphasis on consumerism, and the commodification of difference. Unlike Wolf, (1994), Gill (2007: 148) relates the themes to intersectionality, claiming that they 'co-exist with and are structured by stark and continuing inequalities and exclusions that relate to "race" and ethnicity, class, age, sexuality and disability – as well as gender'.

Lazar (2006: 505), in relation to beauty advertising in Singapore, refers to a global discourse of popular (post)feminism known as 'power femininity' which, she explains:

> incorporates feminist signifiers of emancipation and empowerment as well as circulat[ing] popular postfeminist assumptions that feminist struggles have ended viz., that full equality for all women has been achieved and that women of today can "have it all"; indeed, that it is becoming a woman's world, with a celebration of all things feminine, including the desire for self-aestheticisation.

In a review of Adichie's book *We Should All Be Feminists*, based on the above-mentioned TED talk, the British *The Telegraph* journalist Rupert Hawksley gives an insight into why Adichie's 'brand' of feminism might prove attractive to proponents of the neo-capitalist[5] global economy:

> The 37 year old author of the Orange Prize-winning novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* has, in those brief 52 pages, transformed what is so often a deeply divisive, volatile and confrontational subject into a clear-headed, honest and beautifully argued statement. It has forced me to reconsider my opinions in a way that more militant feminist writing never has. Adichie's is not the language of warfare, it does not seek to berate men or set one sex against the other.
>
> *(Hawksley 2014)*

Clearly, Hawksley finds this less threatening form of feminism more acceptable than other feminisms and in part explains Adichie's wide-ranging popularity in the mainstream and why she was chosen as a brand ambassador. Furthermore, in their selection of a Black woman in an industry that is notorious for its racism, Boots appear to address another issue of concern to feminists, namely relating to the politics of skin colour and the prevalence of white models in advertisements (Asuri 2008; McLoughlin 2013). The analysis will critique Boots' positioning as benefactor and *Vogue*'s apparent altruism, namely, their validation of dark skin, celebration of diversity and difference, and championing of women's rights to reveal the strategies that enable the transnational circulation and strategic exoticisation of Adichie in the chosen texts. This chapter necessarily draws on all the above discussions, but it also brings these trajectories together to discuss the significance and transnational circulation of Adichie as a specific cultural form – a celebrity feminist icon and brand ambassador.

Method and approach

The analysis presented here is based upon examination of texts from the Boots' 'Speak up' campaign, including screenshots and voiceover from the television advertisement and images and text from print advertisements in magazines and hoardings. Images, text, dialogue, clothing, visual design, and layout of *Vogue* articles featuring Adichie, both before and after the announcement of her as the 'new face' of Boots No. 7, were also examined. Since visual, verbal, and textual elements are interwoven, a multimodal approach is an important tool for deconstructing the texts. As Machin et al. (2016: 304) explain, multimodality includes not just language but all the semiotic modes that make up a social context. They usefully point to the compatibility of a multimodal and CDA approach as both aim to 'reveal[s] the discourses buried in texts, which may not be apparent to a casual viewer'.

I employ feminist CDA since the nexus of CDA and feminist studies provides a way to 'advance a rich and nuanced understanding of the complex workings of power and ideology in discourse in sustaining (hierarchically) gendered social arrangements' (Lazar 2007: 141). This is particularly important, as Lazar points out, due to the complex and subtle forms in which asymmetrical power relations presently operate particularly in corporate and consumerist ideologies. In deconstructing texts, the aim is to disrupt and render problematic that which is passed off as 'common sense', for example, in neoliberal discourse,[6] there would seem to be nothing inherently wrong in having as a role model a 'real' woman who has achieved commercial success. This is no doubt intended to critique the lack of representation of women who challenge the stereotypical depictions of beauty but what exactly counts as a 'real' woman is never questioned and is problematic because it implies that some women qualify as legitimate whilst others do not.

Machin et al. (2016: 304) emphasise the importance for gender, language, and discourse in understanding the effects of particular semiotic selections out of a pool of potential alternatives, since it is in these choices that ideology and power are encoded. A social semiotic approach is therefore crucial to this analysis to establish the affordances of signs within the text. To this end, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) offer a systematic framework for examining the formal elements and structures of visual design. They set out four coding orientations that inform the way in which texts are coded by specific social groups, or within specific institutional contexts as follows:

1. *Technological coding orientations*, which have as their dominant principle, the 'effectiveness' of the visual representation as a 'blueprint'.
2. *Sensory coding orientations,* which are used in contexts in which the pleasure principle is allowed to be the dominant.
3. *Abstract coding orientation*s, which are used by sociocultural elites – in 'high' art […] In such contexts modality is higher the more an image reduces the individual to the general, and the concrete to its essential qualities.
4. *The commonsense naturalistic* coding *orientation*, which remains, for the time being, the dominant one in our society.

(Kress and van Leeuwen 2006: 170)

According to Kress (2010), all modes of representation can be harnessed for meaning-making, which is contrary to Adichie's claim, made in the Boots' television advertisement, that 'make-up is just make-up'. A key tenet of poststructuralist theory is that texts and discourses are constructive phenomena, shaping the identities and practices of human subjects. With this in mind, the following analysis will illustrate that make-up does indeed have a context, purpose, and symbolic meaning. When Adichie confides that for a period she hid her high heels and stopped wearing lipstick (Boots' television advertisement), she alludes to two distinctive signs which act as signifiers of femininity in a Western European system of cultural representation.

A feminist postcolonial framework is also beneficial to the analysis since it developed in response to a criticism that feminism focused on the experiences of women in Western cultures and thus seeks to avoid homogenising and systematising the experiences of different groups of women. This framework will aid discussion regarding the strategic exoticisation of Adichie. Intersectionality, mentioned earlier, is a useful approach to denote that Adichie is simultaneously positioned as a woman, Black, heterosexual, and middle-class.

Goankar and Povinelli (2003) advocate a form-sensitive analysis of cultural phenomena which I find useful in mapping how forms, such as a feminist icon, become palpable and recognised as such. Instead of thinking about meaning and translations, they believe we should instead think about circulation (the cultural process that motivates movement) and transfiguration (or makeover). Globalisation has led to changes in the modes of communication; leading to a vast web of intertwined social, economic, cultural, and technological changes. According to Kress (2010: 5):

> Globalisation is not one 'thing'; it is differently constituted in different places, as are its effects and impacts, interacting with the vastly varied cultural social, economic and political conditions of any one specific locality. Yet the deep effects are constant and recognisable.

One of the mechanisms of global connectivity, relating to Adichie, is the widely quoted endorsement of her as a feminist, as cited above in the extract from *The Telegraph*, which in turn are further quoted in media sources, adding to the flow and dynamics of circulation.

How Adichie became feted as a feminist icon and imbued with a celebrity aura, it seems, is contingent on the audience and appears to relate to a complicity in the more acceptable 'face' of feminism she proposes. Her self-avowed love of make-up and fashion, coupled with model-like looks (which offer difference sufficiently within the stereotypical standard), make her a value-bearing commodity in the context into which she is inserted. The context, of course, is a consumer culture and the mechanisms of circulation, modernity's various modes of communication as mentioned above. Consumption activities such as the Boots' advertising campaign and frequent inclusion in *Vogue* further motivates Adichie's movement across global space. According to Goankar and Povinelli (2003), occasion is a further condition of circulation. In terms of timing, feminism's topicality with magazine editors is explained by Keller (2011) who links this to the emergence of women who grew up with third-wave feminist values taking up editorial positions at magazines. She interviewed four New York–based magazine editors who identified as feminist, to uncover contradictions embedded in their identifying as feminist whilst creating a cultural product often deemed anti-feminist. Her findings suggest that editors combine practical strategies with a distinctively 'third-wave ethic' to navigate between corporate and cultural expectations in order to integrate a popular feminism into the magazine's content. I mentioned above the interdependence of magazines and advertising, which can be illustrated by the following comment to *Vogue* from the Vice President of Skincare and Global brands for Walgreens Boots Alliance (http://www.vogue.co.uk/article/chimamanda-ngozi-adichie-for-boots-no7):

> At No. 7 we believe that when women know their make-up is just right they feel great, they feel ready to show up in the world in the way they want. Chimamanda was the perfect choice for us, as not only is she an inspirational woman, *we share the same philosophy about beauty*.

I emphasise the slogan-like phrase 'philosophy of beauty' because it suggests advanced knowledge and scholarship which imbues it with authority. The Vice President endorses aspects of third-wave feminism such as women's agency: they are 'ready to show up' and have independence 'in the way they want', whilst validating his company's choice of Adichie. This thus conjoins the two in the minds of the reader/viewer.

The transfiguration of Adichie in *Vogue*

This chapter aims to show a gradual shift in Adichie's subject positioning in *Vogue* following the announcement of her as the 'new face' of Boots, from an initial focus on her writing to an increased concentration on her appearance. Therefore, the analysis and discussion will deal with texts in the order in which they appeared chronologically.

Article 1

The first article I found in *Vogue* relating to Adichie, in the Culture > Books section, corresponds with the endorsements of Adichie previously mentioned: 'Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie on her "flawless" speech, out today as an eBook'. The article begins:

> If anyone has the skills to make a speech about feminism go viral, it's Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, the Lagos-based writer whose ideas are as complex as her language is straightforward […] Adichie's oration weaved together human stories from her youth

> in Nigeria with a complicated discourse about gender roles in the modern world and a literal textbook definition of "feminism" […]

The term 'viral' refers to a phenomenon characterised by mass dissemination of an item brought about due to advanced technology and the ease with which people now share information. Since the writer refers to this activity as a 'skill', it can be taken that Adichie's ability to make her speech go viral is seen as a positive attribute. The article is presented as a telephone interview – 'Reached by phone in Lagos, Adichie spoke to Vogue.com about the overwhelming success of her speech and what it means to talk politics with the whole world'. The one accompanying image shows Adichie at the centre of the frame delivering her speech marked by the lectern and background.

Thus, the image records a reality as it connects Adichie with a particular location – Euston, the setting for the TED talk, and its specific moment in time, December 2012. According to Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) coding orientation, modality is realised naturalistically as the image presents a true picture of reality. The visual choice of the text producer indexes Adichie's intellect, the meaning associated with academia. This is in contrast with subsequent images in the magazine that follow the announcement of Adichie as the new face of Boots, which are focused on indexing her femininity. Signifiers of Adichie's African identity are the flawless braid crowning her head and the Dutch Wax print,[7] which is recognisable by its super-bright colours and oversized patterns, of her clothing. The purpose of the interview is to gauge Adichie's response to the success of her TED talk and to place her as spokesperson on global sexual politics. The question 'Has it [the talk] resonated differently in Nigeria than in America?' places her as a Nigerian subject in the global context.

Article 2

The second article titled 'Chimamanda says "forget being likeable"' reports on Adichie's acceptance of an award from Girls Write Now, a New York based organisation which seeks to transform the lives of inner-city girls. The focus of the article is the advice Adichie purports to give young women which taps into the third-wave popular feminism referred to earlier:

> I think that what our society teaches young girls, and I think it's also something that's quite difficult for even older women and self-professed feminists to shrug off, is that idea that likeability is an essential part of you, of the space you occupy in the world, that you're supposed to twist yourself into shapes to make yourself likeable, that you're supposed to hold back sometimes, pull back, don't quite say, don't be too pushy, because you have to be likeable.

In prefacing 'older women and self-professed feminists' with the adverb 'even', Adichie distances herself from them. The advice she gives young women corresponds with third-wave feminist discourses of individual empowerment which to some extent repudiates second-wave conceptions of essentialism and the notion of a sisterhood. Whilst it is beneficial to point out that there is nothing inherent in women that would cause them to seek likeability, she omits to mention that there may be consequences if they follow her advice and go against society's prescriptions regarding appropriate conduct for women. That is not to say that young women should adhere to society's prescriptions, but they might be prepared for the fact that not everyone will appreciate their newly acquired assertiveness. There are two

Figure 33.1 Adichie in a trendy loft-style apartment.

accompanying images – the first, showing a perfectly groomed Adichie looking off into the distance, could equally have been used to illustrate a fashion item as the upper body shot, in a decontextualised setting, is characteristic of fashion shoots. Adichie is styled in clothing that fuses African and Western influences – a demure black collar reminiscent of the serviceable 'little black dress' injected with animal print and shocking pink layering. The second image (Figure 33.1) shows Adichie in a trendy loft-style apartment setting looking confidently into the camera.

The viewer is encouraged to imagine the apartment belongs to Adichie due to what appear to be personal possessions on display: books, African-themed art and furniture. Thus, the image could be taken as a visual representation of her success. In Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) framework, it is a 'demand' photograph, one in which Adichie directly addresses the viewer who is presupposed to be naive on matters relating to feminism and women's rights compared to the authoritative and knowledgeable Adichie.

Article 3

In April 2015, *Vogue* published a further interview with Adichie, titled "I wanted to claim my own name". This is the longest of the texts analysed signalling the magazine's growing investment in Adichie. The interviewer, Erica Wagner, recounts her first meeting with Adichie on her home territory which is described in the opening lines:

> I'm on the shore of Lagos Lagoon with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie on a late afternoon in January. It is harmattan season, when a hot wind blows across the Sahara, bringing dust that makes the sun glow dark gold as it hangs over the palm trees on the opposite

> shore. Adichie, in a neat-waisted patterned dress and teetering in lavender heels that are utterly unsuited to the sandy ground, is about to pose for *Vogue's* photographer …

The introduction of Adichie in the context of her homeland is reminiscent of postcolonial representations of Africa where the unfamiliar landscape to Western eyes, different seasonal patterns ('Harmattan' season[88]) and food ('jollof rice', 'moin-moin', and 'garri' – referred to later in the article) are foregrounded. Poverty appears to be eliminated in Adichie's middle-class environment although there are references, later in the article, to a cook, driver, and make-up artist who attend to her needs and, presumably, are not members of the middle class. Much emphasis is placed on Adichie's familiarity with the setting, but this is juxtaposed with signs, for example, 'lavender heels', to suggest that Adichie is straddling two cultures. This makes her the perfect choice as brand ambassador for cosmopolitan feminism. The rationale for the 'exotic' landscape ('dust that makes the sun glow dark gold') becomes apparent; it seems that Adichie is modelling for the magazine's fashion shoot (high-end magazines are known for, and have been criticised for, their exotic backdrops). Photographs, presumably from the fashion shoot, are interspersed at various points in the article. The first shows Adichie in the foreground beside a waterfront with a city scape in the background, presumably Lagos Lagoon. Adichie is confidently posed, looking into the camera. Her dress is extremely colourful, with a striking, unusual design. The interviewer, Wagner, is clearly in awe of Adichie, which is reflected in the number of positive evaluations, not merely in relation to her writing and feminism but also to the fact that they have bonded through a shared love of orange nail polish. The signification of 'orange', since arguably, this is not a stereotypical nail colour such as 'nude' (muted), 'pink' (classic), or 'red' (bold) in Western contexts, suggests something fashionable and daring. Later, when her 'favourite make-up artist' arrives, Adichie 'suggests I [Wagner] might like a go in the make-up chair'. In Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's (1992) framework, these activities of polishing nails and putting on make-up, locate the two women within a 'community of practice'. Thorne (1994), cited by Eckert (2010), refers to colouring nails and lips as the technology of femininity where, through the engagement of common practices, gender is co-constructed; participants come to develop and share ways of doing through engagement in a common enterprise. In this way, the practice of painting nails and make-up wearing are normalised for *Vogue*'s readership and establish Adichie, the novelist, as a member of this fashion-conscious and make-up–wearing community of practice. The interview is interspersed with references to Adichie's feminism '[b]ecause it's known in my family, you don't want to demean women in my presence!'; 'The oppression of women', she says, 'Makes me angry … My family says to me, "Oh you're such a man!"' We begin to see an emergent brand of feminism which, though feisty, 'makes me angry', is not at odds with an industry which has been cited as a source of women's oppression. The title of an article can illustrate the prominence given to particular topics by the text producer and the title of this article, 'Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: "I wanted to claim my own name"', is no exception, although the story behind the quotation is only revealed much later in the article:

> She got into trouble for speaking her mind in Nigeria: when an interviewer addressed her as Mrs Chimamanda Adichie, she corrected him, saying she wished to be known as "Ms", which the journalist reports as "Miss". Her insistence on her own family name was all over the news here last spring. She should be happy to be addressed as "Mrs", she was told, since she was, after all, married.

The interviewer goes on to offer insights into Adichie's personal life. For example, it seems that she is quite protective of her privacy, particularly her relationship with her husband but 'occasionally she lets something slip, like telling me about a pack of crayons he gave her recently. Crayons?' This interactive style of writing, anticipating questions from the reader, creates a sense of the reader eavesdropping on a private conversation, although the less familiar address term, Adichie, is used throughout. As with the foregoing articles, proportionately, the content is more about Adichie's writing, feminism, and the accolades she has received for both, than matters relating to aesthetics. However, an issue is raised regarding the difficulties for women of colour in finding a foundation to match their skin tone which acts as a precursor to why Adichie is considered to be the perfect choice in the Boots 'Match Made' campaign. This leads to a discussion about race in which Adichie claims 'I only became black when I came to America, […] in Nigeria I'm not black, […] We don't do race in Nigeria'; what follows is an explanation that inequalities relating to gender, rather than race, are the salient issue in Nigeria. As mentioned above, Wagner's appreciation of Adichie permeates the interview but her comment that the make-up artist 'highlights Adichie's truly extraordinary beauty perfectly, a shimmering gold on her eyelids the only really glossy touch' gives a foretaste of the more focused attention on Adichie's physical appearance in subsequent editions.

Article 4

The next article titled 'African novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie delivers a powerful message on Dior's front row', does much to confirm Adichie's status as a celebrity:

> Under a flutter of camera flashes announcing the front row arrivals of Rihanna, Jennifer Lawrence, and Kate Moss at Dior this morning, one may not have immediately noticed that the show's true guest of honor had arrived. Quietly slipping past photographers, leading African author and modern feminist icon Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie took her front row perch alongside fashion power players.

Having elevated Adichie's status relative to other 'A-list' celebrities, the report goes on to explain Adichie's presence at the fashion show, namely, that she was the inspiration for a new designer's 'female-empowered designs' (T-shirts emblazoned with 'We Should All Be Feminists' the soundtrack from which is played as the models walk the runway). The report also mentions that Adichie's talk was sampled in a hit by Beyoncé. These endorsements of Adichie's feminism from the designer (whose success, according to the report, emanates from the fact that she is Dior's first female creative director in 70 years) and pop icon Beyoncé (whose involvement in campaigns such as 'ban bossy' links her with popular feminism) are further elements in the enabling matrix that place Adichie firmly in the realm of celebrity. There are two accompanying images – one where Adichie is posed, according to the caption, in 'long-sleeved sculptural frock splashed with a monochromatic graphic pattern and accessorised with a pair of green and magenta shoes that matched the colourful patchwork pockets of her dress. *It delivered as strong a message as her words*' (my emphasis). The other image shows a slightly uncomfortable-looking Adichie in the front row, with clasped hands, intently looking up to the runway. How Adichie's clothing signals a message and what the message is, is not quite clear but we see a link starting to form connecting Adichie's appearance with what she says.

Boots No. 7 advertising campaign

The appropriation of this feminist icon for commercial purposes is most visible in the Boots No.7 'Match Made' advertising campaign, which can be viewed through the link in *Vogue*'s article: 'Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is No. 7's new face' (18th October 2016). The television advertisement signals optimism with its opening frame showing a lush green field with clear blue skies above. The soothing background music is accompanied by melodic female voices humming harmoniously to the rhythm. A furrow acts as a vector (the lines which link elements) leading the viewer's eye to a distant figure – as it comes nearer, we see the figure is Adichie in freely flowing pale pink dress. Adichie speaks, introducing a problem, namely that due to society's restrictions on women's behaviour, she was not taken seriously because of her love of make-up. The solution, as mentioned earlier, was to stop wearing make-up and hide her high heels. The camera points up to the bare branches of a tree – it then pans out to show the full tree to the right of the frame. Presumably, the viewer is to connect the desolate tree with the feelings Adichie had on being make-up free and without high heels. Far from resolving the issue, this abandonment of feminine accoutrements led to a further problem – 'I became a false version of myself'. It is not clear what led to her transformation, but Adichie claims that she 'woke up'. The spoken discourse is accompanied throughout by visual signifiers corresponding with the words spoken. For example, the scene in which Adichie moves is autumnal, signifying optimism, rebirth, and renewal; a tree sheds its leaves then they magically reconnect to the branches in a colourful display of red and gold. As the music becomes more dramatic, a young animal is startled, corresponding with Adichie's claim that she 'woke up'. The signifiers promote the notion of transformation and enjoyment of a self-made new look. Adichie's stance is that make-up wearing can be an act of resistance, ironically, not to challenge restrictive ideals of female beauty but to feminism itself. Her claim in the advertisement – that make-up is just make-up, it's about how she feels when she gets it right, what makes her happy when she looks in the mirror, what makes her walk ever so slightly taller, the face she chooses to show the world and what she chooses to say – is as much about psychological and emotional well-being as it is about empowerment.

A comment from the novelist, Salman Rushdie, cited in Article 3, on meeting Adichie at a literary festival, gives some indication as to why Adichie was seen as an appropriate ambassador to front a campaign with the slogan 'ready to speak up':

> […] but what was so striking was her own confidence and authority. She very much held her own, and spoke fluently and powerfully, and all of us there that day could see that someone very remarkable had just arrived. A star is born, I remember thinking, and so it was.

Adichie's eloquence and force in speaking are the basis for Rushdie's metaphorically charged positive evaluation. One cannot criticise any attempt to credit a woman's verbal proficiency since it does much to dispel negative stereotypes of public-speaking men and silent women (Cameron 2007). Furthermore, Adichie's novels are celebrated for the strong voices of female characters. As seen above, Adichie seems to adopt the adage of second-wave feminists by making the personal political, namely in reprimanding the person who insisted on calling her 'Mrs'. Taken together, it is therefore difficult to imagine that Adichie appears to see no contradiction in co-opting feminism for commercial purposes.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown how feminist CDA, informed by social semiotics, is a useful framework for analysing the transnational circulation of a feminist icon. In their selection of Adichie, *Vogue* and Boots appear to have ceded to pressure on the media to alter their negative portrayals of women. However, offering a 'real' woman as a role model, making platitudinous remarks about rights and choices, making more shades available to match a wider range of skin tones etc., hardly makes these multinational companies feminist. On the surface, the choice of Adichie as a motivational and inspirational role model is difficult to contest – her relaxing smile is safe and reassuring and she exudes confidence, albeit as a result of transformation and reinvention. Her claims about make-up are presented as a positive aspect of modernity and progress but there is little consideration of the implications for non-make-up wearers who, presumably, are lacking in traits such as the confidence required to speak up for themselves. Adichie comes across as rational and well-informed; her claims are presented as incontrovertible facts – 'make-up is just make-up' – though never supported by research. Her neoliberal discourse on self-aestheticisation is worrying to say the least; suggesting that a pleasing appearance can foster psychological and emotional well-being does nothing to tackle the material obstacles that women still face in today's society. Furthermore, she creates an illusion that make-up wearing is an expression of women's freedom; that women are making rational decisions of their own volition to attain an appearance of their own choosing. However, her own appearance, though a refreshing change from the customary white, Western models of beauty advertisements, typifies narrow cultural ideals of beauty and it seems little thought has been given to how her conventionally attractive model-like looks, curvaceous figure, and well-endowed breasts might be difficult for many women to measure up to, potentially causing anxiety and insecurity.

Future directions

Fraser (2013) reminds us that at its roots, the feminist movement's raison d'être was to dismantle patriarchy and, with it, capitalism. Her advice that feminism should end its dangerous liaison with marketisation and that we should be wary of actors who push for it offers a way forward. It seems Adichie's neoliberal stance on feminism appeals to commodity culture since it exacerbates perceived tensions between second- and third-wave feminism. In espousing that 'we should all be feminists', she makes a distinction between conservative and neoliberal feminism. Her references, cited in the texts analysed, to 'self-professed' feminists, 'moralising make-up', etc. suggest that she seeks to distance herself from and to challenge the perceived oppressive ideology of more 'militant' feminists who *stereotypically* are believed to frown upon make-up wearing, are male-bashing, confrontational, etc. Misrepresenting and dismissing other forms of feminism in this way disavows the inroads gained but is also disingenuous since how else does she imagine women came to have the income needed to purchase the beauty products she promotes? In reclaiming beauty practices in terms of pleasure inducement and its transformative properties, then making tenuous links to factors related to women's progression – agency, individualism, empowerment, the right to speak up and be heard – it plays into the hands of commodity producers and thus should be avoided.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Akintunde Akinleye for kind permission to use the image of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

Notes

1 This is how the magazine's ethos is described to advertisers: 'a globally renowned women's luxury magazine on fashion, trends, beauty, people and lifestyle'. http://www.themediaant.com/magazine/vogue-magazine-advertising
2 Boots, established in 1849, formed an alliance with Walgreens in December 2014, making it the largest retail pharmacy in America and Europe.
3 TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design) are influential talks by expert speakers on a range of topics. For more information go to: https://www.ted.com/about/our-organization
4 I am also indebted to Goldie Asuri (2008), whose article on the transfiguration of the former Miss World and Bollywood star Aishwarya Rai, was a source of inspiration.
5 Neo-capitalism is an economic ideology which blends some elements of capitalism with other systems. The capitalist doctrine becomes deeper due to technological developments and the internationalisation of markets; 'new' compared to forms of capitalism before World War II.
6 Neoliberal discourse refers to discourses that emphasis individual agency in the form of taking responsibility for one's behaviour and lifestyle choices.
7 Dutch Wax print, originally produced in Europe and sold in West Africa, has become a marker of identity for some West African women.
8 The Harmattan is a season in the West African subcontinent, which occurs between the end of November and the middle of March.

Further reading

Chandler, D. (2017) *Semiotics: The Basics*, 3rd ed. London: Routledge.

This book introduces the key concepts of semiotics in accessible and jargon-free language.

Gill, R. and Scharff, C. (eds.) (2011) *New Femininities: Postfeminism, Neoliberalism and Subjectivity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

This edited collection looks at the way in which experiences and representations of femininity are changing, and explores the possibilities for producing 'new' femininities in the twenty-first century.

Kress, G. (2010) *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. London: Routledge.

This accessibly written book examines multiple modes of communication and meaning-making with lots of illustrations to demonstrate the points made.

Kress, G. and van Leeuwen, T. (2006) *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

This book examines the ways in which images convey meaning. It offers a systematic and comprehensive account of the grammar of visual design.

Lazar, M. M. (ed.) (2005) *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Gender, Power and Ideology in Discourse*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

This collection brings together well-known scholars writing from feminist perspectives within CDA. The theoretical structure of CDA is illustrated with empirical research from a range of locations and domains.

Related topics

Gender and sexuality in discourse: semiotic and multimodal approaches; multimodal constructions of feminism; revisiting 'gender advertisements' in contemporary culture; doing gender and sexuality intersectionally in multimodal social media practices; the South African news media and representations of sexuality.

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34

Judged and condemned

Semiotic representations of women criminals

Carmen Rosa Caldas-Coulthard

Introduction[1]

This chapter will explore how women perpetrators of crime are resemiotised in public discourses, focusing primarily on media narratives with particular attention to the Brazilian press. Iedema (2003: 29) refers to 'resemiotisation' as the means

> to provide the analytical means for (1) tracing how semiotics are translated from one into the other as social processes unfold, as well as for (2) asking why these semiotics (rather than others) are mobilised to do certain things at certain times.

I argue that the semiotic resources (language, images, colour, among others) which are used to represent women criminals are most of the time associated with their gender and have therefore important cultural and political gendered meanings. I define gender here

> along two key dimensions. First, social relationships (and representations) are infused with assumed differences between the sexes. These assumptions are ideological and can be shown to be constructed in language and other forms of representation and in social practices in institutions. … Second, gender imbalance never operates alone but intersects with other axes of inequality.
>
> *(Machin, Caldas-Coulthard, and Milani 2016: 306)*

For my analysis, I take a multimodal, discourse-analytical perspective since I believe that gendered identities are mainly constructed through multiple semiotic modes.

The notion of discourse adopted in this chapter relates to a set of attitudes or values of the producers of the semiotic signs. Inevitably, our choices in text and image reflect these attitudes and values, and also constitute them. I have drawn on the concept of discourse following authors such as Fairclough 1992; Foucault 1978; Hall 1997; Kress 2010; Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996, 2001; and Wodak 2000 for whom discourses are knowledges of practices which are at the same time:

1. Knowledges of how things are or must be done, together with specific evaluations and legitimations of, and purposes for, these practices (Caldas-Coulthard and Van Leeuwen 2001: 158);
2. Knowledges which are linked to the context of specific communicative practices materialised in texts or other semiotic resources (Van Leeuwen 2005).

By using discourse and multimodal analysis as methodological tools, I am in fact considering the ways semiotic resources create and recreate meanings reflecting the views and ideology of speakers/writers.

Crime as a topic has been extensively studied in many disciplines: criminology (Jewkes 2004; Jewkes and Letherby 2002; Newburn 2017; Williams 2012), sociology (Carradine et al. 2009; Giddens 1989), psychology (Howitt 2011), media and cultural studies (Brown 2003), and more recently, cultural criminology (Ferrell, Hayward, and Young 2015). These disciplines have shed light on the many ways media can distort crime and how some events are defined as crimes and others are not. There is however, very little systematic enquiry into the mediatised semiotics of crime. A critical approach focusing on semiotic resources is a powerful tool to understand the intricacies of media representation of crime and its ideological implications.

According to the Map of Violence 2015 (Mapa da Violência), produced by the Latin-American Social Sciences Faculty (Flacso), in Brazil, where I myself live, 4,762 women were murdered in 2013. There was an increase of 54 per cent in the number of Black women killed every year in the last ten years.

In 2013, according to the same source, Brazil had a figure of 4.8 murders per a 100,000 women. It is in fifth place out of 83 investigated countries for feminicide. There is one case of rape in Brazil every 11 minutes, according to the Brazilian Yearbook of Public Safety (Folha de São Paulo 2017).

Although crimes of violence are much more committed by men and against women than the other way round, women also kill and commit crimes. There is nevertheless, a general essentialist tendency in postmodern societies to perceive women as fragile and submissive and less associated with crime. This tendency is based on values of a positivist or traditional criminology (Espinoza 2002), which recognises intrinsic qualities in men that make them more prone to crime:

> … in their female 'essence', women have a low tendency for delinquency. If a criminal, the motives for the deed would be related to early sexuality, puberty, the menopause, labour or hormone alterations.
>
> *(Ratton, Galvão, and Andrade 2011: 3)*

For Bianchini (2011), common-sense views associate women with crimes of passion or crimes related to motherhood (abortion or infanticide). Women are not considered as agents of premeditated or planned crime, like men. Statistics however point to a significant rise in female criminality. Between the years of 2000 and 2011, according to the Brazilian National Department for Prisons (Departamento Penitenciário Nacional), the number of women prisoners grew by 252 per cent.

These figures were a starting point for my research into the representation of female criminals in the press. And the initial questions were: of all these female criminals, who gets reported in the press? And how? What are the ideological implications of these representations? In other words, in stories about crime and gender, what makes a story ‘reportable’ in the first place?

Crime stories, where sexualised women are represented as main characters, are a significant arena in which social conflict and gender discrimination are symbolically explored. I will discuss here therefore how the very few female characters that get into the main press are recontextualised in relation to their male counterparts and condemned doubly – for their deeds and for their gender. For my analysis, I draw on images from image banks, from newspapers, and online news.

Analytical tools

I adopt a critical semiotic multimodal approach to my data. The main proponents of this approach to social interaction, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), follow the works of systemic functional linguistics (Halliday 1978; Halliday and Hasan 1989; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014) and critical discourse analysts (Fairclough 1989, 1992, 2003, 2010; Weiss and Wodak 2003; Wodak and Meyer 2001). Their main innovation nevertheless is to include in their analyses not just language but all the semiotic modes that make up a social context. They also raise critical questions about the ‘affordances’ and buried ideological purposes used by communicators in a context of usage.

> Affordances are the potential uses of a given object, stemming from the perceivable properties of the object. Because perception is selective, depending on the needs and interests of the observer, different perceivers will notice different affordances. But those that remain unnoticed continue to exist objectively, latent in the object, waiting to be discovered. The same can be said of meaning. People will derive meaning from the material qualities of an object, for example, its colour, and which qualities they notice and what significance they give to them will depend on their needs and interests, whether these are individual and contingent and/or social and cultural, shared with a community.
>
> *(Van Leeuwen 2011: 59)*

Van Leeuwen continues to say that the term ‘meaning potential’ (Halliday 1978) is related to the ‘affordances that have become part of the acknowledged semiotic resources of a culture’ (ibid.). Colour or typography, for example, have a theoretical meaning potential ‘consisting of all their past uses and an actual meaning potential constituted by those past and present uses that are acknowledged and considered relevant by the users of that resource in a specific context’ (ibid.). Think, for example, the Eiffel Tower covered by the French flag after the Football World Cup and the meanings of victory it afforded.

This critical and semiotic approach is very appropriate for my purpose of investigating gender stereotyping in the representation of criminal women since it helps me to understand the effects of particular semiotic selections chosen from a pool of potential alternatives, which lead to discrimination. It is in the semiotic choices that ideology and power are encoded. Differently from other discursive analytical approaches, an important part of this affordance-led approach is the possibility to have something to say about particular kinds of semiotic material, how they are used, and what is special about it.

For the multimodal analysis, I use semiotic categories put forward by Kress 2010; Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996, 2001; Machin 2007; and Van Leeuwen 2005, 2007, 2008, and 2011 to consider photographs, colours, and language as meaning potential.

To complement the visual multimodal analysis, I also use insights from 'appraisal theory' (Martin and White 2005) in order to discuss 'labelling' and 'evaluation' in the linguistic mode.

My main thesis is that, as with language, semiotic modes can produce evaluative meanings that will influence the ways we receive information. Despite all the advances in society in terms of gender relations, the women in my data are contextualised as transgressive actors, not only because they are criminals but also because they perform behaviours highly inappropriate for their 'sex'. They are trivialised, derogated, and consequently judged and condemned.

My conclusions point to processes of social devaluation: sexism is the pervasive and underlying ideology recurrent in many representations of female criminals.

Crime and the media

Portrayals of crime and deviance are prominent and proliferate in all sorts of media. Deviancy, particularly in the form of 'fictionalised' or 'real life' stories, fascinates people. Crime reports, written and spoken, and their accompanying images are entertaining for their dramatic nature and their appeal to morbid curiosity, but they are also compelling since they connote a sense of insecurity and risk. Repackaged as a mass-media entertainment commodity, crime reports blur the boundaries between fact and fiction. They are a source of fear and escapism. Their popularity is attested in the many crime, serial killer, and sex-crime books sold at airports, bookshops, and even at supermarkets. In the visual domain, the most popular TV series in the last decades are all about crime and deviance: the American *The Wire* (2002–2013), *Breaking Bad* (2008–2013), the British produced *Prime Suspect* (1991–2006), *Wallender* (2008–2016), *The Fall* (2013–2016), *Line of Duty* (2012–2017), *Peaky Blinders* (2013–2017), among others. The outcome of these representations of crime life through powerful episodic, realist narration is that viewers, myself included, get involved with characters and addicted to the development of the story.

The treatment of any crime topic will always depend, however, on who is chosen to comment and whose opinions and definitions are sought. Choice and selection, therefore, will determine how a certain event or a certain person will be reported/represented and the implications derived from this choice will have ideological consequences. Clearly, therefore, media crime stories do not tell us about society. They show us, as Hartley (1982) suggests, certain *aspects of* society.

Each crime or tragic story is written against the background of other similar stories and they become part of a larger myth about values. Crime is outside common sense and it can only be explained in terms of 'concepts and mythologies of dominant ideology (corruption, criminal infection, foreign agitation)' (Chibnall, 1977: 115). I also add 'gender' to this list.

The framework of ideologies is revealed and reflected in the semiotic choices made by producers. Because semiotic resources are an instrument of communication, but also an instrument of control, a particular choice from a range of options can convey a fact or distort it and readers and viewers can be informed or manipulated. That is why particular choices can be so significant in terms of discourse interpretation.

The processes articulated in crime narratives focus on acts of violence committed by social actors and the actions taken by the authorities involved in the contexts of crime – police procedures, the court proceedings judgement, and prison. An interesting and very subtle identity choice in terms of gender in several current TV series is that the many 'new' female heroines, although powerful in their functional representations (they are lawyers, politicians, detectives, investigators, or even police superintendents – roles most of the time performed by men), are frequently associated with mental problems (either they are autistic, or bipolar, or even drug addicts). Contrastively and not surprisingly, their male counterparts do not seem to have such mental problems!

In current written media stories about crime, a great number of participants and contexts are represented not only linguistically but also visually. Women as perpetrators of crime are construed very specifically in terms of gender and produce an important link to the social negative imaginary about women. This is what I will discuss next.

Visual representation and gender

Figure 34.1 is a picture from a crime story, and Figure 34.2 is a picture from another. What could a reader deduce from these images as part of a story?

Whereas the reader looking at the second picture might reasonably guess that the story was about boys on the run, the reader of the first is more likely to assume it was about prostitution. In fact, both news stories are concerned with theft, robbery, and motorcycles.

The first story is a piece of news published on line in 2015, which tells the story of two female 'adolescents' who stole a motorbike and were put in prison. The accompanying text has a typical narrative structure (situation, problem, solution, evaluation). The action involves the theft/stealing of a motorbike and the police taking hold of the situation (not only was the robbery against the law but also drugs were found in a house where the adolescents had been before the robbery).

The second crime story, which also follows the same narrative structure, does not sexualise the boys to imply criminality in the visual representation, because sexuality is not a semiotic resource to be drawn upon in the characterisation of male criminality. Props that

Figure 34.1 An adolescent is arrested for the seventeenth time for stealing a motorbike in Anápolis, Goiania (since these pictures appeared in open access blogs, permission for reproduction is not applicable).

Figure 34.2 A motorboy is filmed during the robbery and the thief is shot by the police.

are present in portrayals of male criminals (guns, glasses, particular hats, hairstyle, jewellery, etc.) do, however. But their signification is very different from the ways the girls are made to signify (or are resemiotised) through their bodies.

The photos of these two stories do not add any new narrative meaning to the recounting of facts. They are simply evaluative and connotative – the first represents unnamed, fragmented, semi-naked bodies. The decision to show only parts of the whole person – the upper legs and hips – sexualises the adolescents even though this has nothing to do with the reported story. And it associates people's view of prostitution being linked to the deeds committed by the actors. Therefore, the underlying message is that girls who 'dress' in that way are likely to be criminals and the consequent implication is that because they 'look' like this, they must be guilty.

My point therefore is that, as these first examples demonstrate, there is a clear gender difference in the way women and men are portrayed in ordinary crime stories and that the visual elements add hidden meanings not made explicit in the textual form.

This preliminary point will be further expanded in my analysis of women criminals in the section 'Female criminals – a question of gender' below.

Image and meaning: theoretical categories

Denotation and connotation

According to Hall (1968) images show particular events, particular people, places, and things. They 'document', or in semiotic terminology, they 'denote'. The author proposes 'pointers of denotation' in visual communication, which are very important tools for the understanding of visual messages. Hall also suggests that people can be categorised according to specific social types (dress, objects, or physiognomic features). They can also be categorised as a group or as an individual.

The social distance between participants in the image and the viewer affords different meanings. 'Intimacy' or 'distance' is produced according to the ways bodies are depicted in pictures. If the viewer interacts visually with only a face or a head, s/he feels intimate and near the represented actor. A focus on head and shoulders produces meanings of personal closeness while a more distant focus on the upper, lower body or complete body distance the viewer from the represented participant.

In the picture (Figure 34.3), the five children document or denote middle-class children (for their clothes and the setting they are placed in) in a close social distance (we can see their whole bodies) in relation to the viewer. They are happy, amazed children looking at something interesting and the viewer empathises with them.

Other images however depict people, places, things, and events to get general or abstract *ideas* across. They *connote* ideas and concepts.

The representation of beautiful people, smiling, placed in interesting and attractive contexts (Figure 34.4) draw us to the represented participants and our reaction is positive.

Negative representations (Figure 34.5), however, produce the opposite effect.

Both positiveness and negativeness are, however, construed through the semiotic resources authors choose in order to deliver their message. In Figure 34.4, for example, the social actors (the connoted grandmother and grandson) are represented as happy, smiling, and cuddling and surrounded by lush green trees – all these choices connote 'affection' and 'intimacy'. In Figure 34.5, by contrast, we see the representation of an old lady, ugly because of her exaggerated physical characteristics. The semiotic evaluation is negative since she is construed as 'odd' for her age: in the colour image (not reproduced here) her glasses are green, her hair is blue, and her shoes are red. She connotes transgression, therefore.

According to Machin (2007: 25) asking what an image connotes is asking:

> What ideas and values are communicated through what is represented, and through the way in which it is represented? Or, from the point of view of the image-maker: How do I get general or abstract ideas across? How do I get across what events, places and things *mean*? What concrete signifier can I use to get a particular abstract idea across?

Figure 34.3 Cousins (author photo).

Figure 34.4 Grandma with child (courtesy of iStock/Getty images, reproduced with permission).

Figure 34.5 Naughty old woman (courtesy of iStock/Getty images, reproduced with permission).

For Barthes (1977: 23), ‘connotation’, is realised through the choice of ‘poses’, ‘objects’ (these are inducers of ideas, in other words, a bookcase equals an intellectual person); or ‘settings’ (landscapes, rivers, mountains, the sea, etc. can be used as metaphors for changes in life, the passing of time, or peace); and, finally, ‘photogenia’ (the ways pictures are framed by distance, focus, and illumination). And of course, the same object or pose can have different connotations for different people. A woman in a short skirt can be viewed as ‘modern’ in Western cultures, for example, but could be arrested for immorality in the Middle East.

All visual choices, therefore, like their linguistic counterparts, are never neutral but always presented through an ideological point of view and they are always ideologically motivated. Fairclough (2010: 26) proposes that ‘ideologies are a significant element of processes through which relations of power are established, maintained, enacted and transformed’. He also points out that ideological positioning is most effective when its workings are least visible. In visual representation, viewers tend to believe what they see without critical questioning of how the choices are made, which is a big problem.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 20) argue that the same meaning, within a social cultural domain, can be expressed in different semiotic modes and modes are always resources for making meaning.

Language is, of course, one of the main semiotic resources we use. All semiotic systems allow us to negotiate social and power relationships. The fragmented female bodies in the pictures that accompany the crime narrative in Figure 34.1 ‘afford’ meanings of gendered sexuality, for example. Therefore, if we want to understand how crime is visually represented and how some actors are more judged or discriminated against than others in visual communication, we have to consider the potentiality and affordances of their representation and how semiotic categories are used to realise particular meanings.

Another important category in visual communication proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) and based on functional linguistic theory is ‘modality’, a subsystem of the interpersonal function proposed by Halliday (1978) or the relation between viewer and image. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996: 160) suggest that one of the most important aspects of visual communication is the question of the truthfulness of the message. What do we see that is real, factual, true, or a lie, a fiction, or something out of reality? Choices in ‘modality’ therefore signal degrees of truth or probability expressed by ‘certainty’, ‘possibility’, and ‘probability’ about the world that can be:

- *Irrealis* – it can be like this;
- *Realis* – it is like this.

Visual images can also represent the world as though it is real, naturalistic, or as though it is fantastic or imaginary. The authors call these aspects of representation ‘code orientation’.

For Kress and Van Leeuwen (ibid.), a social semiotic theory cannot establish the absolute truth about visual representations. It can however, demonstrate that a given proposition is represented as true or not. Modality is therefore essential for the analysis of multimodal representation since it can show people, places, and things as real or as unreal (blurred pictures, for example) or as caricatures of a proposition or even copies of the real. In crime news, as I will discuss below, modality and code orientation play a very important role since reality is always presented according to who sees or recounts events. The general tendency, however, is for the vast majority of crime representation to be naturalistic and high in modality choices, while in advertising discourse, sensory orientation plays a very important role since persuasion is the final aim.

Female criminals – a question of gender

According to the historical and judicial research into female crime developed by Faria (2010), women, throughout history, have been victims of a social trap that puts them into a position of being fragile and docile and these characteristics are responsible for the construction of the stereotype of women being less competent. This supposed lack of competence has helped to construe women's universe as inferior to men's. As a consequence, women have been considered, because of their recognised docility, a lot less capable of committing crimes, and when they do so, they are said to be under the influence of a man or involved in matters of the heart.

Beauty and seduction have also been constantly evoked to justify female crimes – the assumption that the most attractive women would be able to trick and deceive men better. Traditionally therefore, 'views of why women turn to or refrain from crime have been rooted in biological and psychological explanations that focus on women's nature, which is supposedly different from men's (Mayr and Machin 2012: 112).

Lombroso (1895/2004), the founder of anthropological criminology, was one of the first authors to categorise women criminals according to stereotypical views and evaluative gendered constructions. 'For him, there are links between the nature of a crime and the personality or physical appearance of the offender' (Mayr and Machin, ibid). Women criminals were either:

- Sexual offenders;
- Born criminal – monsters;
- Hysterical offenders;
- Lunatic criminals – mad;
- Epileptic and morally insane.

It is very interesting to note that these constructions still persist in contemporary narratives about women criminals and visual representations emphasise these assumptions. Evaluations attached to them (both linguistic and visual) are very similar to Lombroso's lexicalisation (or choice of words) of women criminals (Jewkes 2014: 113) – they are described by their sexuality or sexual deviance, their absence of physical attractiveness or as femmes fatales, as bad wives, as bad mothers, as mythical monsters, or even as evil manipulators. As Mayr and Machin (2012) demonstrated in their analysis of 'women and crime', mainstream media has the 'tendency to depict female criminals in terms of a few standard narrative frameworks' (2012: 135) and lexical choices are (hysterical, mad, monster) 'ways of linguistically othering which works to remove the offender from their society, thereby avoiding the uncomfortable truth that they are produced by that society' (2012: 116).

Using the tools of visual grammar, I first examined a series of Getty images which represent visually 'women criminals'. Images in 'image banks' as Machin (2004: 781) suggests, do not record reality, but put forward ideas about certain people or types and 'convey particular kinds of scripts, values and identities'. They are a powerful heuristic tool. By typing the words 'women criminals' a series of pictures of particular kinds of women appear on the screen and they reveal very deep-seated prejudices and values. Because of copyright restriction, only two examples are shown from a database of 2,605 pictures (Figures 34.5 and 34.6, gettyimages.com).

In this big database, there are many kinds of pictures of women criminals but in general, in terms of denotation, I can generalise and say that they present 'specific social types'

Figure 34.6 'Woman criminal'. Free istock images at photo.com by Getty.images (royalty free).

Figure 34.7 'Woman criminal'. Free istock image at photo.com by Getty.images (royalty free).

placed most of the time in vague contexts with the intention of 'documenting' a reality. In terms of distance, the pictures are shot from close or medium distance and at horizontal angles, so the distance between the participants is mitigated.

The visual choices used by the photographers of women criminals index meanings of transgression and confrontation because they transmit, in terms of code orientation, a naturalistic (we believe that the women are criminals because of their threatening faces) and sensory code orientation (indicated, in the colour image – not reproduced here – by red and pink lipstick, and red and black clothing, and by the accompanying gestures).

These transgressive identities are materialised through the presentation of 'demand' (the gaze to the viewer) pictures, which interpellate the viewer. The gaze of the represented participant is directly and horizontally addressed to the viewer, connoting danger and in a sense, power.

As pointed out earlier, just like in language, image producers can present positive or negative meanings, and images of people evoke emotional reactions. Through the semiotic system of evaluation which is the attachment of values to people, things, and action, Martin and White (2005: 44–56), in their 'appraisal theory', label the world around us as an 'evaluative disposition of stance'. One of the main functions of evaluation is attitudinal: we use language or other semiotic resources to assign values of praising or blaming. For the author, there are three types of attitude:

> *affec*t or the emotional evaluation of things, processes or states of affairs (e.g., like/dislike);
> *judgement* or the ethical evaluation of human behaviour (e.g., good/bad)
> *appreciation* or the aesthetic or functional evaluation of things, processes and states of affairs (e.g., beautiful/ugly, useful/useless).

Social judgement is particularly important in visual evaluation since it is the assessment of human behaviour and it is based on systems of rules, of ethics, of social norms, and of accessibility. We can extrapolate the original goal of appraisal theory concerned with linguistic interaction and apply it to the visual mode in order to claim that evaluation is in fact a kind of connotation. Crime, of course, is the breaking of social rules and ethical behaviour and it is always extremely evaluated both linguistically and visually, as discussed below.

In the Getty data, it is through social judgement and aesthetic appreciation that women criminals are evaluated visually. The semiotic resources employed are many, all connoting rule-breaking through the presentation of props included in the pictures: guns, money, drugs, lingerie (which connotes intimacy and sexuality), etc.

Colour choices are also very telling. We know through the study of colours (Van Leeuwen 2011), that they have many different meanings according to time, culture, history, etc. 'Colour systems relate to religions or empires … or the global system that underlies today's use of colour in the creation of a lifestyle and corporate identities' (2011: 15). Colour therefore, together with the other semiotic systems, is an integrative part of linguistic and visual resources that make up a message and all colours have meaning potential and affordances which will only be 'narrowed down, made more specific in specific cultural and situation contexts' (Van Leeuwen ibid.: 58–59).

Another very important aspect of colour meaning is its association with particular identities and style as raised by Van Leeuwen (ibid.). I want to claim that even the choice of colour is evaluative.

In the Getty data analysed, it is interesting to note that criminal women are most of the time young and their bodies are fragmented. The dressing colour code relies on non-chromatic colours, grey and black, and chromatic primary reds and yellows (Van Leeuwen 2011: unnumbered page, between 52 and 53). Because of the choice of saturated reds (which have a symbolic value of intensity and danger) and black, the overall message is that women criminals are sexy (the famous little black dress or grey dress connotes sexuality and elegance). And these of course convey danger and transgression. The choice of colour no doubt affords these meanings.

Another important point is that, although the topics associated with the representation have to do with deviance and drugs, the overall meaning potential is related to sexuality. Sex, in one form or another (bodies, gestures, clothes), is always alluded to. As a consequence of these choices, the viewer can interpret the representations as problematic.

In the popular Brazilian press, the situation is very similar to the Getty images world. The news stories and the images I examined are of real people involved in real crimes. See examples in Figures 34.8 and 34.9.

A woman called Elize Matsunaga killed her abusive husband, first by shooting him, then sawing him into pieces, and putting his body parts into a suitcase. This was a national news event specially because it was committed by a woman in a terrifying way. The interesting aspect of the case for us is the ways the murderer was presented linguistically and visually. Elize Matsunaga[2] was described linguistically in the headline of the news as:

> SexElize Matsunaga, who killed her husband Marcos Matsunaga, was a call girl. Really. Eliza Matsunaga was a high-class prostitute registered on the Prostitution web site McClass.

Elize is linguistically classified as a prostitute and as a 'femme fatale'. The implication therefore is that sexuality and criminality are intertwined. Because she is a prostitute, she is connotatively placed as a member of the criminal fraternity, so murder is just one more step although her sexual profession was not at issue in the crime event. Ironically, those who read the story will discover it was the husband's sexual betrayal that occasioned his murder. Interestingly, there is no picture of the mistress.

It is also important to note that the picture of Elize in her lingerie (Figure 34.8) taken from another context, a call-girl site, and designed originally as an advert for sexual services, is resemiotised and used in the news story. This is a very persuasive strategy used by the newsmakers to convince viewers of her criminality.

Visually, modality is *realis* (this is her!), her body is fragmented and semi-naked, her gaze is directly pointing to the eye of the viewer (a demand picture), her pose is sexualised, her lips are red and she is blonde! In the news story, the murderess, who is interacting with the reader, presents those very interactive features of Getty images (Figure 34.9). This is clearly an excuse to present a picture of her in her underclothes with the function of selling the magazine and attracting sensually the viewers. This also invites the reader to construct an alternative narrative. The pictures published are not chosen primarily for their news values or story relevance, but to titillate readers who incidentally judge and condemn the represented actor.

A point that is worth mentioning here is that the Brazilian population is very mixed in terms of skin colour, but whiteness and blondness are desired aspects in the construction of positive identities. Paradoxically therefore, although in reality Black women are in the majority in the criminal population in Brazil, the few criminal women who are made into the news, are white and blonde, extremely sexualised, and are labelled as such. So the perverse construction of stereotypical positive features join criminality and sexuality as given fact. The next pictures (Figure 34.10) illustrate this point further.

Figure 34.8 Elize in her lingerie (reproduced with the permission of Veja at veja@abril.com.br).

These mugshot pictures are of a gang of young women referred to as 'blonde' (no names or other identity markers) who committed 'lighting kidnapping' in São Paulo, Brazil. All are white, blond, and glamorised. Once again, race here intersects with gender, and discrimination is symbolically explored.

When their identity is described linguistically, they are either described by their physical attributes (blonde, beautiful) or are given names such as 'muse'.

> **Blonde** was used to corrupt mayors in a big corruption scheme.[3]

A last point is that there is a constant association with male criminals and women criminals are lexicalised through their family connections as 'misses', 'girl-friends', and 'lovers':

> *Little auntie* from Rocinha, *ex-wife* and *sister* of drug dealer is put in jail for her association with drugs.[4]

As Caldas-Coulthard and Moon (2010, 2016) and Caldas-Coulthard (2010) pointed out, women in news stories are needlessly and standardly reported in terms of their physical attributes (age, beauty) or classified according to female roles in society (mother, wife, prostitute, grandmother, etc.). Women criminals, in crime news stories, continue to be

Figure 34.9 Elize the murderess (reproduced with the permission of Veja at veja@abril.com.br).

categorised as social actors in relation to their male partners as wives, girlfriends, sisters, etc. Even in crime, the constant dependency on a male partner continues to be reinstated.

To sum up the analysis, in visual representation of female actors in news as narrative texts, women criminals tend to be represented in *realis* modalities, interacting directly with viewers and therefore connoting anti-social behaviour.

Through sexualised images, the underlying ideology is that female criminals break social norms and should be condemned twice – by their criminal acts as well as by their sexuality or simply by the fact that they are women.

Conclusions

The examples discussed in this chapter have demonstrated a strong bias against female suspects since their representation is construed through very sexist points of view. Women continue to be associated with men, and in this sense, they are yet again agentless. Sexuality, youth, and beauty are given aspects of the construction of characters not because criminality is a social issue that needs to be tackled by state policies but simply because it sells stories. The outcome of this representation is the fictionalisation of criminal activity. They in fact portray a very different resemiotisation of the 'real' women criminals that are in prison – these are poor, Black, not physically attractive, and hopeless.

The visual analysis has suggested that the representation 'encourages readers to draw misleading conclusions about female offenders and limit critical inquiry of the story' (Mayr

Figure 34.10 Members of a gang of young women, referred to as 'The Blondie Gang' ('*Guangue das Loiras*') (DHPP/Divulgação/VEJA.) veja.abril.com.br (22nd March 2012, 16h30).

and Machin 2012: 135), especially in the Brazilian context where criminality is an enormous social problem that should never be glamorised.

Future directions

Gender and language, as an area of discourse studies, has evolved tremendously in recent decades and our research, as linguists and semioticians, has contributed in many ways to the dissemination of awareness about gender and discourse issues, focusing especially on the discursive constructions of the social. Although it is undeniable that significant advances have been made through the work of many different social movements, there are still many examples of domination and exclusion based on people's gender identities in our societies and their discursive practices.

Sexism, racism, and ageism in discourses in different private and institutional contexts have not disappeared. In many parts of the world, there is a considerable backlash in terms of conservative views on gender issues, materialised in different ways for meaning-making, in other words, in different semiotic resources, and a growing political influence which aims at tightening restrictions on issues such as abortion, gay marriage, and secular education, among many others. Gender inequalities continue to exist and violence is practised against minorities on a daily basis.

Linguistically mediated violence for us is a central topic and we must continue to explore the different and subtle ways sexism and violence are materialised in discourse.

As I hope to have demonstrated in my analysis, semiotic resources like: location of elements and props, modality, proximity from the viewer, gaze, angles, and linguistic evaluation help to create fictional personas that are not congruent with the brutal reality of daily crime. The serious stereotypes constructed through modes of representation produce derogation and exclusion. In the representation of crime, gender imbalance continues to operate with other axes of inequality. Future critical readings of other institutional discourses related to crime (in the legal and the medical professions, among others) can help to question and destabilise these axes of injustice. And more research is still needed.

Notes

1 All the translations from Portuguese into English are my own.
2 SExElize Matsunaga, que assassinou o marido Marcos Matsunaga, era garota de programa!Isso mesmo! Elize Matsunaga era prostituta de luxo do site de prostituição Mclass!
3 **Loira** era usada para aliciar prefeitos para esquema de corrupção. https://www.em.com.br/app/noticia/nacional/2013/09/24/interna_nacional,452505/loira-era-usada-para-aliciar-prefeitos-para-esquema-de-corrupcao.shtml
4 Tiazinha da Rochinha, ex mulher e Irma de traficantes é presa por associacao ao trafico. https://www.terra.com.br/noticias/brasil/policia/musas-do-crime/

Further reading

Machin, D., Caldas-Coulthard, C. R., and Milani, T. (2016) 'Doing critical multimodality in research on gender, language and discourse'. *Gender and Language*, 10(3), pp. 301–308.

This introductory chapter of *Gender and Language* opens a discussion of the role of multimodality in gender studies. For the authors, multimodality is still a fragmented and unconsolidated area but crucial because it raises critical questions about meanings and gendered identities.

Ruiz, P. (2017) 'Power revealed: Masking police officers in the public sphere'. *Visual Communication Special Issue: Picturing Protest – Visuality, Visibility and the Public Sphere*, 16(3), pp. 299–314.

This paper discusses how journalists constructing news narratives about 'public demonstrations' reproduce the ways police distinguish between good and bad/criminal protesters and how images of violent demonstrators tend to be used to delegitimise political claims. The focus of the paper is on the ways images highlight acts of concealment in popular print and online narratives and 'the police' rather than the protesters become the object of public attention.

Van Leeuwen, T. (2018) 'More evaluation in critical discourse analysis'. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 15(2), pp. 140–153.

According to the author, CDA must 'evaluate' the results of discourse analysis taking into consideration the questions of misrepresentation. A critical reading can establish that misrepresentation results in social inequality. This paper considers therefore very important issues related to any critical analysis and ethics.

Related topics

Language, gender, and sexuality: reflections on the field's ongoing critical engagement with the sociopolitical landscape; anthropological discourse analysis and the social ordering of gender ideology; gender and sexuality in discourse: semiotic and multimodal approaches; doing gender and sexuality intersectionally in multimodal social media practices; XML mark-up for nomination, collocation, and frequency analysis of language of the law.

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35

Confident appearing

Revisiting *Gender Advertisements* in contemporary culture

Kirsten Kohrs and Rosalind Gill

Introduction

It is now more than 40 years since Goffman published his landmark study *Gender Advertisements* (1979), which changed the way that questions of power and identity in advertising were understood. Goffman broke with traditional content analytic approaches to analysing images and instead developed a framework for examining the way that nonverbal signals communicate messages about gendered power. Working with a largely print-based sample of adverts, he argued that features such as relative size, posture, and touch conveyed important messages about social value and authority. For example, relative to men, women were typically presented as smaller, lower, and adopting deferential or 'canting' postures. Moreover, whilst men were shown using the products they advertised – and hence their touch was coded as 'functional' – women were frequently depicted in a dreamy far-away kind of 'licensed withdrawal'. Far from being idiosyncratic, Goffman argued, such representations were highly patterned and deeply connected to unequal gendered power relations. Indeed they operated symbolically as a kind of ritualisation of female subordination.

Goffman's work has become a reference point for almost all subsequent scholars interested in gender and visual language, including those in linguistics, semiotics, and the developing field of multi-modal analysis. His analyses had the force of an instant 'recognition factor', along with vivid examples, and, once apprehended, these patterns of visual domination could readily be observed to be widespread across consumer culture. Yet Goffman was writing in a particular place and time – he was engaging with the habitat of images that defined 1970s North America. How relevant are his analyses today? To what extent do the patterns of ritualised gender subordination he discussed still apply? How might his approach be deployed in contemporary culture to 'notice' – analytically and politically – other gendered patterns?

In this chapter we address these questions in a critical appreciation of Goffman's work. Drawing on a sample of 200 advertisements ('adverts') placed in upmarket women's magazines we examine whether his claims still hold true, questioning his arguments about size, posture, touch, and gaze, and raising new questions about how gender is 'done' and communicated today. While there are still many examples of adverts that adopt conventions that Goffman would recognise, the visual landscape of gender is changing, we suggest, in the wake of increasingly well-documented shifts to what is variously understood as post-feminism, commodity feminism, or neoliberal feminism, i.e., a mediated multiplicity of contradictory new and revitalised feminist ideas which range from construction of feminism as stylish, cool, and fashionable identities to political activism. Our focus here is on one particular iteration of this – the figure of the 'confident woman', who, rather than being presented as small, passive, or deferential, is depicted as bold and powerful. Drawing on a wider literature in gender studies we seek to interrogate the focus upon 'confident appearing', asking how – i.e. by what visual and textual means – it is produced, what it communicates, and what it does ideologically and performatively. The chapter's aims are thus threefold: to critically engage in debates about how gender materialises in contemporary advertising; to examine a novel but increasingly dominant trope for the representation of (some) women, locating this in debates about new femininities; and to contribute both theoretically and methodologically to analysing the vocabularies of gender in use in visual culture.

Gender and advertising

Advertising has long been a focus of feminist analysis. One reason for this is the sheer volume of adverts in contemporary culture. As long ago as 2000, it was estimated that the average North American sees approximately 3,000 advertising messages every day (Kilbourne 2000) or, to put it another way, spends around three years in an average lifespan engaging with this material. Such figures represent a substantial under-estimate today where adverts greet us from every conceivable platform and where their ubiquity signals a blurring – if not a complete breakdown – of the boundaries between advertising and other media. In our 'promotional culture' (Wernick 1991) and world of omnipresent branding, commercial content has 'gone native', seamlessly blurring into editorial content in magazines and newspapers, listicles on Buzz Feed, tweets, vines, and blog posts 'that never mention their corporate connections' – in what Einstein (2016) calls 'black ops advertising'. Advertising is viral, heavily watched as entertainment via YouTube videos, is endlessly discussed and spoofed, or may not even be recognised as a commercial message – as when the drink company, Red Bull, set up a space dive that was reported as news.

The influence of advertising has been compared to that of education and organised religion, a vast body of material that shapes our media and is at the heart of social existence (Jhally 1987). However, it is not simply its ubiquitous nature that has generated feminist interest: adverts have also garnered critique because of their reliance upon gender ideologies (Jhally 1987); their condensed nature makes them sites of crude stereotypes and some of the most egregious examples of sexism in media culture. They are also the locus of new meanings and figurations of gender – deeply implicated in constructions of the 'new man' and 'new father', for example, and in contemporary representations of trans and non-binary genders, as well as in popularising distinctively postfeminist depictions of women as active, empowered sexual subjects (as we discuss below).

Early research on gender and advertising used a quantitative content analytic approach. This involves coding, then counting, instances of particular portrayals – for example whether women were portrayed as working outside the home, where they were depicted, whether they spoke, etc. A major study published in the *New York Times* magazine (Hennessee and Nicholson 1972) prefigured decades of research which showed women were predominantly shown in the home, depicted as housewives and mothers, often in subservient roles; and rarely provided argument in favour of the advertised products. By contrast, men were portrayed in a wide range of settings and occupational roles; as independent and autonomous; and were presented as objective and knowledgeable about the products being advertised.

Content analytic studies were immensely valuable in documenting striking patterns of portrayal and in furnishing quantitative evidence for arguments about sexism in advertising. However, their weaknesses included the superficiality of the analyses provided – only focused on manifest content, not underlying ideas or ideologies – and the tendency to generate very similar findings. This was in part an artefact of the methodology itself, since in order to document instances of something (e.g. a stereotype) it has to have been pre-identified. In this sense such studies could only tell us what we already 'knew', supplying evidence about the extent of use of a representation rather than anything about it.

Goffman's (1979) book – alongside emerging work in the semiotic tradition (Coward 1984; Williamson 1978) – interrupted this depressing litany of statistics about the preponderance of women depicted as housewives, shown only in the kitchen or bathroom, and portrayed solely for their physical attractiveness, offering a new approach grounded in an interest in nonverbal communication. According to Goffman's dramaturgical perspective individuals are constantly and routinely putting on a performance in public space to convey culturally distinctive information, which allows strangers a glimpse of their lives. Goffman called these performances displays: 'all of an individual's behaviour and appearance informs those who witness him [sic], minimally telling them something about his social identity, about his mood, intent, and expectations, and about the state of his relation to them' (1979: 1). As displays become well established in a particular sequence, they can be taken out of the original context and 'quoted' in the 'make-believe scenes in advertisements'; advertisers are thus able 'to use a few models and props to evoke a lifelike scene' (Goffman 1979: 3, 23). Advertisements are carefully choreographed, thereby providing a heightened, aspirational version of reality grounded in a broad cultural context. Thus, the representation of identity in print advertisement can be considered a rich source of data for social analysis of the performance of gender.

In *Gender Advertisements* (1979), Goffman explores the depiction of women, primarily in print advertising, from a fresh perspective offering insights on taken-for-granted gender codes based on his understanding of display, i.e. an individual's nonverbal behaviour (body language) and appearance. His analysis of gender display focuses on and reveals gender role stereotyping as well as patterns of submission. He argued that adverts frequently depict ritualised versions of the parent–child relationship, in which women are largely accorded child-like status. In the adverts he analysed, women were typically shown lower or smaller than men and using gestures that 'ritualised their subordination', for example lying down, using bashful knee bends, and deferential postures and smiles. Women were also often depicted in licensed withdrawal (dreamy self-absorption). Clear differences in gendered touch were also identified. While men's touch was functional and instrumental, women's was light and caressing, often having no purpose at all. As Gill (2007a: 80) has argued elsewhere, this key difference can be seen vividly in adverts for shower gel: men would be shown as lathering up busily, while women were – and arguably still are – routinely depicted 'making only a small circular movement on one shoulder'. Similarly, women were shown touching themselves frequently, particularly on the face, and were also depicted running their fingers gently along a range of products from perfume bottles to sanitary pads.

Reading Goffman: a critical appreciation

Goffman's genius lay in framing the reader's perception of gender display in advertising in skilfully chosen samples of mainly print advertisements. He was diffident about quantifying his insights. He acknowledged freely that in terms of the methodological question of 'discovery, presentation, and proof' (Goffman 1979: 24), he only addresses the first two. Yet 'his observations were extremely insightful and full of resonance for most readers' (Bruce and Yearly 2006: 126). A 'shock of recognition' (Manning and Smith 2010) testifies to the relevance of his findings. Guided by Goffman's observations, the reader performs an 'instructed reading' (Smith 1996), scrutinising the visual evidence provided in the form of pictures which visually corroborate Goffman's written descriptions of the underlying pattern.

Forty years after its publication, the book remains central to studies of gender in advertising. Goffman's analytic framework is a point of departure for the analysis of gender and the body's presentation in advertising. One of the major insights of subsequent feminist work has centred on how 'cropping' is used in adverts. Many studies have highlighted the way in which women's – and now increasingly men's – bodies are fragmented in adverts, visually dissected so that the viewer sees only the lips, the breasts, the bottom, etc. Kilbourne (1999: 278) compellingly argues that this works as a strategy of objectification, and that 'turning a human being into a thing, an object, is almost always the first step towards justifying violence against that person'. Cortese (1999) further extended Goffman's ideas by documenting examples of what he calls the display of 'mock assault' in adverts, such as an advert for a Karl Lagerfeld perfume in which a frightened looking, sexy woman is portrayed backed against a wall, while a large, muscular man (seen only from behind) bears down on her. Similar examples remain abundant, particularly in a context in which advertisers have to use ever more visually arresting imagery in order to stand out in a crowded mediascape.

But are Goffman's arguments still relevant today? After decades of feminist activism and large-scale social transformation, to what extent are these patterns of ritualised subordination of women still evident in advertising? Meta studies (i.e. studies about other studies) have produced contradictory findings (Eisend 2010; Hall et al. 2005; Wolin 2003). Goffman's framework is not easy to operationalise and his categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive or exhaustive (Smith 1996). For example, the physical placement of a woman behind another figure may signal coyness and dependence but the effect would be different if it is a man who is placed in the rear position. Goffman does not specify how the different effects are achieved but notes that the 'same verbal description of relative "physical" position could be equally applied to cover radically different effects. For the effective reading of his text, the writer depends upon effective viewing by his reader' (Goffman 1979: 74). Nonetheless, two studies (Belknap and Leonard 1991; Kang 1997) set out to conduct a conceptual replication of Goffman's work applying his precise framework. The studies analysed 1,000 images in 1985, and 500 (approximately 250 in 1971 and 250 in 1991) advertisements respectively. Both found continued evidence of the feminine touch, ritualisation of subordination, as well as a degree of licensed withdrawal while relative size and function ranking were infrequent.

Forty years on

Our own research, conducted in 2015, analyses 200 double-page adverts in the upmarket glossy magazines *Vogue* (US and UK editions) and *Vanity Fair* (UK edition). The adverts featured fashion, accessories, jewellery, perfume, and beauty products and depicted almost exclusively women. (In order to compare women's and men's body language, the sample was complemented by approximately 100 adverts from the upmarket men's lifestyle magazines *Esquire* (UK edition) and *GQ* (UK edition) in which the adverts were equally highly targeted featuring fashion, accessories, and perfume depicting almost exclusively men.) Our research takes as point of departure a grounded theory approach, developed from the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), which offers a rigorous inductive approach to building theory from data. In our research we sought to identify the basic units of non-verbal behaviour in six main categories. These are gaze, posture, gesture, touch, facial expression, and proxemics, that is, the culturally determined 'invisible, variable volume of space surrounding an individual that defines that individual's preferred distance from others' (Griffin 2012: 105). It explores their constituent parts as components of visual meaning-making.

Before presenting our findings it is important to make some methodological observations on developing building blocks of meaning-making in visual language. What becomes abundantly clear from an analysis of this type, is the difficulty of deriving meaning from *isolated* units of body language in complex social situations. Context is everything. For instance, contradictory results have been found in interpreting the smile. Less powerful individuals have been found to both smile more *and* to smile less – in order to please others, reduce threat by gathering information, or indicate role conformity in the absence of social control and status (for excellent detailed analysis see Hall et al. 2005: 901).

Clearly, in advertisements the genre itself also limits the number of meaningful interpretations of a smile, as one would expect it to indicate pleasure or delight regarding the advertised object. Interestingly, the smile is the most frequent facial expression in our sample, but only presents in just over 10 per cent of the adverts, while in most images there is a *neutral* facial expression. When a smile does present, it is cued by proximal indicators, i.e. pointers that indicate the state of something closely related, such as a feeling of happiness or interest and liking in social encounters. Interestingly, only 1 image of the 200 in upmarket women's magazines presented a facial expression that was not a smile or neutral, namely a frown. In the absence of contextual information, it is not possible to assign meaning to it – it might be tiredness or irritation. In other words, facial expression is only readable in the context of other cues.

Individual units of meaning-making in isolation are polysemic, that is, they can be interpreted in multiple different ways. Building blocks of visual meaning such as intimate physical proximity and bodily contact can signal a close personal relationship. However, this reading is only valid in conjunction with a cluster of other key units of meaning-making such as body orientation towards the other, a leaning forward posture, and, frequently, mutual gaze and friendly facial expression as well as contextual variables. For example, an intense intimate relationship between a woman and a girl in a Patek Philippe advertisement (*Vogue*, UK September 2015), is cued by mutual gaze, smile, body orientation towards one another, leaning forward, intimate physical proximity, and touch.

The relationship between the actors may thus be read as mother and daughter based on the socio-psychological notion of a script, frame, or schema, all of which describe 'structures of expectation based on past experience' which 'help us process and comprehend stories [and] serve to filter and shape perception' (Tannen 1984: 179). However, intimate physical proximity and bodily contact in a *different* context, such as a crowded urban environment, reveal no such meaning, but can be observed among strangers, as for example in the 'Rush Hour Commute' (*Vanity Fair*, UK September 2015) or 'Afternoon Sun' (*Vogue*, UK November 2015) executions of the MiuMiu Eyewear 'Subjective Reality' campaign (Figure 35.1).

Figure 35.1 MiuMiu 'Subjective Reality Afternoon Sun' (*Vogue*, UK 2015). Image courtesy of The Advertising Archives.

In this context, the cluster is made up of variables dissonant with a close personal relationship, namely, lack of eye contact, neutral facial expression, and body orientation away from one another.

Our sample does not confirm Goffman's analysis in terms of height, relative size, gendered postures, or canting (deferential) positions, though it does point to some persistence of a particular form of 'feminine touch' – light, caressing, and frequently directed at the self. There are no incidences of function ranking as none of the images show one person instructing or serving another, superior roles, or even professional/working environments as indicators of the ritualisation of subordination. Nor are there incidences of licensed withdrawal, a dreamy self-absorption. The direct gaze in most images levelled at the viewer, the confident stance or gait, heads held up high, give the women in the advertisements a strong presence and signal confidence: 'holding the body erect and the head high is stereotypically a mark of unashamedness, superiority, and disdain' (Goffman 1979: 40). This is the case in almost all of the advertisements. In fact, the women might even be almost naked, as for example in the YSL Rouge Pur Couture advertisement (https://cdn.newsapi.com.au/image/v1/4576b83b1cd81b6c3517c91ec481e4bc) where the female model, Cara Delevigne, is only partially covered by a jacket, yet her relaxed posture, head held high, line of sight looking down on the viewer, signal unashamedness, superiority, and disdain.

One exception to this bold, confident representation of women might be the Gucci 2015/16 'Cruise' campaign (*Vogue*, US/UK November 2015) which appears to show a social setting in grand interiors (Figure 35.2). However, the avoidance of eye contact and the overall stiff body language of all the female actors makes them appear like puppets rather than humans. This suggests an edgy, 'arty' set of meanings.

The visuals Goffman analysed revealed a ritualisation of subordination which was partly effected via height relationships: 'A classic stereotype of deference is that of lowering oneself physically in some form or other of prostration' (Goffman 1979: 40);

'elevation seems to be employed indicatively in our society, high physical place symbolising high social place' (Goffman 1979: 43). However in our sample, relative size (height relationships) was not relevant as there were few advertisements that pictured both men and women. When advertisements featured a diversity of genders men were taller than women only in as far as men typically have a greater body height than women, such as in the group portraits of the Dolce & Gabbana #DG Mamma, the MiuMiu 'Subjective Reality' campaigns, and a Moncler and Kate Spade advertisement. Their placing and the hold of their bodies did not accentuate this. Indeed it is more frequently the man rather than the woman who physically lowers himself. In a Gucci advertisement, cropped so that one can only see the upper bodies, a man with a naked torso is lying on a bed, while a fully dressed woman is leaning in with her arm resting across his body (*GQ*, UK September 2015; *Vogue*, UK September 2015), inverting what might be expected from Goffman's analysis (Figure 35.3).

This trend is reflected across our dataset in which, overall, rather than appearing small, passive, or deferential, women are presented as bold, confident, and powerful, with strong and assertive patterns of looking. We want to argue that a new kind of visual language is being developed to address (particularly, though not exclusively) the magazines' readership of middle- and upper-class female subjects. These women are being hailed through a composite of signifiers of assertiveness, boldness, and power that together comprise a kind of 'confident appearing'. It is to this that we turn in the remainder of this chapter, first locating this new figure in debates about postfeminism, new femininities, and confidence culture (Gill and Orgad 2015), and then in the next section examining examples in contemporary advertising.

Figure 35.2 Gucci (*Vogue*, US 2015). Image courtesy of The Advertising Archives.

Figure 35.3 Gucci (*GQ*, UK 2015). Image courtesy of The Advertising Archives.

Advertising and postfeminism

Since the 1990s, a number of different writers have sought to make sense of changing constructions of gender in advertising, with a significant body of scholarship interested in exploring the impact that feminism has had on advertising. Goldman (1992/2000) coined the term 'commodity feminism' to refer to the way that advertising has sought to harness and appropriate the cultural power of feminism, while neutering its critique of media. From this perspective, advertising can be thought of as simultaneously using, incorporating, revising, attacking, and depoliticising feminism. Feminism may be presented as a 'style' or used as a branding strategy. Ideas about – for example – bodily autonomy or reproductive rights can be emptied of their political significance and sold back to us as things to consume. As Douglas (1994: 247–248) put it:

> [A]dvertising agencies had figured out how to make feminism – and anti feminism – work for them […] the appropriation of feminist desires and feminist rhetoric by Revlon, Lancome and other major corporations was nothing short of spectacular. Women's liberation metamorphosed into female narcissism unchained as political concepts like liberation and equality were collapsed into distinctly personal, private desires.

Relatedly, advertising often seeks to make a suture or articulation between feminist ideas and more traditional versions of femininity. Lazar's (2006: 505) work has been valuable in exploring what she calls 'power femininity' – a 'subject effect' (Butler 1990) of popular (post) feminism 'which incorporates signifiers of emancipation and empowerment as well as circulates the assumptions that feminist struggles have ended … full equality has been achieved and that women of today can "have it all"'. Her recent analyses of advertising (Lazar 2017) have centred on the presentation of femininity as labour which must nonetheless be presented as freely chosen, playful, and fun. In these tropes, feminist critiques of power are repudiated and an imaginary feminism is indicted as 'censorious', 'uptight' and 'old school', and set against the empowered, pleasurable, feminine subjectivities on offer in advertising.

McRobbie's (2009) important research on the 'aftermath of feminism' develops a similar line of argument, exploring the entanglement of feminist ideas with other ideas and practices, including commercially produced femininities. In turn, Gill and Scharff's (2011) book *New Femininities* examines the way a postfeminist and neoliberal sensibility offers up novel constructions of gender, structured by notions of agency and entrepreneurship.

All this research contributes to an understanding of the distinctive form of 'confident appearing' we have identified in contemporary advertising. Two other developments are also illuminating. One is the shift, discussed by Gill (2003, 2007b, 2008) towards tropes of empowerment in advertising targeted at women, in which women are invited to purchase everything from sanitary protection to coffee as signs of their power and independence (from men). This kind of advertising has four themes: 'an emphasis upon the body, a shift from objectification to sexual subjectification, a pronounced discourse of choice and autonomy, and an emphasis upon empowerment' (2008: 41).

What is key for our argument here is the way that this shift contributes to the depiction of a new independent female subject who is presented as playful and in control. Where once sexualised representations of women in the media presented them as passive, mute objects of an assumed male gaze, today women are presented as active desiring sexual subjects, it would seem, in adverts targeted at both men and women. For instance, the left-hand side of the Gucci advert (Figure 35.3) showing the man in the 'deferential' position was used both in the men's lifestyle magazine *GQ* and in British *Vogue*.

Bra advertising was a key site of this shift, moving dramatically from earnest discussions of the hold and firmness of girdles and from constructions in which women were depicted as wrapped in lingerie as a gift for men, to a novel feisty tone from the mid-1990s onwards. For example, model Eva Herzigova, clad in a push-up bra, hailed us provocatively with the slogan 'Or are you just pleased to see me?' – leaving out the punchline of this famous Mae West quotation for viewers to fill in themselves (Figure 35.4).

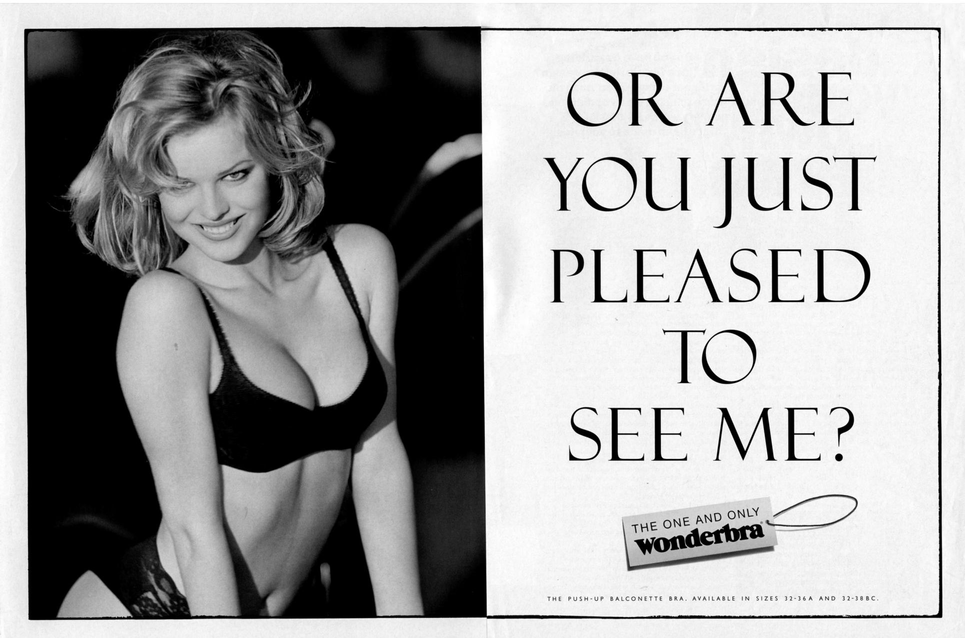

Figure 35.4 Wonderbra (1990s). Image courtesy of The Advertising Archives.

This was no passive, objectified sex object, but a woman who was knowingly playing with her sexual power. Similarly, the confident, assertive tone of a Triumph bra advert from the same period is quite different from most earlier representations: 'New hair, new look, new bra. And if he doesn't like it, new boyfriend'. Following suit, other ads stressed women's independence from men ('If he's late you can always start without him') and their power ('I pull the strings').While there were numerous problematic features of this trend within advertising – their heterosexual exclusiveness, the emphasis upon the 'perfect' desirable body as women's source of power – they were distinctive in instantiating a new more assertive vocabulary in advertising that is a crucial part of the genealogy of what we call 'confident appearing'.

Another key trend central to the emerging modality of 'confident appearing' is the rise of what has become known as 'Love your body' (LYB) advertising. This exhorts women to get 'comfortable in their own skin', to 'believe in yourself', and materialises with taglines such as 'You are more beautiful than you think' (Dove) or 'Awaken your incredible' (Weight Watchers). LYB discourses are, in part, a response to feminist anger at what has been seen by many as unrealistic and harmful images of female beauty, and as such, join the list of ways in which the advertising industry has been forced to adapt. They interrupt the almost entirely normalised hostile judgement of women's bodies, with more positive and celebratory messages focused upon forging links between body confidence, self-esteem, and the products being advertised.

While the mediated public sphere is full of posts testifying to women's relief and joy at these messages, including the emotional power of being encouraged – for once – to feel okay about themselves (Lynch 2011), there is also a growing critical literature that questions the supposedly benign ideas upon which it rests (Banet-Weiser 2014; Murphy 2013; Rodrigues 2012). Critics have pointed to a variety of problems with LYB advertising. These include the 'fakeness' of the LYB visual regime. Many of the companies adopting the iconography of 'natural', 'real' women and passing it off as 'authentic' have been exposed for using precisely the techniques they claim to reject: photoshop, make up, professional models, etc. The claimed diversity of the images has also been interrogated. Do they really depart from most other advertising in terms of showing different ages, ethnicities, body sizes? Moreover, the adverts have been accused of 're-citing' hate speech e.g. endlessly circulating fat-phobic discourses in the apparent interest of shutting down 'fat talk' (Special K), and of effacing their own complicity with precisely the negative discourses they claim to reject. What is striking for our argument here, however, is to note the way that these adverts have evolved a distinctive visual language for representing the 'natural' female body, with a simple, pared-back aesthetic look, as well as a bold and defiant language centred on self-esteem as a route to beauty. This can be seen to feed directly into the forms of confident appearing we have identified.

Confident appearing

In the visual regime we dub 'confident appearing', the elements of LYB have disseminated beyond bodily appearance to construct a new female subject for whom confidence is central. This can be seen across popular culture directed at women: women's magazines publish confidence issues, smartphone apps promote ongoing confidence programmes, and policymakers talking about gender inequality highlight a female 'confidence deficit' as a central problem in equalising gender pay and status. As Gill and Orgad (2015) have argued, confidence has emerged in the second decade of the twenty-first century as a gendered 'technology of self' (Foucault 1988), calling on women to act upon themselves to refashion their subjectivity around ideas of self-belief. Confidence operates across multiple domains from body love to international development and from workplace to finance, and is increasingly diffused across social life.

A growing body of work examines the 'confidence cult' (Banet-Weiser 2015, 2017; Favaro 2017; Gill and Orgad 2015, 2017; Wood 2017) as well as related formations such as the 'happiness industry '(Binkley 2014; Davies 2015),'state of esteem', or 'wellness' syndrome (Cederstrom and Spicer 2015). What this work has not examined, however, is the way these notions materialise not simply as discourses or ideologies evident in language, but also as particular visual regimes. It is this that we look at here, since it is highly evident in our sample of adverts in which, rather than appearing to be subordinated, women seemed to be bold and confident actors.

The visual elements of this mode of confident appearing involve several repeated features: head held high, face turned forward, eyes meeting the gaze of the viewer and looking directly back at her or him. Smiling is rare, and sometimes the gaze has an almost defiant aspect. These visual motifs are underpinned by linguistic elements, which highlight female independence, empowerment, self-belief, and entitlement. A good example is Clinique's advert for soap, clarifying lotion, and moisturiser.

Using the face of US feminist, Tavi Gevinson, known for founding the feminist blog Rookie while a teenager, the advert declares 'FACE FORWARD' (*Vogue*, US September 2015). Facing forward, like 'facing the world', is a synonym for confidence. Gevinson's visage, made up in a naturalistic style, with her hair swept away from her face and tucked behind her ears, exemplifies this idea: her 'bare' face looks straight at us with a neutral expression. The confidence message, in a visual language that would even appear to transcend national borders and operates across multiple media platforms (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrB4hY4Cel8), is underscored by the written text which commands:

> 'Dress for yourself. Dream big. Find your voice. Put it out there'

These imperatives express autonomy, boldness, empowerment, engagement, or taking on the world. They encode what Dobson (2014) has called a kind of 'performative shamelessness' and what Gill and Kanai (2018) dub 'hollow defiance'. Like other 'feeling rules'(Hochschild 1983) circulating in contemporary culture they offer powerful messages of hope and possibility, wrapped in an upbeat and vaguely defiant sense of self-belief – whose argumentative target is never specified (i.e. What or who it is that stops you – without Clinique's help – from dreaming big or finding your voice?). They sell us a kind of 'feminist feeling' (Gill and Orgad 2017), but one that is devoid of political thinking and action.

Other tropes in the visual construction of 'confident appearing' involve control or movement, for example with the figure of the woman striding confidently forward through an urban landscape. In such representations the stride is typically exaggerated – much longer than is actually typical of walking – to highlight a sense of a forward-moving woman. An example found at the time of writing is an advert for Geox (Respira) shoes in which a woman is depicted striding out, her hands in her trouser pockets, her head held high. M&S also use this motif in a 2017 campaign, the woman's hair blowing behind her to signify the speed and purposefulness of her gait, underpinned by the copy, 'Always walk tall, even in flats'. Swatch uses a different motif of movement – this time a highly controlled acrobatic dance move, that mimics the shape of the watch, several times life size, around the woman's body. The slogan declares 'YOUR MOVE'.

What we see, then, across our corpus is evidence of the way that a distinctive visual language is being developed for depicting female self-confidence – in ways that break markedly from Goffman's analysis. This is underscored by a multiplicity of beauty and grooming commercial confidence messages which exhort: 'Confidence is the new sexy' (Bobbi Brown), 'Take control' (Braun), 'Command style' (Great Lengths), or 'Feel confident everyday' (Charles Worthington). In the latter the confidence message is hardly lessened by the inclusion, in much smaller font, of the phrase 'washing your hair' between 'feel confident' and 'everyday'. Confident appearing has become a central and recognisable trope in contemporary advertising to women, and demands further analysis.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have revisited the important work of Goffman, which offered a compelling way of analysing the visual language of gender in advertisements. Using a sample of 200 adverts taken from *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* we systematically examined whether Goffman's arguments still hold true, 40 years on. Our analysis showed marked disjunctures from Goffman's account of the ritualised subordination of women in advertising. Indeed, looking across a range of features of his analysis, little evidence was found of function ranking, height marking or lower placing, canting, or deferential postures. 'Licensed withdrawal' was rarely present, and women were rarely shown smiling or in any other way implying lower status. Indeed, only the sharp differentiations in touch that Goffman identified were to be seen clearly in our sample.

What was evident, however, was what appeared to be a new visual trope for representing women: one that we have named 'confident appearing'. In this, women are depicted with their heads held high, looking directly at the viewer, with a neutral expression, or pictured striding purposefully forward, or holding themselves in controlled movement. We have shown how this has become an established visual motif for representing women, and one that is underpinned by written texts that exhort confidence, self-belief, and empowerment. In our analysis we have sought to locate this in a broader understanding of the way in which advertising has responded to and engaged with feminism. It seems to have become a way for advertisers to appropriate some of the meanings and contemporary cultural power of feminism, while locating it in individualised expressions of self-belief and entitlement rather than calls for social transformation. In this way a vague sense of feminist defiance can be appropriated, yet emptied out of its political force. Confident appearing has become a key trope for enacting this.

Future directions

One limitation of the analysis presented here is the clear class bias of the magazines we examined. They are targeted at an upper-class and upper-middle-class readership of women, predominantly college-educated with above average professional, managerial, or executive employment living in households with above-average incomes, as the breakdown of audience demographics shows. The brands advertised are upmarket and aspirational, and the adverts themselves have very high production values connoting wealth and exclusivity. Perhaps our general findings about Goffman's work may not be replicated in media targeted at a different class demographic. This remains a task for future research to examine. However, the figure of the confident woman whom we have identified as a key feature of advertising targeted at women does indeed extend beyond the wealthy demographic addressed by *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*. It can be seen in adverts by high street brands such as M&S, Boots, and Braun. Confident appearing, we suggest, is a widespread representational practice that cuts across class, race, age, and sexuality, and it has become a key way that advertisers express a 'lite', individualised version of feminism, while offering little challenge to a wider, patriarchal capitalist culture. Documenting these ideological shifts – which operate at both visual and discursive levels – remains important work for feminist analysts.

Further reading

Banet-Weiser, S. (2018) *Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

In *Empowered*, Banet-Weiser explores the relationship between popular feminism and misogyny in advertising, online and multi-media platforms, and nonprofit and commercial campaigns. Investigating feminist discourses that emphasise self-confidence, body positivity, and individual achievement alongside violent misogynist phenomena such as revenge porn, toxic geek masculinity, and men's rights movements, the author traces how popular feminism and popular misogyny are co-constituted.

Elias, A., Gill, R., and Scharff, C. (eds.) (2016) *Aesthetic Labour: Beauty Politics in Neoliberalism*. London: Palgrave.

Aesthetic Labour considers questions about gender and the politics of appearance from a new perspective by developing the notion of aesthetic labour. Bringing together feminist writing regarding the 'beauty myth' with recent scholarship about new forms of work, the authors suggest that in this moment of ubiquitous photography, social media, and 360-degree surveillance, women are increasingly required to be 'aesthetic entrepreneurs', maintaining a constant state of vigilance about their appearance.

Hall, S. (1997) *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Hall offers a comprehensive outline of how visual images, language, and discourse work as 'systems of representation'. Individual chapters explore: representation as a signifying practice in diverse social contexts and institutional sites; the use of photography in the construction of national identity and culture; other cultures in ethnographic museums; fantasies of the racialised 'Other' in popular media, film, and image; the construction of masculine identities in discourses of consumer culture and advertising; and the gendering of narratives in television soap operas.

Orgad, S. and Gill, R. (2019) *The Confidence Cult*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Confidence Cult explores how confidence has become a 'technology of self' that invites girls and women to work on themselves. It demonstrates the extensiveness of what Orgad and Gill call the 'cult(ure) of confidence' across different areas of social life, identities in discourses of consumer culture, and advertising; and the gendering of narratives in television soap operas.

Rose, G. (2016) *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*, 4th ed. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials is a critical guide to the study and analysis of visual culture which examines individual methodologies in a clear and structured fashion.

Related topics

Multimodal constructions of feminism; gender and sexuality in discourse: semiotic and multimodal approaches; gender and sexuality normativities; analysing gendered discourses online; feminist poststructuralism – discourse, subjectivity, the body, and power.

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Doing gender and sexuality intersectionally in multimodal social media practices

Sirpa Leppänen and Sanna Tapionkaski

Introduction

In this chapter, our focus is on how members in participatory cultures, such as fan groups and communities around user-generated content on social media, engage in informal and interest-driven social and discursive practices primarily on social media, but in ways that intertwine with their offline lives. In particular, we will show how social media participants construct their gendered and sexual identities through cultural practices at specific intersections with other sociocultural categories.

Before this, however, it is important to understand what we mean by social media, and why social media practices matter in terms of research on language, gender, and sexuality. Social media can be defined as digital applications that build on the ideological and technological premises and foundations of Web 2.0 (e.g. Herring 2013), allowing the creation, exchange, and circulation of user-generated content (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010) and enabling interaction between users. Social media encompass both applications explicitly, building on the idea of mutual exchange of content, and digital environments in which the main content can consist of single-authored or monophonic discourse but that also offer an opportunity to authors and recipients to interact with one another (such as discussion sections of blog sites).

Social media are sites for everyday social interaction that intertwine with and complement physical activities and interactions. In terms of gender and sexuality they also matter a great deal. They can provide individuals and groups with 'affordances' (i.e. enablings and constraints for behaviour provided by some object or environment to some agent (Gibson 1986)) for doing gender and sexuality in different ways. Sometimes these ways can be novel and liberating, at other times they can replicate distinctions and power relations that are typical of other contexts, and at yet other times involve and impose forms of constraint that are specific to the technological activities and interactions in digital media contexts (see e.g. Herring and Kapidzic 2015).

In research on how gendered and sexualised identities are constructed on social media, an approach is needed that can capture their complexity and embeddedness in relations of power. We suggest that this approach can rely on the notion of 'intersectionality'. Gender and sexuality are always constructed at intersections with other identity categories, and these multifaceted identity constructions are often part of particular identity politics in relations, contexts, and formations of power (Hill Collins and Blige 2016). While intersectionality has various meanings, in our approach focusing on identity work in digitally mediated contexts, we argue that an anticategorical approach to intersectionality (McCall 2005) is particularly useful. In brief, this approach does not take identity categories such as gender or sexuality for granted but examines how a complex array of various intersecting categories – and norms related to categories – emerge in everyday contexts of social life. Here, this will involve studying how participants in social media perform, negotiate, and struggle over gendered and sexualised identities multimodally by drawing on various meaning-making resources such as language, other semiotic symbols, and (sub-) cultural scripts that index specific understandings of gender and sexuality, in particular digital contexts. This happens, first, by paying attention to the ways in which, in the context of specific participatory cultural practices, people orient to norms of gender and sexuality, by adhering to or rejecting particular norms, or by positioning themselves critically in relation to them. Second, our analyses pay attention to the availability of and access to various multimodal meaning-making resources: despite the relatively broad access to social media (in the West), not everyone has the same access to or knowledge of resources used in online identity construction. That is, it matters who is able to do what kind of performances, where, and when. To examine the potential inequalities in these practices, we suggest that an ethnographic understanding of people's lived realities on- and offline should support the analyses of discourse practices in social media.

Social media activities and interactions call for a transdisciplinary framework

In such investigations, we argue, a transdisciplinary framework that draws on discourse studies, ethnography, sociolinguistics, and the study of multimodality can be particularly useful. A detailed analysis of social media discourse practices, and social meanings constructed in them, combined with the ethnographic understanding of the studied phenomenon, can enable the scrutiny of the complex intersectional identity work that can occur even in a very limited amount of social media data.

Discourse studies offer tools to study the ways in which people do their identities online through their linguistic and discursive choices. In such analyses attention can be paid to what kind of language resources participants draw on, what is made visible and what not, and what kind of norms and discourses related to gender and sexuality they mobilise – discourses here referring to the regulatory practices that constitute for us what counts as truth, reality, and knowledge (Baxter 2003; Foucault 1978). For its part, immersive ethnographic fieldwork that can either range from discourse-centred (Androutsopoulos 2008) to multi-sited (on/offline) ethnography (Staehr 2015) enables a nuanced understanding of the studied phenomenon from both the emic (insider) perspective of the participants and the analyst's etic (outsider) perspective. That is, without understanding the specific social, cultural, and media contexts of the participatory practices, it may be impossible for the researcher to recognise the particular sociolinguistic contextual cues (or indices, Silverstein 2006) that the specific choices have and how these contribute to identity work.

Paying attention to contextual cues (i.e. indexicality) can explain how language users interpret each other's, and index meanings in their own linguistic and discursive identity construction. Language use, or verbal and textual means – such as languages, varieties, styles, and genres – are important resources in this. Further, communication can be monolingual or multilingual in nature; and it can also involve code switches as a means for creating specific discourse-level meanings (Leppänen 2012).

However, besides verbal and textual resources, social media participants can also mobilise resources provided by other modes. In this task, the study of multimodality (e.g. Kress and van Leeuwen 2006) is necessary as an analytic perspective: it allows the investigation of how social media users also draw on a range of multimodal and embodied resources for the production of meaning. These can include textual forms and patterns, visuality, still and moving images, sound, music, facial expressions, bodily actions, gestures, and performances, as well as cultural discourses. They also involve processes of recontextualisation in which discourse chunks are lifted from their original context and re-embedded in new contexts (Bauman and Briggs 1990), and of resemiotisation whereby discourse content is converted from one mode to another/others, from verbal text to (moving) image, for example (Iedema 2003).

In the following, we will first discuss critical issues related to intersectionality. We will touch upon some historical perspectives in relation to intersectionality theory, but will focus on recent research on language, gender, and sexuality in social media practices. We will then move on to introduce some current research and recommendations for practice, through discussing a couple of examples from our recent research projects.

Critical issues: intersectionality as an approach to investigate the complexity of identity work

The concept of intersectionality was introduced by the legal studies scholar Crenshaw (1989; 1991) to address the specific positions of Black women whose experiences could not be explained only through the category of gender *or* ethnicity, but through looking at these two identity categories as mutually constitutive of each other. Since the 1980s, the concept of intersectionality has become central in feminist theory and gender and sexuality studies (see McCall 2005). It has also been adopted by language, gender, and sexuality researchers (e.g. Levon 2015; Machin, Caldas-Coulthard and Milani 2016; Queen 2014), especially in the field of queer linguistics (see Bucholtz and Hall 2004; Motschenbacher 2011). Intersectionality theory maintains that power relations, constituted in and through sociocultural categories such as gender, sexuality, race, class, ethnicity, and age, do not exist in isolation from each other either in individual people's experiences or as social structures, but co-construct one another in a complex manner. While this premise serves as the starting point of intersectionality perspectives in research, there have been different ways to categorise types of intersections, and various methodological approaches to examine intersectionality in practice.

In the field of sociolinguistics, there are, to date, relatively few studies that utilise an intersectional approach. However, in a sense, sociolinguistics has addressed the intersections of different identities from the beginning. In the classic studies, gender and social class were examined as categories that affect each other and the speakers' output. This necessity to pay attention to several identity categories simultaneously has also been a key focus of sociolinguistic studies of gender later on (see e.g. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1999; Milroy and Milroy 1993). However, especially in variationist sociolinguistics, the different identity categories have been treated as background variables, rather than as something that is situationally constructed through language and other semiotic means. A notable exception is Levon (2015: 297–298, italics original) who argues that there are three main principles in intersectionality research that are important for language scholars. These include that (1) '*lived experience* is ultimately intersectional in nature' (cf. Crenshaw 1989, 1991); (2) 'intersections are *dynamic*, and emerge in specific social, historical and interactional configurations'; and (3) 'these (dynamic) categories not only intersect but also *mutually constitute* one another'. These basic tenets can lead to diverse approaches, however. Indeed, in terms of methodological approaches, intersectionality theory has been criticised for obscurity and lack of critical discussion of what it actually means to examine the complexity of social identity construction (see Levon 2015). Dealing with the complexity, or all the possible identity categories that may be significant in any given socio-historical context, is more easily said than done.

In her review of (sociological) intersectionality studies, McCall (2005) outlines three main approaches to intersectionality: (1) anticategorical complexity, (2) intracategorical complexity, and (3) intercategorical complexity. The first approach 'rejects categories' and aims at deconstructing them to capture the multiplicity, fluidity, and complexity of social life (McCall 2005: 1773). The second one, intracategorical complexity, refers to approaches such as Crenshaw's (1991), which aims at questioning the boundaries of macro-categories by examining the diversity inside a larger category (e.g. gender) that occurs when other identity categories (e.g. ethnicity) are considered in relation to it (McCall 2005: 1774). Finally, approaches to intercategorical complexity do not aim at questioning categories but require 'that scholars provisionally adopt existing analytical categories to document relationships of inequality among social groups and changing configurations of inequality along multiple and conflicting dimensions' (McCall 2005: 1773).

Our approach falls under the category of anticategorical complexity: we are interested in the complex, often messy, and unexpected intersections of gender, sexuality, and other identities in social media and the ways in which they tie up with particular identity politics. In this, we also follow Levon's (2015: 303) suggestion that analyses of intersectional identity performances should not be done by 'simply adding these other categories into the empirical mix but instead by centring our analyses on the social, historical, ideological, and linguistic relationships between these categories and the different lived articulations of gender and sexuality we study.' What this means in practice is that although we start with certain categories – here, gender and sexuality – we do not approach our data with a checklist of other potentially intersecting categories (e.g. ethnicity, religion, class) but pay attention to those intersections and identities that emerge from the data. That is, we will empirically pay attention to the 'lived articulations of gender and sexuality' that may vary from one social media context to another. In this, we will focus on a range of semiotic resources.

But what exactly are these 'lived articulations' and how can we examine them through a discourse-analytical and ethnographic framework? We suggest that this can be done by focusing on the 'performativity' of gendered, sexualised, and other identities that can, again, be analysed through the indexicality of language and other semiotic resources. In other words, we will examine how people mobilise different semiotic resources in their presentation of the self and/or others in social media, (cf. Halonen and Leppänen 2017; Lehtonen 2017).

In Butler's (1990, 1993, 2004) theory, performativity refers to the embodied performances of gender and sexuality that through repetition begin to look as if they are natural and self-evident. Apart from embodiment, gender and sexuality are performed through positioning of the self or others in discourse where performativity refers to 'a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint' (Butler 2004: 2). This echoes the understanding of performance from the perspective of the Goffmanian root metaphor 'life is a stage' (Goffman 1959), according to which all human actions are seen as performances, or presentations of the self, aimed at particular audiences, in particular spatio-temporal settings, and based on particular cultural values, norms, and beliefs. In this respect, social media sites are not unlike a stage in which the performers never know the whole audience but on which they still need to perform in ways that make sense to and are interpretable by their audience.

Current research and recommendations for practice

In our discussion of the nexus of multimodal participatory cultural practices on social media and intersectionality, we will highlight how, in order to capture the multi-sited and entangled nature of how gender and sexuality are constructed in the lived realities of participants, the analysis needs to rely on insights provided by a range of disciplines. We will illustrate this with the help of examples from our previous studies. The discussion of these examples here only involves certain key observations about them to illustrate the complexity of the multi-semiotic practices that participants rely on in their social media practice – a full analysis of each case would require more space than we have.

However, our analytic approach to the investigation of how participants on social media perform their gendered and sexualised identities involves a number of analytic tasks (see also Leppänen and Kytölä 2016). First, the researcher should carefully contextualise the fan/activity culture in focus socioculturally. Second, to achieve a nuanced understanding of its practices and their meanings to the participants, they need to observe the culture in a systematic ethnographic way. Third, the study needs to involve a close analysis of how social media participants mobilise particular linguistic and other semiotic resources and how these choices index specific understandings of gender and sexuality. Finally, the study also needs to consider how in their semiotic practice, the participants orient to norms of gender and sexuality, as well as pay attention to the availability of and access to meaning-making resources and the potential inequalities in this.

Doing young alternative masculinity intersectionally

Our first example comes from a Finnish discussion forum for 'bronies' (a blend of 'brother' and 'pony'), that is, young adult male fans of the children's animated television series 'My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic' (2011–, from here on MLP). With the help of this example we will illustrate, first, the unexpected social media contexts where gender and sexuality are performed and, second, the complexity of intersecting identity performances, realised through the use of various semiotic resources that index particular meanings and are consequential for the actors' sense of self and agency in this participatory online culture.

According to Hasbro Studios' website (2015), the target audience of the MLP series – based on Hasbro's line of toys – are 4- to 7-year-old girls. Against marketing and cultural expectations, a substantial part of the fans of the series have been young (adult) men, calling themselves 'bronies' (see Lehtonen 2017). Bronies themselves explain their attraction to the series by the 'soft' values that it celebrates – friendship and tolerance – and find their fandom (fan community) very supportive; many of them have made long-term investments in building up an active on- and offline community. The fandom has, however, attracted mixed media attention because it challenges hegemonic gender and age discourses: men who admit to liking media products targeted at girls are often met with ridicule (Jones 2015: 121), if not pathologisation. Bronies have inspired 'antifandom' practices both online and in traditional media where they are considered disturbing, immature, or sexually deviant (Jones 2015). In Finland, the community has been active since 2012 both on- and offline. In the Finnish mainstream media, bronies have been treated as a group that deviates from gendered and aged norms – although they are not represented as disturbing, they are viewed as strange, exceptional, or funny (see Lehtonen 2017).

The example is a post in a thread where members of the forum introduce themselves. The poster is an active member of the Finnish brony fandom who was also interviewed for a larger research project on the Finnish bronies (see Lehtonen 2017). At a first look, the post seems like a typical discussion forum post. A lot could be said by merely examining the post as a representative of a certain genre on social media. It has the format of a forum post signalling the title of the thread, the nickname and avatar of the author, the time-stamps, and so forth. It is multimodal and involves text, emoji, images, hyperlinks, and an embedded video. It follows the textual genre of the thread – titled 'Introduce yourself' – which is a chain of introductions; these introduction threads are typical on discussion forums focusing on shared interests (see Page 2012: 31–33). Each post presents the poster, his occupation and hobbies, and his relationship to the MLP television series. However, we will argue that – in terms of gender, sexuality, and other intersecting identity categories – it is impossible to understand the meanings constructed in the post without a knowledge of the cultural context of the brony fandom and ethnographic understanding of the shared practices in the Finnish fandom.

Figure 36.1 shows a modified, anonymised image of the data excerpt.[1]

First, the language use in the text indexes identities some of which are also explicitly stated in the post. The poster, for instance, says that he is in the military service and a 21-year-old student. His young adult male identity – opposed to the expected target audience of MLP, young girls – is also signalled by the fairly formal language use with some swear words, as well as his way of initially distancing himself from the MLP series as a 'little girls' thing'. In the written text, the unexpectedness of a young adult male's interest in the series is rationalised through various strategies. Being a brony goes against the expectations tied to normative Finnish adult masculinity, especially in its institutionalised forms, such as the compulsory military service, which is commonly described as the rite of passage to manhood. However, the rationalisation is not only necessary in terms of gender and age to explain away the 'girlishness' or 'childishness' of one's interest, but also in terms of sexuality. Although sexuality is nowhere explicitly mentioned, in other contexts bronies have been suspected of representing queerness, non-normative sexualities, or, in the worst cases, paedophilia. This makes sense in the framework of hegemonic, heterosexual masculinity where masculinity itself is defined in opposition to women, children, and queers (e.g. Connell 2005). Bronies need to negotiate outsiders' expectations and thus explain their unexpected interest in a girls' media franchise by refusing to follow the logic of hegemonic masculinity and by offering alternative motivations for, and ways of doing, brony masculinity.

In our example, the rationalisation happens by relying on two recurring narrative patterns that are circulated widely in the translocal brony community: a trauma narrative and a conversion narrative (Lehtonen 2017). Typically, in the context of brony fandom, the trauma narrative has to do with the poster's past experiences of bullying and depression. Here the poster refers to his 'shitty past' right at the beginning. While this kind of trauma narrative occurs in various contexts, in the brony community, through the process of resemiotisation, it is usually also used to explain the writer's interest in a girls' media franchise. That is, in the bronies' version of the trauma narrative the television series offers consolation and

Re: Introduce yourself

Author **Nickname** » XX.XX.2012 XX:XX

Hello Everypony Allll-right, I'm a 21-year-old conscript, and a future student (once again). Where should I start…?

Well, I'm a bit silent and depressive due to my shitty past, and during the past years I've tried to pull myself together, and get to know people with varying success. To register on this site was a big social challenge in itself, but we'll see how it goes. Excluding the previous lines, I'm a fairly happy person, who is always seeking for new things, and tries to see the brighter side of things As a pony I could probably be described as *Fluttershy* and *Pinkie Pie*. I guess…

If someone is familiar with Helen Fisher's theory of four personality types, they'll probably understand me better, because according to the theory I'm a **negotiator/explorer**.

But in my own words: "the world is a curious place". Yes, I find many things interesting, and I'm in the bad habit of getting stuck in exploring things new and exciting. Or then just something that is otherwise interesting. E.g. if I see an interesting article in a magazine, I must read it.

Hobbies: reading (esp. fantasy), drawing (yeah, fantasy and ponies...), cooking, beer tasting (no regular lagers, that is, but different special beers), gaming (RPGs mostly), and obviously pony activities in different forms. I, for instance, listen to music, draw and read fanfics

Interests: I love history, and read a lot of it in my freetime. Ufos, conspiracy theories, and everything related. **The Elder Scrolls** game series, because it's just so vast and interesting. Then there are of course ponies and too many other things to mention

Pony hobby: It started on a normal day some time in 2011. Maybe… Well, anyway, I'd seen avatars, popular pics on boards all over the net earlier, and thought: "What the heck am I seeing?". I didn't get why the series was so popular, and why people loved it. I hated ponies, and thought they were "a little girls' thing", even though *Rainbow Dash* was somehow, well, rather nice looking

On IRC two people were talking about the latest pony episode, and I was like *wuut*?! They asked me to watch one, and I decided to start from the beginning. The first episode was naturally followed by the second one, so that I could finish the plotline. When I'd watched the two first episodes, I was pondering for a week or two what to think about it. A voice in my head told me to watch another episode, and then I found myself singing along during the theme song.

So that's it for now.

My favourite remix [a video on YouTube]:

Pussikalja meet-ups and meet-ups in general since April 2013
A cave master serving [the name of a fan society]

The full Winds of Change comic [a link to a pony fanfic]

Nickname
Pegasos

Messages: 2399
Joined: XX.XX.2012
City/town: XXXX

Figure 36.1 Modified image of a post from a Finnish discussion forum for 'bronies'.

values, such as friendship and respect for others, that have helped the writer deal with his past experiences. In the brony community, the narrative is so typical that the poster does not have to explain it in detail – the mere mention of his depressive past at the beginning indexes that he is like others with similar past narratives who have entered the community. The same is the case for the second narrative pattern, the conversion narrative, borrowed from religious contexts but typical also in other fan communities. At the end of the post, the writer explains his 'conversion' from a hater into a fan in one paragraph. After watching two episodes of the 'little girls' thing' because some of his online friends were also doing this, he was suddenly emotionally hooked, or found himself 'singing along during the theme song'.

Here the musical and emotional content of the series is marked as significant, although elsewhere the same writer also offers more analytic explanations for why it is that this particular girls' series is so good (e.g. it has more complex screenwriting than other children's series).

While the written text thus indexes an adult male rationalising his interest in a young girls' series, the other semiotic resources index his fan identity more directly. This fan identity partly draws on resources often used in online communication by young girls: emoji based on an animated series (here ponies), an avatar that is an animated figure (here a pony), simple lines in English borrowed from a television show ('Hello everypony'). However, other resources signal an adult fan identity: the poster's signature that involves text explaining that he has been participating in offline '*pussikalja*' meet-ups ('*pussikalja*', literally 'bag beer' is an informal expression that refers to the activity of buying a bag of beers from a shop and drinking it outside) and includes a banner advertising an offline meet-up. Other hyperlinks indicate his interest in the translocal brony fandom (a link to an MLP video remix), as well as his identity as a fantasy RPG gamer (a link to the *Elder Scrolls* game franchise). The poster's pony avatar is a combination of (stereotypically) child and adult things: an animated pony character wearing an army helmet with the acronym N.E.E.T. (not in education, employment, or training). On the basis of an interview with the poster, we know that the avatar is his 'ponysona', designed by himself that changes in relation to his life events. We should note that the multimodal resources in the post have, in fact, accumulated over time: it is not possible, for instance, that the poster could have advertised for the offline meet on the date of the original post (other threads reveal that it had not been planned yet). All the profile information also changes constantly; thus, the total number of posts by the poster, listed under the avatar, is from the date of collecting the data (year 2016), not from the original date of the post (2012). While this means that there is no access to the post as it was at the original time of posting, the accumulated resources offer plenty of materials to examine a fan identity performed *through time*, rather than merely in the moment of posting. In sum, looking at the identity performances of the poster by taking into account the ways in which the brony fan identity intersects with gender, sexuality, and age is not only necessary in terms of understanding the complex, lived experience of this particular poster but also enables the researcher to move beyond examining the text in terms of polar identity categories (e.g. female–male, feminine–masculine, child–adult, heterosexual–asexual).

Finally, we suggest that an ethnographic understanding of the bronies' fan practices is needed to be able to read all of this as (mainly) sincere and not (merely) ironic. While there are some indications in the language use, namely its sincere tone, as well as in the discursive context – a thread of introductions by participants who wish to join the community – that the post is not meant to be read as ironic, it could be posted by a skilful troll. There are, after all, several memes, that is, images, videos, or pieces of texts copied and spread rapidly on the internet that mock the bronies. Obviously, one could analyse the post as a text by a writer whose sincerity cannot be decided: whether sincere or ironic, the gendered and sexualised discourses and multi-semiotic choices in the post can be examined through textual analysis. However, if one wants to analyse the social media practices as people's lived experiences, the textual analysis should be supported by ethnographic research. Online ethnography conducted on the discussion forum could already help to contextualise the poster as a member of the community: one would, for instance, find out that he has been very active on the forum (more than 2,000 posts over the course of several years), offers support for others, is on friendly terms with several other members, and also active on other online and offline sites of the community (offline fan activities are often documented online, so the researcher does not have to go 'out' to the field to be able to access these). All of this supports the reading of his identity performances as sincere. In the case of this participant, however, online ethnography was also supported by an offline interview that shed further light on his fan trajectory and its connections to his everyday life, such as his statement that his avatar's changing outfits, including the N.E.E.T. helmet, reflect what is actually going on in his life.

Doing migrant masculinity intersectionally

Our second set of examples with which we illustrate multimodal social media practices that are centrally concerned with performing, sharing, and interrogating identities intersectionally, are short, entertaining, often explicitly parodic, videos by young Finland-based migrant men. These are disseminated via video sharing platforms, such as YouTube and Vimeo, where they are also discussed and debated by diverse audiences. These videos are part of a popular trend whereby social media serve as a popular 'stage' for lay and celebrity performances as well as 'a virtual lounge' for audience reactions to and evaluations of these performances (Marwick and boyd 2011). On video-sharing platforms, such as YouTube, performances are disseminated for appreciative audiences who, in turn, take up what is being performed in discussions and debates, but also in replications and recontextualisations of different kinds and degrees of appreciation and criticality (Häkkinen and Leppänen 2014). Platforms like YouTube are thus not simply media in which people watch videos, listen to music, broadcast their own videos, but they also serve as a forum for participatory cultures, cultural niches, and memes.

Multi-sited ethnographic observations have shown that for migrants, video-sharing social media have become means of reaching audiences beyond their locality and immediate social circles. For many of them, their mediatised performances have proved an important means for establishing their identity and for generating more followers and fans (Leppänen and Westinen 2018; Westinen 2017). Social media performances are also something that the performers can themselves monitor, and thus they provide them with an opportunity to have a voice that can have considerable reach and potential in terms of audience engagement.

Typically, the videos feature everyday happenings, such as driving a car, talking with one's mother, or having an argument with a girlfriend. They are always to some extent scripted mono- or dialogic performances. Technically, they are shot with a smartphone or a video camera, after which they are usually (moderately) edited, and sometimes complemented with special effects, such as sounds, music, animation, and subtitles. The language used in them is most often Finnish, although they can also include English, as well as snippets of other languages. The varied language choices of the videos show, in fact, that they are not aimed at particular migrant groups, but at more mixed audiences, including ethnic Finns as well as other migrants who are Finnish- and English-speaking.

As multimodal productions, the videos call for detailed and multifaceted analysis that can describe the ways in which the modes drawn on in them – varied language resources, embodied performances, cinematic representation, music, for example – are coordinated and integrated to create coherent narrative performances. As highlighted in interviews with creators of these videos, for both themselves and their audiences the crafted multimodal narratives serve as entertainment and critical commentary: through humour and disparagement, they depict ways in which migrants are treated by the host society, as well as how migrants themselves strive to make sense of the host society

A very typical strategy that the video performances apply to achieve these effects is double voicing (Bakhtin 1984). In concrete terms, this means that the narratives are presented from the perspective of young migrant men, pretending not to be young migrant men. For example, in one video,[2] entitled 'A migrant who thinks he is a Finn', a young Iraqi migrant, with the artist name Kilikali, gives a parodic performance of ethnic Finnish masculinity. The video depicts Kilikali driving his car and giving an impassioned speech in Finnish on how Finland – which has recently received unprecedented numbers of migrants and refugees – is being invaded by foreigners who 'steal our women' and 'fill our country' so that there is 'no space left for us anymore'. In this way, his speech takes up recognisable themes of the racist and populist discourses circulating in Finnish society at the moment, and recontextualises them as part of his parodic-critical performance of ethnic Finnish masculinity. In addition, his exaggerated ('stylised', Coupland 2007) way of speech functions as an index of Finnishness: it flows effortlessly and idiomatically in a fluent eastern-Finnish dialect – a dialect typically associated with a traditional lifestyle. At the same time, the embodied style Kilikali has chosen for himself in the video (Figure 36.2) – the sunglasses hiding his eyes and the military-style jacket, for example – emphasise the fact that he is not an authentic Finn.

The video thus gives us a parodic performance of a stereotypical social persona, that of a traditional heterosexual Finnish man. It borrows his voice, thus crossing over to a habitus and style that are generally not taken to belong to people such as the migrant author of the video. Thus, the video performance portrays to its audiences a double-voiced, intersectional identity: migrant and non-migrant; non-Finnish and Finnish; Finnish-speaking and non-Finnish speaking; non-racist and racist; critical and humorous.

Other examples that rely on a similar double-voiced strategy are videos that give us (drag) performances of Finnish women, such as the one by an Angolan migrant man, who has adopted Bianca Sossu as his artist name.

This video, 'When you are trying to teach the language of Finland to your refugee boyfriend', features the character of Bianca Sossu engaged in dialogue with her refugee boyfriend. In it, Bianca is presented as the Finnish L1 speaker instructing the boyfriend on how to say in Finnish 'I love you' ('*Minä rakastan sinua*'). Like the previous example, this performance, too, mobilises a range of semiotic resources. These include, for example, Bianca's didactic use of vernacular Finnish – the character's expertise in Finnish is used to

Figure 36.2 Kilikali in the video.

Figure 36.3 Bianca's performance in the video as a blond Finnish woman.

suggest that the performance is essentially about Finnishness. In addition, Bianca's embodied performance in the video as a blond Finnish woman (Figure 36.3) can be interpreted as indexing a particular kind of young white Finnish woman, a bold and frivolous 'pissis' girl (Halonen and Leppänen 2017), located at a particular intersection of gender, age, race, sexuality, ethnicity, and nationality. Finally, in the same way as the previous example, the video also includes snippets of recognisable populist and racist slogans (e.g. 'in Finland we don't beat up women'; 'you are going back to your country'). These are recontextualised as part of this performance of gendered Finnishness, in order to drive home a humorous and critical commentary of the racist and xenophobic discourses currently mushrooming in public debates and discourses in Finnish society.

In sum, both videos tell multimodal narratives of selves and their ethnic Finnish others at the intersection of categories – race, gender, sexuality, nationality, and ethnicity, most significantly. While they are humorous in nature, they are also deeply critical in how they transgressively make visible and engage with particular norms, distinctions, and relations in power related to the lived realities of migrant men: what and who they may and can be in the often-hostile host society which projects onto them various forms of otherness, dangerousness, and threat.

Future directions

As both intersectionality research in sociolinguistics and discourse studies and research on multimodal gendered and sexualised identity practices on social media are fairly recent fields of study, more research is called for in the future. Our own research has focused on voluntary, participatory social media practices that often involve conscious norm-breaking both in terms of identity discourses and the use of linguistic and semiotic resources (e.g. Halonen and Leppänen 2017; Lehtonen 2015, 2017; Leppänen 2008; Leppänen and Häkkinen 2012). Future research could look at social media contexts where people are more inclined to follow norms, rather than challenge them. A particularly interesting example could be social media activities involving explicit relationship work, such as guidance and advice sites and online dating services (see e.g. Herring and Kapidzic 2015; Milani 2013; Kohler Mortensen 2017). Moreover, attention could be paid to how intersectional identity performances are both carried out and reflexively made sense of in interactions among social media participants. In particular, it is a timely topic to investigate the various forms of disparagement and policing that are targeted at particular individuals and groups and that can have serious consequences for those focused on. These can sometimes take elaborate forms of multimodal crafting, recontextualisation, and resemiotisation, and become widely influential and virally spreading memes. Examples of these include social media campaigns focusing on public persona such as politicians, civil servants, and journalists in which their credibility is attacked and ridiculed; as well as the abundant racist and populist memic discourses about the other – refugees and migrants, for example – widely circulating and multiplying in social media.

Notes

1 For privacy and copyright reasons the original screenshots of the brony sites cannot be used. All the examples in the text are English translations of the Finnish originals.
2 The authors of the videos have given SL their permission to include links to their videos, to show screenshots of them, and to refer to their verbatim discourse, in public presentations and publications discussing their work.

Further reading

Leppänen, S., Westinen, E., and Kytölä, S. (eds.) (2017) *Social Media Discourse, (Dis)identifications and Diversities*. New York, NY: Routledge.

The introductory chapter gives an overview of recent work in the sociolinguistic work on identity work on social media as well as discusses key concepts and approaches in this. Many of the chapters exemplify an intersectional take on identity as well as different approaches to multimodal analysis of social media discourse.

Levon, E. (2015) 'Integrating intersectionality in language, gender and sexuality research'. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 9(7), pp. 295–308.

Levon's article gives a useful introduction to how intersectionality can be integrated in sociolinguistic research on language, gender, and sexuality.

Machin, D., Caldas-Coulthard, C., and Milani, T. (2016) 'Doing critical multimodality in research on gender, language and discourse'. *Gender and Language*, 10(3), pp. 301–308.

The article discusses multimodal work in the area of gender, language, and discourse, and proposes the kinds of multimodal approaches that are most appropriate for this task.

Related topics

Digital ethnography in the study of language, gender, and sexuality; using communities of practice and ethnography to answer sociolinguistic questions; applying queer theory to language, gender, and sexuality research in schools; poststructuralist research on language, gender, and sexuality; analysing gendered discourses online.

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Part VIII
Corpus linguistic approaches

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Lovely nurses, rude receptionists, and patronising doctors

Determining the impact of gender stereotyping on patient feedback

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Introduction

Part VIII of the Handbook demonstrates how techniques from corpus linguistics can be useful with large amounts of linguistic data for studying the relationship between language, gender, and sexuality. Corpus linguistics is a collection of methods that involve the use of specialist computer programmes to analyse language use in large bodies of machine-readable text (McEnery and Wilson 2001). Corpus approaches to linguistic analysis typically involve the use of quantitative computational techniques in order to identify frequent, salient, or atypical patterns in texts. Corpus analysis tools also display the language data visually, in ways that make it easier for human analysts to notice such patterns through qualitative analyses. This first chapter in Part VIII provides a detailed introduction to corpus linguistics, outlining its key principles, strengths, and limitations, and providing worked examples of how established corpus techniques can be used to study gendered discourse. We then review a selection of corpus-based studies of language, gender, and sexuality, before concluding with a brief introduction to the other chapters in this section.

Corpus linguistics: definitions and main principles

A *corpus* (Latin for *body*, plural *corpora*) is a large collection of naturally occurring texts which have been sampled to be representative of a particular language or linguistic variety. There are two main types of corpora: reference (or general) and specialised (or purpose-built). Reference corpora, which are designed to represent a whole language (usually at a particular point in time), often contain thousands of texts, amounting to millions or billions of words. Specialised corpora, on the other hand, are designed to represent language in more specific contexts (e.g. newspaper articles about a particular topic, published within a particular time frame) and are usually smaller than reference corpora. The concepts of sampling and representativeness are vital to ensuring that corpora are representative of the language or variety we are interested in studying. For example, if we aim to sample female speech in

England, we would need to ensure that the speech we sampled for the corpus represented the speech of women from different age groups, geographical locations (e.g. North, South, Midlands), social classes, ethnicities, and so forth. We would also have to consider the extent to which our corpus represented speech in different situational contexts (i.e. where, when, and with whom the conversations took place). Once these variables have been considered, we also need to ensure that the corpus is relatively balanced so that no demographic group or other variable is over- or under-represented in the data.

Once selected or assembled, the corpus is analysed with the help of specialist computer programmes (e.g. WordSmith Tools (Scott 2016), AntConc (Anthony 2014), CQPWeb (Hardie 2012), Sketch Engine (Kilgariff et al. 2014)). To subject the corpus to computational analysis, the text files it contains must be stored in a machine-readable, digital format. For texts that already exist in electronic form, such as emails, e-books, and online news articles, this is a relatively straightforward task. However, texts originating in other formats pose more of a challenge in this regard. Printed texts, such as printed books or handwritten letters, need to be typed up or digitised using optical character recognition software. Spoken texts, such as face-to-face conversations, need to be recorded and digitally transcribed prior to analysis. When dealing with spoken data, the corpus builder must also decide whether (and if so, how) to include paralinguistic features of the interaction, such as tone and pitch of voice, body language, gesture, and facial expression. Once they have been assembled, corpora can be annotated with additional information relating to the texts or the language they contain. Annotation at the text level is likely to indicate the genre or mode of the texts, or demographic metadata about the authors/speakers (e.g. speaker sex, age, social class, etc.), while annotation at the linguistic level usually indicates a word's grammatical class or semantic field. Linguistic annotation is normally carried out automatically via taggers such as Wmatrix (Rayson 2008).Importantly, issues around ethics and copyright also need to be considered when building a corpus, particularly if the language collected involves private forms of communication or we intend to make the corpus publically available.

The option of introducing corpus linguistics methods into the analysis of gender and sexuality is appealing for many reasons. First, because corpora are characteristically larger and more representative than datasets comprising just single or handfuls of texts, analysts can usually claim that their findings are more generalizable with respect to the type of language they are investigating. A related strength of corpus methods is that they are useful for pinpointing what Baker (2006: 13) describes as the 'incremental effect of discourse', that is to say, the propensity for discourses to be subtly established through linguistic patterns that might feature sparingly in one or two texts, but become significant when considered as part of a broader discourse type or collection of texts. Larger corpora are also more likely than smaller datasets to represent a fuller range of discourse positions around a particular subject, which can be particularly useful for apprehending so-called resistant or minority discourses. A further advantage of corpus methods is that the specialist computer programmes that underpin such methods can perform frequency counts and complex statistical calculations faster and more reliably than the human mind, and so can reveal linguistic patterns that might otherwise evade manual observation or run counter to intuition (Baker 2006: 10–14). Corpus linguistics methods can also add a degree of objectivity to discourse analysis in that they advocate a principle of methodological transparency in terms of two important principles: (i) no systematic bias in the selection of texts included in the corpus (i.e. do not exclude a text because it does not fit a pre-existing argument or theory); and (ii) total accountability (all data gathered must be accounted for) (McEnery and Hardie 2012). Combined, these principles of methodological transparency can help discourse analysts overcome the accusation that certain texts or examples have been cherry-picked (Widdowson 2004) because they support a preconceived argument.

Like any other methodology, however, corpus linguistics is not perfect. One limitation concerns what corpora have the power to represent. The rendering of a text or a collection of texts into a corpus is a transformative process, the product of which bears important differences to the originals. Because corpora tend to contain transcriptions of written or spoken language, it is difficult to systematically use corpus techniques to analyse, say, the gestures in a spoken interaction, or the visuals in a newspaper text (Baker 2008). A related criticism levelled at corpora is that they offer decontextualised versions of the texts they represent. The corpus analyst must therefore carry out more work in order to become cognisant of the role that the contexts of situation and culture play in the production and consumption of the texts contained in the corpus. Another limitation of corpus approaches is that they tend to focus on presence (i.e. those linguistic features that *do* occur in the texts under analysis), but tell us less about what is absent (i.e. what is missing or obscured from the texts in the corpus). Finally, although the computer programmes underpinning corpus linguistic analyses are useful for pinpointing frequent and statistically interesting features of the data, they cannot interpret those patterns or tell us why they are significant. Crucially, it is up to the human analyst to dig deeper (and often wider – drawing on corpus-external sources) to make sense of and explain the significance of those patterns. At this point, we reiterate Baker's (2014) argument that analysts should be wary of the danger in relying exclusively on corpora and corpus techniques, particularly when carrying out social research. A corpus by itself does not always yield explanations for language patterns. Only by considering other forms of context – by reading individual texts in their entirety or drawing on our knowledge of the world outside the corpus, in which those texts exist – can we fully account for our findings.

It should be borne in mind that many of the criticisms of corpus methods outlined above can also be directed at other approaches applied to the study of language, gender, and sexuality. These criticisms should not discourage the use of corpus methods in this field. Rather, our discussion of them here is intended to make analysts aware of what corpus methods can and cannot do well so that informed decisions can be made about when and how such methods might be used most effectively, and work out what steps can be taken to meet any methodological shortcomings. Analysts employing corpus methods should also take care if making claims about objectivity. Our own political leanings may bias us by causing us to disregard aspects of texts we disagree with, and even when dealing with non-political data, human brains tend to process data inefficiently (such as paying more attention to emotionally charged or recent information). Corpus analytical computer programmes are not subject to such biases in the same way as human minds. However, both the designers and users of these programmes are still subject to such biases. It is therefore important for analysts to avoid uncritical over-reliance on corpus techniques, and be self-reflexive about the influence that their own positions and biases are likely to have had in shaping their findings (see also: Baxter 2003; Mills and Mullany 2011).

Using corpus methods to analyse gender: a case study of patient feedback

In order to demonstrate how some of the most commonly used techniques within corpus linguistics can be applied to research on language, gender, and sexuality, this short section examines a corpus of 29 million words of online patient feedback to the British National

Health Service, posted to the NHS Choices website between 2013 and 2015. The corpus contains 228,113 separate comments relating to GP practices, hospitals, dentists, and a range of other NHS providers. The research question which frames this section is: to what extent is evaluation made about NHS practitioners gendered? To answer this question we will use techniques from word lists, collocation, and concordancing.

Prior to the analysis, the corpus was loaded to an online interface called CQPweb (Hardie 2012). As a first step we examined a word list which simply consists of a table containing all of the words in the corpus, displayed in order of frequency. The top ten words in the corpus were *the*, *to*, *I*, *and*, *a*, *have*, *of*, *for*, *is*, and *in*. These words often appear as the most frequent words in any corpus and are not the most helpful ones for us to answer our research question. Instead, we are more interested in frequent words which indicate evaluation. The version of the corpus we are working with has been part-of-speech tagged, meaning that each word in it has been annotated with one of 148 fine-grained grammatical categories or codes such as NN1 (singular common noun) or RT (adverb of time). This is a process that was carried out automatically with a computer program called CLAWS (Garside and Smith 1997) and can be useful in helping analysts to focus on words with certain properties. In our case we want to consider words tagged as JJ (general adjective). We can specify that CQPweb shows a wordlist just containing words tagged as JJ, and from that list we can pick out the most frequent terms which indicate positive and negative evaluation. The most frequent positive evaluative words (in order of frequency) are: *good*, *excellent*, *helpful*, *friendly*, *great*, *professional*, *caring*, *fantastic*, *lovely*, and *polite*, while the ten most frequent negative words are: *rude*, *bad*, *unhelpful*, *terrible*, *awful*, *appalling*, *unprofessional*, *disgusting*, *abrupt*, and *useless*.

Bearing these 20 adjectives in mind, we can examine whether certain words tend to be gendered, or in other words, tend to be used to differently to describe men or women. There are various ways that this can be approached, but as an illustrative example we decided to examine the extent to which these words collocate with the gendered pronouns *he* and *she*. A collocate is simply a word which occurs near or next to another word, usually more frequently than would be expected by chance alone. In order to identify collocates we first need to decide on which collocational measure to use (for this case study we will simply count the cases of co-occurrence rather than using a more complex measure like mutual information or log-likelihood). We also need to consider the collocational span; i.e. the maximum number of words apart that two words can appear together. Using different spans will produce different results. A wide span (say, ten words to the left or right of a word), will probably produce a lot of collocates, including some words where the relationship between the words is not a direct one. On the other hand, too small a span (say, one word either side of a word) will produce fewer collocates but is also likely to miss some important cases. Generally, a span of between three and five words either side of the word we are focusing on is used. For this study we will use a span of five words and remove unwanted cases by hand.

After carrying out some experiments with different gendered terms, we chose to examine the evaluative adjectives which collocate with the pronouns *he* and *she*. These two terms are highly frequent so are likely to give us a reasonable number of cases to consider. They also tend to co-occur with the evaluative adjectives in constructions like ‘I have to praise the new doctor *he* is very *good*’. However, we need to be careful about assuming that every case of ‘good’ and ‘he’ collocating involves a positive evaluation of someone who works at the NHS and is male. For example, consider the following excerpt of text: ‘*he* received equally *good* care’. Here, the male person being discussed is a patient rather than a practitioner. For this reason, it is necessary for us to examine concordances of each collocational pair and adjust the frequencies in order to remove cases which are not relevant to the research question. A concordance is a table showing all of the citations of a word, phrase, or collocational pairing in a corpus, within the immediate context of the text they occur in. As concordances often only show around 10 to 20 words at a time, it is sometimes necessary to expand concordance lines to see more context in order to make an accurate interpretation. Table 37.1 shows a concordance of the first ten cases of the collocational pair of 'he' and 'good' in the corpus.

Examining Table 37.1, we only categorised lines 1, 3, 5, and 6 as counting towards an evaluation of a male practitioner as good. Line 8 refers to a doctor giving good advice, whereas line 10 refers to the patient's relationship with the doctor as being good. A case could be made for counting these two cases as well, but for this analysis we are only going to consider direct evaluations. Another analyst may make a different decision though, and because of this we should note that it is more important for analysts to explain how a categorisation is made and be consistent, rather than trying to produce a 'definitive' categorisation scheme which satisfies everyone. Therefore, for this study, we counted cases of direct evaluation e.g. 'he is good' as well as cases where a practitioner's behaviour or manner was evaluated e.g. 'what she did is disgusting'.

Table 37.2 shows the top ten positive and negative evaluative adjectives and the number of times they collocate with *he* or *she* in order to label an NHS practitioner.

What can we conclude from the numbers in Table 37.2? First, it looks as if positive evaluation is more frequent than negative evaluation, and that women are evaluated more often than men (both positively and negatively). This might suggest that women receive more scrutiny than men in this context, although the higher numbers for women could be due to a range of other reasons. For example, perhaps patients are more likely to encounter

Table 37.1 Concordances of the collocation of 'he' and 'good'

1	recepton staff I have to praise the new doctor **he** is very	**good**	and thorough . However trying to get an appointment is a nightmare
2	nowt rong with him : @ i rushed.him 2 walkin center n	**good**	job i.did **he** had a really.really bad chest infection n if left
3	who my husband had had in the past as **he** was really	**good**	, when I get te comment 'for goodness sake' i cant believe
4	a lot of love put him to bed . **He** had a	**good**	night sleep and if I can write you now , it is
5	wont waste my time ! GP Practice Review My doctor is very	**good**	. **he** is always very helpful for patient . He is the
6	allow for better access . good receiption my GP is a very	**good**	dr coz **he** freindly behavier and reception is good also The GP
7	Sadly though this was to the adhd service which was no	**good**	as **he** does n't suffer from this condition . When I asked
8	feel I can trust this doctor , he has always given me	**good**	advice . **He** never rushes , which is a godsend , he
9	now when I have a small baby . Not only is **he**	**good**	during appointments but he also follows things up to check how we
10	and the staff are very courteous.The doctor relationship with me was very	**good**	and **he** consulted me about my treatment.I recommend this practice to to

Table 37.2 Frequency of positive and negative evaluative adjectives as collocates of 'he' and 'she' when referring to NHS practitioners

Positive adjectives	*he*	*she*	*Negative adjectives*	*he*	*she*
good	40	21	rude	91	184
helpful	53	86	bad	3	2
excellent	47	35	unhelpful	6	15
friendly	53	88	terrible	1	7
great	34	47	awful	4	10
professional	83	91	appalling	3	5
polite	30	37	unprofessional	5	7
fantastic	36	65	useless	0	0
caring	45	65	disgusting	1	6
lovely	35	136	abrupt	17	25
Total	*456*	*671*	*Total*	*131*	*261*

women than men in the NHS. Overall, there are more references to *she* (44,938 cases) than *he* (37,513 cases) in the corpus. This does not necessarily mean that patients do encounter women more, but it does imply that they are written about more in the comments. It is also worth considering the proportion of positive and negative evaluations that men and women receive. Women receive twice as many negative evaluations as men (261 vs. 131), although only 1.47 times as many positive evaluations as men (671 vs. 456). However, if we compare the ratio of positive to negative evaluations, for women it is 1 negative adjective to 2.57 positive adjectives, while for men it is 1 negative adjective to 3.48 positive adjectives. So while women receive the most positive adjectives overall, compared to men, and compared to the ratio of negative adjectives with which they also collocate, they do not seem to be rated as well.

These results should not allow us to conclude that men are better at their jobs than women in the NHS. Patient feedback is impressionistic, and when people orient to gender in their comments they are likely to be (unconsciously) drawing upon a wide range of gendered discourses (Sunderland 2004), resulting in expectations about what counts as 'appropriate' or 'notable' male and female behaviour. This trend is further illuminated when we consider words which are used at least double the amount for one sex compared to the other. For women, these are: *lovely*, *rude*, *unhelpful*, *terrible*, *awful*, and *disgusting*. We may want to discount the latter four as their frequencies are all quite low, leaving us with *lovely* and *rude*. For men, the only adjective that applies is *good*. However, we may also want to note that only two adjectives are used to refer more to males than females (*good* and *excellent*), so these two words are both salient. Therefore, a complementary finding from this current study in terms of male and female professional behaviour, women are less likely than men to be evaluated as *excellent* or *good*, although they are almost four times as likely as men to be evaluated with the somewhat more patronising word, *lovely* (see also Baker 2010).

An important part of corpus-based research is to consider context in order to interpret and explain our findings. For example, a (partial) explanation for the pattern that we have found is that certain roles in the NHS involve different expectations about technical, emotional, social, or communicative skills, and may thus attract certain types of evaluation. So in the corpus the word *nurse* is more likely (than other NHS roles) to be labelled with the adjectives *lovely* or *caring*, while the word *receptionist* is more likely to be described as *rude*. In addition to this, some roles have a high gender imbalance. For example, a report from the Nursing and Midwifery Council (2014) found that 90 per cent of nurses were female, while Yar et al. (2006: 56) gave the proportion of female receptionists in the NHS as being almost 99 per cent. There is a societal expectation that nurses and women will be *lovely* and *caring*, whereas a receptionist role is paid less and is generally seen as less prestigious than other NHS jobs (such as doctor or dentist), so perhaps people are less likely to tolerate behaviour they view as rude from receptionists, as opposed to similar behaviour from, say, doctors, who have a higher social status, and the ability to heal them.

We could also consider context within the corpus itself, for example, by looking in more detail at some of the patterns around the collocates. Take the word *excellent*, which was found to occur more with *he* than *she*. This word is particularly interesting because of the most frequent ten positive evaluative adjectives it could be seen as the most positive. It is therefore notable that it is used to describe males more than females (as 18 out of 20 of the top evaluative words refer to females more often). A more detailed analysis of the concordance lines around *excellent* found that it was most commonly used with *he* to refer to doctors (20 cases), dentists (8), and consultants (7). However, when occurring alongside *she*, *excellent* referred most often to female nurses (12 times), consultants (5 times), and doctors (4 times).

In order to compare more directly how *excellent* is used in context for male and female practitioners, we examined only cases of excellent doctors. While there was less data to examine for women than men, we noticed that the praise around the male doctors was generally longer and tended to be accompanied by specific reasons to warrant the label of *excellent*. For the four excellent female doctors, three of them were simply labelled as *excellent* but without any reason given. The fourth was described as ‘very friendly, caring and professional’ – positive descriptions, but also somewhat generic and unspecific. On the other hand, excellent male doctors were described in the following ways: ‘spoke clearly, patiently and without talking down to me … included my wife in our conversation’, ‘compassionate without being patronising and was perceptive enough to see that I needed more than the antibiotics’, ‘he explained everything extremely thoroughly and made me feel very relaxed’, ‘he found a vein successfully and managed to get bloods and a line in’, and ‘has a great deal of knowledge’. This sample of longer quotes about male doctors relates to their attitude, communication skills, technical ability, and knowledge. Not only, then, do males get referred to as excellent more than females in the NHS, but when they do, they also appear to get longer amounts of (more specific) praise heaped upon them.

The analysis presented here is preliminary and incomplete in terms of exploring gendered patterns across the whole corpus. A more comprehensive analysis would consider patterns around the other evaluative adjectives in Table 37.2. For example, the word *rude* is the most frequently used negative adjective in the corpus and is also used twice as much for women as for men. It would therefore be interesting to see what types of behaviours are described as *rude* for men and women and explore the extent to which these reflect different expectations for men and women. We could also further consider the intersection between behaviour and role. For example, one description of a ‘rude’ receptionist involved someone’s daughter being ‘asked personal questions about the nature of her ailment by the receptionist’. This most likely relates to the fact that receptionists often play a ‘medical gatekeeping’ role which requires them to ask such questions to ensure that patients with the most serious medical problems are treated first, as well as that patients receive the right type of treatment from the most appropriate practitioner (Gallagher et al. 2001). Another example from the corpus refers to a rude receptionist, with the only additional information about her being that she told a patient that they could not have an appointment for seven days. However, receptionists do not control the number of appointments that can be given out, they simply have to administer timetabling systems that were created by other people. These two cases of perceived rudeness then, could be more to do with the requirements of being a receptionist (Hammond et al. 2013), and might be exacerbated by gendered expectations involving appropriate female behaviour (e.g. women, especially those in relatively low-paid jobs, should not engage in face-threatening behaviour) (see Mills 2003).

Having demonstrated some of the main techniques of analysis in corpus linguistics, the following section surveys existing research which has applied such techniques to the study of language, gender, and sexuality.

Corpus studies of language, gender, and sexuality

In the past, researchers investigating language, gender, and sexuality have tended to take mainly qualitative perspectives on relatively small datasets, a trend which prompted Baker (2008: 73–74) to describe corpus linguistics as '[sitting] somewhat uncomfortably on the sidelines of language and gender research.' This under-subscription is likely to have resulted from various factors, including: unfamiliarity, lack of access to data and tools of analysis, and a misperception that corpus linguistics is difficult or requires advanced knowledge of computer programming or statistics (Baker 2014: 12). On a theoretical level, researchers with an interest in language, gender, and sexuality have tended to align with postmodern positions which reject the possibility of an 'objective' research method, and are likely to view the use of quantification, for example to distinguish language associated with sex, gender, or sexuality, as contributing to the essentialist reification of gendered linguistic norms.

Although discourse studies of gender and sexuality have generally been slow to adopt corpus approaches in their analyses, there is nonetheless a growing body of research in this area that has harnessed the possibilities of corpus linguistics to study larger collections of data and support theory-driven insights with quantitative linguistic evidence. We will first review a selection of studies of language and gender, before moving on to language and sexuality. The earliest corpus-based studies of language and gender examined similarities and differences across corpora of texts (spoken and written) produced by men and women. Shalom (1997) studied similarities and differences between men's and women's personal adverts. McEnery et al. (2000) compared the prevalence of swearing in speech produced by men and women in the British National Corpus (BNC). This early interest in the similarities and differences between male and female speech has maintained, with more recent corpus-based studies exploring gendered language use in more specific contexts. For example, Jiménez Catalan and Ojeda Alba (2008) compared the vocabularies of male and female primary-school children learning English in their written English. More recently, Charteris-Black and Seale (2010) used corpus methods to compare the ways that men and women with cancer talk about their illness. The men in their study were found to draw on technical, medico-scientific language to make sense of and communicate about their illness, while the women's accounts tended to focus on emotional disclosure and talk about relationships.

Corpus linguistics methods granted these researchers the opportunity to test gendered language norms by observing linguistic trends across larger (even population level) groups, rather than relying on small groups of speakers or researcher introspection. Because of their commitment to analysing authentic language data (rather than researcher-invented examples) corpus linguistic studies of language produced by men and women can help in challenging difference models of gender and language, which erroneously post two gendered 'species' of language user, but have little (or no) empirical grounding in terms of how men and women actually use language. For example, Harrington (2008) combined quantitative and qualitative corpus techniques to compare reported speech in language produced by men and women. The analysis suggested that speakers' use of reported dialogue was more to do with social context than it was to do with gender as a social category.

Another popular strand of corpus-based research into language and gender focuses on uncovering gendered discourses and ideologies in society. Stubbs (1996) examined gendered expectations of boys and girls manifested in speeches given by the founder of the Boy Scouts Association, Robert Baden-Powell. Baker (2008: 203–208) compared the discourse surrounding the terms *bachelor* and *spinster* in the BNC, finding that although the two words are semantic equivalents (unmarried male and female, respectively), the word *spinster* tended to accrue negative attributes, such as sexual frustration and unattractiveness, while the word *bachelor* evidenced comparatively positive attributes for young men, such as being eligible and fun-loving, with older bachelors represented as problematic, and their status needing to be 'explained'. The media – especially the print media – has provided a popular data source for corpus-based studies of gendered representation. For example, Taylor (2013) compared the use of the terms *boy* and *girl* in three corpora of British broadsheet newspapers, focusing on similarities as well as differences, while Baker and Levon (2016) studied the representation of men in UK newspaper articles about masculinity. More recently, Baker (2014) studied the representation of trans people in a corpus of British newspaper articles. Other studies have focused on gendered representations in more specialised corpora of media texts, for example, the Harry Potter book series (Hunt 2015) and pop song lyrics (Kreyer 2015).

Another area of interest in corpus-based studies of gender is sexist language. In an early study, Kjellmer (1986) compared the frequencies of male and female pronouns and the terms *man*, *men, woman* and *women* in American and British English, reporting an overall bias towards the male terms. Sigley and Holmes (2002) studied the frequency of gender-marked suffixes, such as -*ess* and -*ette*, and reported that such terms declined in use over time. More recently, Baker (2010) expanded this research by studying British English corpora dated between 1931 to 2006, finding that while *Ms* continued to be very rare, the male equivalent, *Mr*, was also in decline. Baker hypothesised that this trend might signal the diminishment (and possible eventual disappearance) of the unequal gender title system.

The majority of corpus-based research into language and sexuality has explored the linguistic construction of gay and lesbian identities, paying particular attention to how these intersect with desire. For example, Morrish and Sauntson (2011) utilised corpus methods to study how lesbian desires and identities were represented in a corpus of lesbian erotica from the 1980s and 1990s. Using the corpus techniques of frequency and collocation, the authors explored the ways in which 'lesbian gender', power, and desire were represented, (re-)produced, and enacted in their data, which they argued often challenged hegemonic discourses of gender and sexuality. Similarly, Baker (2002, 2005) studied the changing constructions of gay men's identity and desire in a corpus of gay men's personal adverts in the UK, while Bogetić (2013) considered a similar corpus of adverts written by Serbian gay teenagers.

A growing area of interest in corpus-based studies of gender and sexuality concerns language and homophobic discrimination. Baker (2004) used the keywords method to compare oppositional stances in House of Lord debates about the equalisation of the age of sexual consent for gay men. He found that, while the word *homosexual* was associated with acts, the word *gay* was linked to identities. Furthermore, those who argued in favour of law reform focused on a discourse of equality and tolerance, while those who were against law reform constructed homosexuality by accessing discourses linking it to danger, ill-health, crime, and unnatural behaviour. Similar work undertaken on political debates around equality for LGBT people have been carried out by Bachmann (2011), Love and Baker (2015), and Findlay (2017). Finally, as part of a broader study into the discourse of white supremacism, Brindle (2016) combined corpus linguistics with critical discourse analysis to examine the language used by members of a white supremacist web forum to construct heterosexual, white masculinities and represent gay men and other out-groups.

Section summary

In this section we briefly outline the remaining three chapters in Part VIII of the Handbook. While all of the chapters in this part have drawn on online sources in order to collect corpus data, the types of data, and the ways that they relate to gender and/or sexuality are very different. First, Taylor's chapter extends the discussion of collocation which began in this chapter to consider how it can be used in order to imply evaluative meanings at a subconscious level. Taylor considers a range of different statistical techniques for calculating collocations as well as considering how altering the span will impact on the type of collocates retrieved. This is followed by a discussion of commonly used corpus tools for calculating collocates: Sketch Engine and LancsBox and a survey of studies in language and gender which have used collocates. Taylor's case study involves an examination of the phenomenon of mock politeness in a 61-million-word corpus of posts taken from the online forum Mumsnet. Examining terms that have been found to reference mock politeness (like *sarcastic*, *patronising* and *bitchy*), Taylor uses collocational networks to show how particular terms and evaluations are associated with different gendered identities. For example, *sarcastic* is found to be associated with male identities while *bitchy* is most strongly associated with female ones. Taylor's analysis indicates that general understandings of social interactions are filtered through gendered discourses, with different criteria applied for males and females.

Hunt's chapter focuses on the analysis of different types of gendered and sexed identities in a corpus of South African newspaper articles. This corpus presents particular problems for corpus analysts due to its multilingual nature and Hunt spends some time discussing how to identify and search for terms relating to identities when working with multiple languages. Then, using the corpus analysis tool AntConc, Hunt discusses how dispersion plots can be used in order to gain an impression of usage of particular terms over time, before moving on to show how collocation analysis should be ideally combined with analysis of concordance lines in order to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between two words, focusing particularly on an analysis of words that are used to refer to people who are gay or lesbian. The analysis, taking into account a comparison of the two terms in a collocational network, reveals the extent of intersectionality in representations of gay people – with sexuality and gender functioning as a matrix.

Finally, Potts and Formato examine a smaller corpus (around 27,000 words) of sentencing remarks from judges where women were the victims of male-perpetrated homicide. When using small amounts of corpus data, it can often be fruitful to carry out some form of annotation in order to enable a more sophisticated analysis. In this case, Potts and Formato carry out XML mark-up of the social actors in their corpus in order to indicate the gender, terms of reference, and grammatical status of each of them. Their subsequent analysis focuses on how naming strategies are used to construct solidarity or distance between judges and victims, and how the victims are often described in terms of their (disrupted) relationship with other people, as sisters, mothers, wives, etc. Subsequent analysis reveals how such women are described as collections of body parts that have been acted upon violently. Opportunities to functionalise victims in terms of their careers are less frequent in the corpus, leading Potts and Formato to discuss their findings in relationship to the extent that judges humanise and individualise female victims of violence.

The four chapters in Part VIII thus collectively cover a range of commonly used corpus procedures (collocation, concordancing, keywords, dispersion plots, collocational networks, annotation) and corpora from different contexts (healthcare feedback, online social networks, news media, and legal language). Together they demonstrate the potential of corpus linguistics to contribute towards language, gender, and sexuality research, by enabling analysts to identify frequent or salient linguistic patterns in large sets of texts, which can then be subjected to more detailed forms of qualitative interrogation. Corpus linguistics approaches, in identifying patterns that we may not have noticed without the help of statistical tests and visual models, help to reduce researcher bias to a reasonably acceptable level as well as giving us a toolbox to facilitate a speedier analysis of very large datasets. While we do not wish to present corpus linguistics as outclassing existing analytical approaches, we hope that the chapters in this part will encourage the consideration of this approach as a complement or supplement to existing toolkits. We particularly note that much gender and sexuality research within corpus linguistics has been carried out on general reference corpora and/or newspaper corpora in the English language, so note the potential for the approach to be extended to other languages and for a wider range of text types. Currently underexplored types of data which could benefit from a corpus approach could include transcripts of interviews, advertising, managerial and business texts, fiction (particularly LGBT fiction, modern fiction, or children's fiction), online news comments, and online sites aimed at particular identity groups. Often such data types raise methodological issues in terms of multimodality which corpus linguists have yet to fully resolve and which are likely to require the development of new tools and techniques for the future. This is a fast-paced and moving field and there are many opportunities for new researchers to make their mark.

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38

Investigating gendered language through collocation

The case of mock politeness

Charlotte Taylor

Introduction/definitions

Overview

This chapter makes use of the notion of ‘collocation’, a key concept in corpus linguistic work. Collocation refers to the tendency of certain words or phrases to occur together with other words and phrases. It is an important aspect of language because it gives us a way of understanding the associations that particular words or phrases may carry for language users. While collocation comes from corpus linguistics work, and as such pertains to a more quantitative approach to language studies, it has been extensively used in the subfield which combines corpus linguistics and (critical) discourse analysis and sits astride the traditional qualitative/quantitative divide.

Collocation analysis gives a way in to understanding how words and phrases are used, and the associations they trigger, which is essential to identifying the discourses that surround the representation of groups – a topic which is often of interest in research on language, gender, and sexuality. I would argue that collocation can also be an important preparatory stage in variation studies in this area. That is to say, before we can ask who does ‘x’ (most frequently), we need to know the full semantic and pragmatic profile of ‘x’ to be sure that we are measuring what we intend. In the case of mock politeness, which is the focus of the case-study in this chapter, previous research regarding gender has tended to report that men are more likely than women to perform sarcasm and more likely to perform patronising behaviours in mixed-sex interactions. In this chapter, I aim to step back from these binary comparisons to question whether the terms *sarcastic* and *patronising* are themselves gendered. For instance, is there a tendency to use *sarcastic* to describe behaviour by a male speaker when a different label would have been applied to the same behaviour if it had been performed by a female speaker?

The chapter starts by defining what is meant by collocation and how it can be investigated in studies of language, gender, and sexuality, including some guidance for good practice in the area. The case study is then presented in which collocation is employed to investigate *sarcastic* and *patronising*. The chapter ends with indications of future directions and recommendations for further reading for scholars interested in using collocation analysis to investigate the relationship between language, gender, and sexuality.

What is collocation?

Collocation is a fundamental notion within corpus linguistics, and is perhaps best summed up by Firth (1957: 11) who famously stated that 'you shall judge a word by the company it keeps'. The Firth quotation is important because it sums up not just *how* we understand collocation (the relationship between words), but *why* we are interested in collocation. That is how knowing which words tend to go together can tell us more about the contextual meanings (including evaluative potential) of the item we are particularly interested in. The role of corpus linguistics here is in allowing us to look at a greater number of instances than would be feasible by manual analysis, and in giving us information about the *significance* of collocation.

There are two different ways of thinking about the significance of collocation: the first relates to the identification of collocation and the second relates to why it is of interest to those of us studying language. Starting with the first, here we are trying to identify which collocates or pairings of words we should consider to be significant. To address this point we might want to go back to defining collocation. According to Stubbs (2001: 29), a collocate is

> a word-form or lemma which co-occurs with a node [the word the researcher is interested in] in a corpus. Usually it is frequent co-occurrences which are of interest, and corpus linguistics is based on the assumption that events which are frequent are significant.

However, frequency alone is insufficient because, as Biber, Conrad, and Reppen (1998: 265) remind us, 'more common words are more likely to occur in a collocate pair simply by chance'. Thus it would be overly simplistic to look at frequency alone, and potentially uninformative for our research purposes. For this reason, in the practical sections we will look at which measurements can be used to identify collocates.

To take the second aspect of significance in relation to collocation, we need to consider more fundamentally why word pairings should be of interest to a researcher interested in investigating the relationship between gender and sexuality and language. Here, the reason that collocation is seen as meaningful is because it gives us a way in to understanding the evaluative meanings that are potentially bundled up with any lexical item.

In the most obvious cases, the evaluative meaning actually is the central meaning, as for instance in the term *bitch* where it is used as a term of abuse for a woman. In this context, we cannot separate out the negative evaluation from the thing to which the word refers; the evaluation is entirely intrinsic to the word. The unfavourable meanings, or negative connotations, are absolutely apparent to the fluent speaker and not in any sense peripheral or hidden. Similarly, to take a well-known gender pair, the connotations of *spinster* and *bachelor* are quite apparent to a fluent speaker; the difference between the two is not just that one is used for an unmarried man and one for an unmarried woman, but that *bachelor* evaluates that unmarried status more favourably than *spinster*.

Then, there are lexical items which are less obviously evaluative in function. For instance, Cameron (2003) discusses the term *openly gay*. At first glance, we might not see anything so obviously evaluative here but, as Cameron urges, we only have to think about what else we might describe someone as being *openly*. Using a corpus, we can check those intuitions and, according to the general corpus EnTenTen13 (described below), the words which have the strongest collocation with *openly* are, in order of strength: *gay*, *hostile*, *homosexual*, *lesbian*, *racist*, *contemptuous*, *bisexual*, *critical*, *defiant*, *anti-semitic*. Apart from the words that refer to sexuality and perhaps ‘defiant’, we might note that these are mainly attributes that are unlikely to be used to describe someone the speaker admires (*hostile*, *contemptuous*, *critical*) and describe highly offensive views (*racist*, *anti-semitic*). With this information to hand, we might reconsider whether *openly gay* is a neutral expression. This tendency for a lexical item to regularly occur with items that have favourable or unfavourable connotations has been discussed in corpus linguistics as ‘semantic prosody’ or ‘evaluative prosody’. It is often referred to as the ‘aura’ that a word carries (following Louw 1993) and often we only realise that a word has a particular prosody when the expected pattern is broken. For instance, does *openly friendly* sound usual or familiar?

In addition to these evaluative meanings, there may be other connotations that are held as part of our conscious or unconscious knowledge of a lexical item, and these are the aspects now likely to be described as ‘discourse prosodies’. To take an older example, Sinclair (2004: 38) discusses how the phrase *my place* has a prosody of ‘informality’ and ‘invitation’ as in ‘Would you like come to back to my place for a while?’. The uptake of collocation and connotation in studies of language, gender, and sexuality is discussed in more detail below.

Using collocation in studies of language, gender, and sexuality

In a survey of work that employed corpus linguistics approaches in order to study the relationship between gender and sexuality and language, I identified 47 articles published in international journals between 2006 and 2016. Of these, 21 focused on *variation* in language used by people classified as belonging to different gender or sexuality groups and 22 focused on the *representation* of people classified as belonging to different gender or sexuality groups. Collocation was used as a tool only in the latter group of representation-based studies and was employed in 11 of those papers, so nearly one quarter of the studies overall. If we consider why collocation tends to be used most frequently in representation studies, it is likely to be because of its close relationship to discourse and therefore to ideology.

As outlined in the previous section, the study of collocation provides us with an entry point to our data in terms of understanding what evaluations and other types of connotation may be packaged up with certain lexical items in given contexts. We may consider the contribution of collocation analysis as affecting two principal areas within discourse studies. In the first, as Bogetić (2013: 334) puts it, ‘collocation analysis offers a productive means for understanding ideology, as lexical co-occurrence may shed new light on complex webs of identities, discourses and social representations in a community’. Indeed it is because of this notion of ‘webs’ that the concept of the collocational network is particularly useful. We may not be consciously aware of how particular ideas are persuasively grouped in discourses and so the analysis of collocates gives us a means for drawing out these connections and *non-obvious* meanings. The second important use of collocates is that they ‘can be useful in revealing how meaning is acquired through repeated uses of language, as certain concepts become inextricably linked over time’ (Baker 2014: 13). If we consider discourse to be cumulative, then looking at the accumulated associations around particular lexical items can help make this process more evident.

In the papers surveyed for the literature review, 6 of the 11 focused explicitly on the gendered noun pairs MAN/WOMAN and GIRL/BOY and all but one focused on gendered nouns. This focus on gender pairs may represent a strength of the approach because analysing the collocation patterns allows us to discover new information about how such seemingly straightforward pairs are used in different domains. However, it also shows where more research may be required in collocation studies of language, gender, and sexuality because it reveals that the research to date tends to operate along binary gender lines. What this suggests is that the knowledge which is valued is difference between two genders. More recent research into these gendered nouns, such as Baker and Levon (2016), digs deeper by examining the different language surrounding racialised and classed pre-modifiers of 'man' and this intersectional approach reflects more accurately the wider movement in gender and sexuality studies.

Good practice in collocation analysis

In terms of good practice, those principles that apply to collocation analysis are the same as those that apply to most research and certainly most corpus linguistic work.

Transparency

When reporting collocation analysis, provide sufficient information for the reader to understand exactly how you manipulated your data. This would include details of which word forms you searched for, what software you used, the statistical measure of strength of collocation, the cut-off points implemented, and the span examined for collocates (how many to the left and how many to the right of the node). Ideally, you should aim to produce enough information for a reader to repeat the analysis, thus fulfilling the goal of 'replicability'. Although space is often an issue, it is usually possible to include this information at least as a footnote. The reason this is so important is that there are different ways of calculating collocation and these will produce different results (see discussion in Baker 2014; McEnery and Hardie 2012). To take an example which is relevant to the case study we discuss in the following section, if we look at the collocates of SARCASTIC in EnTenTen13 (a very large corpus of texts gathered online), the Sketch Engine software (Kilgarriff et al. 2014) offers us four different measures for calculating collocates and the results are displayed in Table 38.1. The number given to the right-hand side of each column tells us how often these two words occur together.

Table 38.1 Comparison of collocate ranking according to different measures

Frequency		*t-score*		*Mutual information*		*logDice*	
and	12,655	*And*	12,655	*insultsude*	14	*witty*	684
a	11,499	*a*	11,499	*quotesarcastic*	11	*snarky*	277
the	9,216	*I*	7,848	*jerksarcastic*	10	*Revive*	233
I	7,848	*the*	9,216	*sarkastisches*	5	*remark*	597
to	6,974	*to*	6,974	*bithcy*	14	*cynical*	469
of	6,236	*being*	5,070	*fringeheads*	13	*remarks*	928
being	5,070	*of*	6,236	*raucher*	3	*humor*	1,183
is	4,568	*was*	4,252	*fringehead*	8	*snide*	151
in	4,363	*is*	4,568	*Fringehead*	7	*wit*	430
was	4.252	*be*	3,835	*Marcot's*	8	*Dont*	323

In the first column we see that the ten most frequent collocates are mostly function words and this is not particularly surprising because these are the most frequent types of words in the corpus overall: in fact seven of the ten most frequent collocates are also among the ten most frequent words in the corpus. The following three columns use different statistical measures to calculate the likelihood of two items occurring together by chance and we can see great variation in the kinds of words that are identified. The t-score measure in the second column privileges high frequency of co-occurrence and indeed the ranking is very similar to the simple frequency ranking shown in the first column (nine of the top ten words are shared). By contrast, the words identified as significant collocates using the mutual information calculation (the third column) appear to be mainly usernames. They are very low frequency overall and are reported because the calculation foregrounds items that occur very infrequently and nearly always occur together with the node (SARCASTIC). In the fourth column we see that the logDice calculation provides items that are neither particularly high nor particularly low in overall frequency and so looks the most likely to be productive in better understanding the company kept by SARCASTIC. So we can see that the choice of statistic will depend on the purpose and 'the sort of words that the researcher is interested in obtaining' (Baker 2006: 102) and needs to be reported because the results can vary so greatly. The same would apply to other factors which will affect the words that are calculated to be collocates such as the span and cut-off points that are chosen by the researcher and/or set as default in the software.

Total accountability

When discussing collocates, it is good practice to show all the collocates that were gathered using the chosen settings and criteria. This is important in order to fulfil the requirements of 'total accountability', a term coined in Leech (1992), which encapsulates the principle that we account for all findings and do not simply select those which are favourable to our hypothesis. Restrictions on space often mean that we have to be selective about what we discuss, but it is usually possible to use the appendices to list all collocates so the reader can get a fuller picture.

Generalisations

Collocates are register specific and so we should be careful not to assume that the collocates found in one corpus will be found elsewhere. For instance, in a study of newspaper language I found that collocates of *girl* and *boy* which remained constant over a 12-year time period related to violence (for *girl* only: *abduct*, *burn*, *death*, *lure*; for *boy* only: *wound*). Within the context of newspaper discourse, these offered interesting routes for investigation but it is also the case that they are a result of the news values of our press which tends to report negative events.

Context

When we examine collocates, we need to make sure we do not look at these lexical items in isolation. This is particularly the case when categorising collocates because that process of categorisation is a process of interpretation of meaning. Therefore, a key part of collocation analysis involves going back to the text (often via the concordance line) to see how the terms were used in that specific set of data. For instance, in my study of *girl* and *boy* in the press sometimes the two shared the same collocate but closer investigation showed that one was the object and the other was the subject of the same verb, which requires a different interpretation.

Background

The last suggestion for good practice is to remember to look outside the corpus at the wider field of language, gender, and sexuality studies. The rationale for filling a gap cannot simply be that no one has done a collocation study of 'x' previously; there needs to be a theoretically grounded reason as to why that is a worthy topic of investigation. More fundamentally, the researcher needs to be aware of how the theoretical framework in the field has developed and can support their research. As mentioned above, it is perhaps the case that collocation studies lag behind shifts in focus in the broader field at present.

Case study: gendered language and mock politeness

Background

In the case study, I explore two issues relating to the topic of mock politeness and gender. Mock politeness is defined as occurring when there is an im/politeness mismatch leading to an implicature of impoliteness (see Taylor 2016 for a more detailed discussion). Thus, it encompasses utterances such as those in Examples (1) and (2) which come from the corpus of forum interactions used in the case study:

(1) Lift came, doors opened, we stepped forward to get in and were almost knocked down by a couple with their own pushchair. I'm afraid I was rather sarcastic and exclaimed "Don't mind the queue";

(2) People that carry on like you Alba, are often described as twattish, or a bit of a tit. hth. [hope that helps]

In the first, the impoliteness mismatch comes from the apparently polite move of 'Don't mind the queue' and the context in which the targets had already entered the lift ahead of the speaker. The speaker intends that the incompatibility of what is said and the context lead to an implicature that what is meant is a reproach for non-observance of a perceived social norm (the impolite move). In the second, the mismatch is made more explicit as it occurs at the textual level where the polite move is given at the end of the utterance ('hth') following on from an impolite move in which the speaker associates the target with unfavourable characteristics.

The term 'mock politeness' is probably not one that you use in ordinary conversation, and as such we may consider it a 'second-order' label, which is to say it is a label for an academic concept (as summarised in the definition above). In previous work (Taylor 2016), I have found that the following are all 'first-order' or lay labels which were used to describe mock polite behaviours in a corpus of British English forum interactions: *patronising*, *biting*, *make fun*, *condescending*, *cutting*, *caustic*, *mock*, *bitchy*, *tease*, *passive aggressive*, *put down*, *overly polite*, *sarcastic*. This distinction between first- and second-order uses (see for instance Watts et al. 1992), between the lay and academic constructs and terms, is an important one, particularly when trying to elicit data, because any researcher needs to be confident that they are employing terms with which the participants are familiar and which may be used to describe the full range of behaviours under study and all kinds of people who perform those behaviours. So, for instance, if a researcher wanted to collect accounts of mock politeness, they would not ask interviewees ‘Can you tell me about a time someone was *bitchy* to you’ unless they wanted to focus on stories of female mock politeness. In this case the gendering of the lexical item is obvious, in other cases, the researcher might need to study the collocates to check for such bias.

In the following sections I briefly describe the data used here and then introduce two areas that overlap significantly with mock politeness and which have consistently been associated with male behaviour: sarcasm and patronising behaviour.

Data

The dataset used in this study comes from an online forum which was selected because it allows access to ‘everyday’ or ‘conversational’ comments on mock politeness, while retaining much of the context. The forum, mumsnet.com, is UK based and predominantly populated by people presenting as women (an imbalance which clearly has implications for any discussion of gender). By way of illustration of the size, as of January 2015, Mumsnet claims to have over 14 million visits per month (Mumsnet 2015). The 61-million-token corpus was compiled from the forum using the free software BootCat (Baroni and Bernardini 2004), which gathers text from entire webpages using seeds (search words).[1] The EnTenTen13 corpus, which is available through Sketch Engine, was also used.[2] This is an English language corpus of online texts and contains approximately 19 billion words (Jakubíček et al. 2013).

Tools

The latest tool for visualising connections between words is Lancsbox (Brezina et al. 2015, applied in Baker and McEnery 2015) which shows the way that collocates link to the node and also to one another.[3] The importance of visualising the collocational network is that it allows us to see the company that a word is keeping and, crucially, it places that company in context. As Brezina et al. (2015: 141) state, ‘[c]ollocates of words do not occur in isolation, but are part of a complex network of semantic relationships which ultimately reveals their meaning and the semantic structure of a text or corpus’. Furthermore, because the networks can be displayed simultaneously, it is also possible that we may be able to identify what is absent (Duguid and Partington 2018) by noting which items collocate with some nodes and not with others.

The Sketch Engine thesaurus (Rychlý and Kilgarriff 2007) allows us to see which words share similar collocates. It works by identifying collocates for a search word and then in the second stage identifies other words which share those collocates. So, for instance, in the previous study (Taylor 2013) of *boy* and *girl* in a corpus of newspaper texts, the Sketch Engine thesaurus identified the word with the most similar collocates to *boy* as *girl* and vice versa (more revealingly, the second word in the *girl* list was *woman*, while the second word in the *boy* list was *child*).

Sarcasm

Starting with research into sarcasm, to date attention from a language, gender, and sexuality perspective has primarily focused on *variation* in use as correlated with gender. The issue of frequency of use has received most attention and the consensus has been that men use sarcasm more than women. The most common measurement has involved self-assessment, for instance, Dress et al (2008: 83, my italics) asked participants the following questions:

1) What is the likelihood that you would use *sarcasm* with someone you just met?
2) How *sarcastic* do you think you are?
3) What is the likelihood that you would use *sarcasm* when insulting someone?
4) What is the likelihood that you would use *sarcasm* with your best friend?

The majority of studies using this method found men self-reported as being sarcastic more often than women (e.g. Bowes and Katz 2011; Dress et al. 2008; Milanowicz 2013; Rockwell and Theriot 2001). This method assumes that the participants are both self-aware and truthful and, perhaps not surprisingly, two of these studies (Bowes and Katz 2011; Dress et al. 2008) found that although the male participants reported using sarcasm more than the female participants, they did not do so in elicitation tests. Furthermore, the choice of metalanguage suggests a problematic blurring between first- and second-order uses. The use of the word 'sarcastic/sarcasm' when interacting with participants means that they will not answer with reference to the researcher's second-order concept of sarcasm, that is, the scientific construct, but the kinds of contexts in which they personally would describe a behaviour as 'sarcastic', that is, the first-order understanding. However, we know that lay and academic uses of 'sarcasm' are not the same (e.g. Creusere 1999) and lay uses will be influenced by sociolinguistic variables, including whether these terms are gendered.

In terms of *expectations* of gendered performance, previous research again points towards an association of sarcasm with male behaviour. In experimental conditions, Colston and Lee (2004) reported that speakers of sarcastic utterances were more likely to be assumed to be male. Furthermore, Katz, Piasecka, and Toplak (2001) found that the perceived gender of the producer of a sarcastic utterance affected processing, with reading times for texts featuring male producers of sarcasm being lower than for female producers. This was interpreted as occurring because 'sarcasm is more likely to be associated with males than females, comprehension of noncanonical usage is delayed as people attempt to integrate the text they are reading with their stored "knowledge" (stereotypes) of men and women' (Katz et al. 2004: 187). Indeed, what is not clear, and what this case study aims to address, is the extent to which these gender effects are the results of stereotypes or actual gendered tendencies. For instance, Katz et al. (2004: 187, my italics) report that 'when the gender of the speaker is manipulated in a textoid [a short text], the *same* comment is rated as more sarcastic when made by a male than when made by a female'. This suggests that participants are drawing on stereotypes in associating *sarcasm* with male speakers.

To investigate the potential gender associations with *sarcastic* we start by visualising the collocates. Figure 38.1 visually displays the metapragmatic labels which I had previously

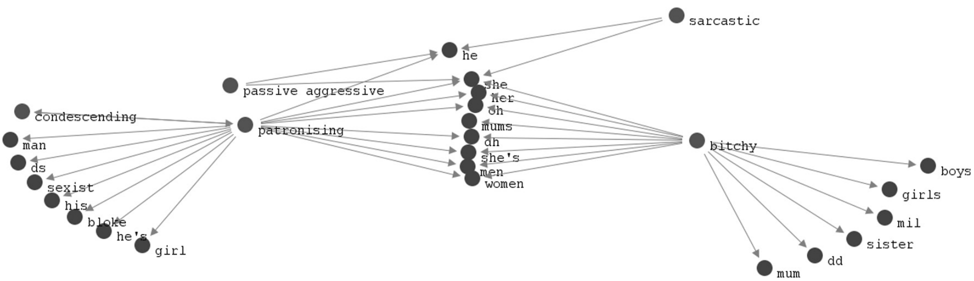

Figure 38.1 Gendered collocates of adjectival mock politeness labels.

found to indicate mock politeness and all their collocates which were gendered terms referring to people. In the LancsBox visualisation, the length of the line linking the search word and any given collocate reflects the strength of collocation between those items. The items in the central positions (*bitchy*, *patronising* etc.) are the nodes which are entered manually, and the items radiating out are the collocates.[4]

Two metapragmatic labels which emerge as gendered are *bitchy* on the right (the only one collocating with *mil* [mother-in-law], *girls*, *mum*, *dd* [dear daughter], *sister*) and *patronising* (the only one collocating with *man*, *ds* [dear son], *his*, *bloke*, *he's*). However, these two items also share a large number of collocates referring to both male and female participants (*she*, *her*, *mums*, *she's*, *women* and *dh* [dear husband], *men*). From this measure, *sarcastic* and *passive aggressive* collocate with just *he* and *she* which suggests a more neutral set in terms of gendering. Obviously at this point, what we do not know is how the gendered items relate to the node, that is – who is being described as mock polite and to whom they are being mock polite? This could be tackled by analysing collocates using a tool like Word Sketch which allows us to draw on grammatical (part of speech) information.

In this case study, the behaviours described by the metapragmatic labels were all analysed to identify the gender of the performer, that is, the person who was described as being 'sarcastic' etc. As Figure 38.2 shows, there were gender preferences for the different labels.[5]

The most gendered metapragmatic label of those examined was 'bitchy', which showed a semantic preference for describing female behaviour while the item most strongly associated with male behaviour in terms of statistical significance (measured using log-likelihood) was 'sarcastic'; these uses are illustrated in Examples (3) and (4) with key terms in bold.

(3) i ended up telling a couple of **bitchy** customers [I was pregnant], because I was lying down on the floor because I felt sick as shit, and this random **woman** came in and snottily said 'oh! having a lie-down are we?' 'yes, I replied, I'm pregnant and feel sick'.

(4) **DH** [dear husband] is happy for me to be at home BUT he moans at me if the house isn't tidy or I get behind. **He** is **sarcastic** and says things like 'I know you're really busy' or 'if you could spare the time'…

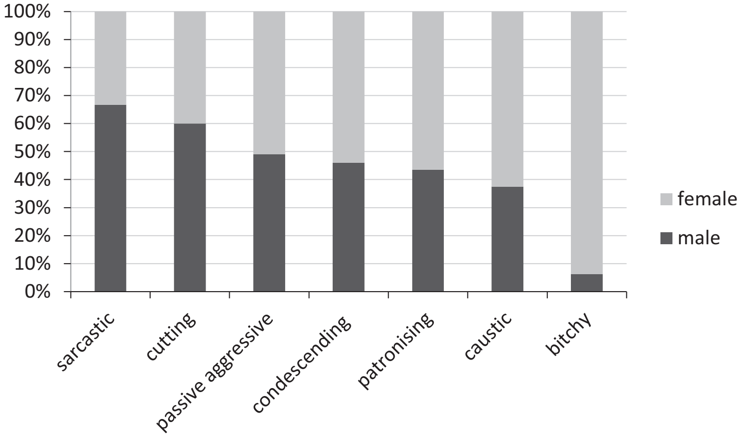

Figure 38.2 Distribution of male/female performance of behaviours.

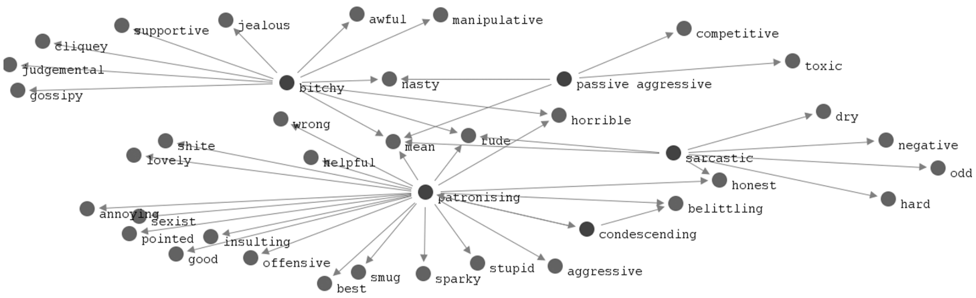

Figure 38.3 Evaluative collocates of adjectival mock politeness labels.

From Figure 38.2 we see that both *bitchy* and *sarcastic* carry gendered associations in terms of who they tend to describe. So when studies of gender ask participants to self-report the extent to which they are *sarcastic*, they are asking participants to apply a gendered label to their own behaviour. Understanding that *sarcastic* is actually gendered helps explain why men self-report as sarcastic more frequently than women even though there is no evidence of differences in actual practice: that is to say they self-report as *sarcastic* because they associate the term with a male behaviour (what remains unknown at this point is how a woman who performs the second-order construct of sarcasm would self-describe).

The collocation analysis also reveals differing patterns of evaluation for the labels investigated here, as shown in Figure 38.3. *Bitchy* and *sarcastic* and *patronising* share negative collocates (*rude*, *mean*). Additionally, *bitchy* collocates with a set of strongly unfavourable evaluations (e.g. *nasty*, *awful*) while those for *sarcastic* are less strong (e.g. *dry*, *odd*). Thus, it appears that the two most gendered labels (*sarcastic* for male behaviour and *bitchy* for female behaviour) also carry very different evaluative prosodies, indicating the potential for male and female participants to be judged differently for similar mock polite behaviours.

To further explore the evaluative connotations, Sketch Engine Thesaurus was used to investigate which terms share similar lexical environments in a much larger web corpus (EntenTen13). The results are visualised in Figure 38.4, which presents those items with the most shared collocates in the biggest font (the variation in shading is simply for ease of reading).

From Figure 38.4 we can observe that terms with similar collocates include those previously identified as mock politeness labels (e.g. *condescending*, *ironic*) alongside a mixture of apparently favourable (e.g. *humorous*, *witty*) and unfavourable (e.g. *obnoxious*, *dismissive*) labels, in addition to some which would need context to disambiguate (e.g. *irreverent*). What emerges then is a picture in which the label *sarcastic* is more likely to be used to describe a man's behaviour and that the evaluation of the lexical item is mixed, with both favourable and unfavourable interpretations co-existing.

Patronising

As a second-order label, *patronising* is usually understood to encompass behaviours which might also be labelled as *condescending*, another word that is under-investigated in terms of gender connotations. As Culpeper (2011: 95) notes, '[b]eing patronized involves a kind of 'double whammy': your face is devalued in some way, but it is also devalued in a particular relational context that does not licence the "patroniser" to do so'. This latter point about 'licence' invokes another key aspect: power. Thus, it is perhaps not altogether surprising

Figure 38.4 Sketch Engine Thesaurus output for 'sarcastic'.

that gender has often been a dominant focus of study in research into patronising behaviour from social psychology (alongside intergenerational interactions), in particular, so-called 'benevolent sexism' (Glick and Fiske 1997). In the conceptualisation of patronising and condescending behaviours in these areas, mismatch is given a central role because it is assumed that the patronising speaker is under-estimating the competence of the hearer. This potentially generates an im/politeness mismatch between the ostensibly helpful utterance and the simultaneous devaluing of the target by that under-estimation of competence. Another area where patronising behaviour has been researched in relation to gender is work on intimate relations. For instance, Buss (1989) identified 147 sources of upset (essentially impoliteness as it is conceptualised here) that men perform on women and vice versa. One of these factors was labelled as 'condescending' and this was more frequently complained about by women with regard to men's behaviour than vice versa.

To investigate the potential gendering of the term *patronising* itself, we can return to Figure 38.1 in which we saw that the collocates of *patronising* included more male participants than other mock politeness labels (*man*, *ds* [dear son], *his*, *bloke*, *he's*, *he*, *dh* [dear husband], *men*) but also collocated with female participants (*girl*, *she*, *her*, *mums*, *she's*, *women*), leaving the picture unclear. As previously, we may look to the larger corpus of EnTenTen13 to see what terms are used in similar environments through the Sketch Thesaurus function. The findings are reported in Figure 38.5 which shows there is a distinct negative evaluative prosody and the presence of lexical items with clear gender associations (*paternalistic*, *misogynistic*, *sexist*).

However, the data reported in Figure 38.2 did not show that this label was more likely to be used to discuss male behaviour in the context of the forum. One explanation for this which could be explored in further work is that *patronising* is not actually gendered in the same way as *sarcastic* but that it is so strongly associated with behaviours performed by those in positions of power that in many contexts it is biased towards male participants because they are more likely to hold such positions in societies.

Figure 38.5 Sketch Engine Thesaurus output for 'patronising'.

Summary

In this short case study, I hope to have shown how we can use collocation analysis as an entry point to our data and not only to start to unravel complex webs of connotations in relation to representation of gender but also as a preparatory stage for variation-focused studies of language and gender.

What collocation analysis can offer language, gender, and sexuality studies is an empirical basis for discussions of connotations and the two tools used here, LancsBox and the Sketch Engine Thesaurus, go further by offering visualisation techniques for displaying collocation patterns. The use of such techniques may help to make the integration of collocation analysis more accessible and something that can supplement language, gender, and sexuality research coming from a broad range of methodological backgrounds (such as those discussed and illustrated in this volume), in addition to forming the centre point in research coming from corpus linguistics.

Future directions

Given the adaptability of the method, the range of topics ripe for investigation using collocation research in language, gender, and sexuality studies is almost as wide as the range of topics in the subject area itself. Labels can be interrogated for non-obvious meanings across a wide spectrum of questions. This may constitute the main scope of the research, as in some of the examples below which centre on the collocates of gendered nouns to understand how men and women are represented in public discourses. Alternatively, the collocation analysis may be integrated as a way of offering another 'way in' to the data, as a form of triangulation alongside frequency analysis or non-corpus methods. Finally, the collocation analysis may be a preparatory stage to sociolinguistic variation investigations, as discussed above.

In terms of which future directions are likely to be particularly beneficial for the field, there is scope for research that takes a non-binary and/or intersectional approach in collocation analysis of language, gender, and sexuality. From a methodological perspective, it would be highly interesting to see variation studies which look beyond frequency and integrate collocation analysis.

At a larger scale, important avenues for future research within language, gender, and sexuality include studies of how lexical items accumulate and shed connotations over time, and the rise of diachronic corpora will facilitate this. Another significant avenue is to achieve better understanding of the extent to which people are aware of, or can be made aware of, the prosodies surrounding particular lexical items and this will be significant for creating impact from collocation studies. Finally, as a broad long-term goal, understanding how the networks of evaluations and connotations relate and intertwine in representing and constructing gender and sexuality is an important area for future attention.

Notes

1 See Taylor (2016) for the full corpus description.
2 Sketch Engine is currently free to universities in EU member states.
3 Freely available from http://corpora.lancs.ac.uk/lancsbox/
4 Calculated using a span of 5L/R, logdice, minimum collocation frequency of 5.
5 Only those instances where the behaviour of a third person was being described were counted in this stage because this mean that the gender was more likely to be specified and to avoid bias from the fact that the first- and second-person references would be disproportionately female in this particular corpus.

Further reading

Baker, P. (2014) *Using Corpora to Analyze Gender*. London and New York, NY: Bloomsbury.

This is a comprehensive overview of how corpus linguistics may be used in investigating the relationship between language and gender. Chapters 5 and 6 are particularly relevant for collocational analyses.

Baker, J. P. and Levon, E. (2016) '"That's what I call a man": Representations of racialised and classed masculinities in the UK print media'. *Gender and Language*, 10(1), pp. 106–139.

This paper shows how collocation analysis may be integrated with other approaches to the study of language, gender, and sexuality.

Bogetić, K. (2013) 'Normal straight gays: Lexical collocations and ideologies of masculinity in personal ads of Serbian gay teenagers'. *Gender & Language*, 7(3), pp. 333–367.

This is an example of work in which collocation is absolutely central to the investigation. It is worth noting that collocation in this paper is calculated as simple frequency.

Brezina, V., McEnery, T., and Wattam, S. (2015) 'Collocations in context: A new perspective on collocation networks'. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 20(2), pp. 139–173.

This offers an overview of the importance of collocation networks as well as an introduction to the LancsBox tool.

Jaworska, S. and Hunt, S. (2017) 'Differentiations and intersections: A corpus-assisted discourse study of gender representations in the British press before, during and after the London Olympics 2012'. *Gender and Language*, 11(3), pp. 336–364.

This is an example of how collocation analysis may be combined with frequency to investigate constructions of gender. It also addresses issues of intersectionality.

Related topics

The South African news media and representations of sexuality; XML mark-up for nomination, collocation, and frequency analysis of language of the law; analysing gendered discourses online;

determining the impact of gender stereotyping on patient feedback; affect in language, gender, and sexuality research.

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39

The South African news media and representations of sexuality

Sally Hunt

Introduction

In this chapter I demonstrate the application of a combination of corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis to a corpus of the most widely read newspaper in South Africa: the *Daily Sun*. I analyse the data in terms of the representation of sexuality, in the context of the newspaper's inclusion of words from languages other than English. I discuss some of the challenges of working with this multilingual data set, and make some comments on the benefits of using corpus methods in critical discourse analysis (CDA) to analyse the representation of sexuality in media texts.

Sexuality in South Africa

South Africa's constitution is noteworthy for its strong stance on equality in terms of sexuality, amongst other aspects of identity (The Constitution of South Africa 1996: n.p.). However, the statistics on rape and gender-based violence in the country and the practice of 'corrective rape', that is, rape to 'cure' lesbians, suggest that the lived reality of many South Africans is far removed from the hopeful statements of the constitution (Boonzaier and Zway 2015). It has been claimed, by public figures from presidents to pastors, that homosexuality is 'un-African', which not only reproduces 'a logic of essentialised racial identities', quite common in South Africa (Epprecht 2012, cited in Bhana 2015: 135), but also bolsters heteronormativity. Indeed, as recently as 2008, between 82 and 85 per cent of South Africans considered sex between people of the same sex to be 'always wrong' (Roberts and Reddy 2008). This chapter reports on research into the representation of sexualities in the most widely read newspaper in the country, in an attempt to explore the attitudes reflected and perpetuated in the local media.

The representation of identity in the media

In this context, the media provide a useful reflection of the views of ordinary citizens, the imagined 'ideal readers', and the dominant commonsense beliefs about sexuality, especially non-heterosexual sexualities. The significance of media constructions of sexuality also lies in their potential to influence ideological ebbs and flows, to thwart efforts to move towards equality through omission or negative coverage, and/or to support and thereby normalise them. The media form one of several categories of text producers who possess symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1984) and constitute the symbolic elite. Their ideas and actions and texts affect more people and therefore potentially have a disproportionate impact on the general public:

> [j]ournalists, writers, professors, and other symbolic elites thus have a primary role in setting the agenda, and hence have considerable influence in defining the terms and the margins of consent and dissent for public debate, in formulating the problems people speak and think about, and especially in controlling the changing systems of norms and values by which … events are evaluated.
>
> *(Van Dijk 1993: 47)*

In the context of this chapter, how sexuality is represented in the South African media both limits and defines the ways in which this aspect of identity is conceived in the public eye, and frames and shapes debates concerning the position of various sexualities in society.

Current contributions and research

Research into the representation of various aspects of identity in the media increasingly uses corpus methods to support a critical discourse analytic approach. In 2010, Johnson and Milani edited a book on ideological representation in the media. Two subsequent journal special issues have also stimulated work in this area: in 2011 Jaworska and Larivee edited an edition of the *Journal of Pragmatics*, 'assessing the bias' towards women in the media, and Milani drew together research on 'Language, gender and sexuality in South Africa' in SPIL Plus 46 (2015) with a focus on a range of media from T-shirts to advice columns. In other contexts, Caldas-Coulthard and Moon (2010) examined gendered patterns of representation in the British press, while Santaemilia and Maruenda (2014) analysed the representation of women and gender-based violence in the Spanish news media. In the South African context, Hunt and Hubbard (2015) contrast the representations of sex work(ers) in two local newspapers. Baker and Levon (2016) consider the intersectional representations of race, class, and masculinity in the UK print media, and Bartley and Hidlgo-Tenorio (2015) examine the Irish press in terms of their representation of homosexuality. Many of these studies incorporate corpus linguistics methods to analyse corpora of media texts. These, and many other contributions, indicate an academic concern with social identity that often rests on personal and political convictions regarding the perpetuation of discriminatory ideas and practices via the mass media. This chapter, in showing how corpus linguistics can be used to interrogate large bodies of texts for patterns of ideological representation, reveals how various non-heterosexual sexualities are represented in the most widely read South African daily newspaper, and thereby adds to the efforts of critical analysts to reduce inequality.

The case study

In this case study, I answer the following questions:

- What methodological adaptations to common practice in the combined use of corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis are needed to analyse sexuality in this context and in this corpus in particular?

- How is sexuality represented in this corpus of news reporting? Are any identities related to sexuality included (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer, intersex, asexual and other) and, if so, how (positively or negatively? using which terms?)?
- What do these patterns of representation reflect about prominent views on sexuality in South Africa?

Methodology

To draw out patterns of representation for each of these aspects, I make use of an increasingly popular combination of methods: CDA and corpus linguistics. The first of these, CDA, has been described as 'discourse analysis with attitude' (Van Dijk 2001: 96), which quite aptly captures the overtly political nature of this kind of research. CDA examines the language choices made by a speaker or a writer and interprets the world view so implied. CDA offers emancipatory potential and analysts strive to reveal any inequality in the representations of relatively powerless groups in society. The second, corpus linguistics, is the analysis of large bodies of text ('corpora') using quantitative methods of various kinds. Available software offers a range of ways of processing the data to reveal patterns in usage, which in turn reveal ideological emphases and assessments. How these two methods were adapted to the specific data will be expanded upon in the description of the analysis below.

The data for the case study come from the most widely read national newspaper in South Africa, the *Daily Sun*, which has an estimated daily readership of around 5 million people (Media 24 2017), just under 10 per cent of the population (Census 2015), and 14.2 per cent of adults (SAARF 2017). The tabloid is published in English, although the readership claims many different languages as mother tongues. This last feature is part of what makes the publication so interesting to study, as the multilingual readership means that words from languages other than English are used.

The linguistic context in South Africa is diverse, both in terms of the language families represented and individual repertoires, with multilingualism being the norm. The country has approximately 30 languages, from several language families. English is widely used as a lingua franca, with approximately 40 per cent of South Africans reporting English as a first or second language (Posel and Zeller 2016). In this context, the use of English in the *Daily Sun* means it can reach a sizeable proportion of the population while the variety of English used reflects the mother tongues of the readership in terms of the borrowings evident in the articles.

The frequency of words originating from African languages is higher in the *Daily Sun* corpus than in some other corpora of South African English. In the corpus of 132,603 tokens and 12,289 unique word forms, the words from Indigenous languages total just under 250 types, reflected in 2,724 tokens, giving words from African languages just over a 2 per cent share. This is significantly higher than that in SAE11, a general corpus of South African English built on the Brown-LOB sampling frame (Hunt and Bowker 2015), which has 0.2 per cent African lexis calculated on the same basis. The varied linguistic repertoire of the *Daily Sun* readership may account for the ten-fold usage of African words in the media corpus, when compared to a corpus of South African English from multiple, typically formal, genres. It could be argued that the *Daily Sun* corpus reflects less formal everyday usage amongst multilingual South Africans and reveals how they construe sexual identities. Corpus analysis of terms from African languages referring to sexuality allows the exploration of how these are represented as part of African identity, or as outside of it.

The *Daily Sun* data were sourced from NewsBank, a limited access online news repository. I searched the repository using a list of 27 nouns referring to sexual identity across the entire 11 years of publication available online. In descending order of frequency, the most productive terms found in the publication were: *gay*, *lesbian*, *gays*, *lesbians*, *homosexuality*, *homosexual*, *homosexuals*, *moffie* (gay man), *stabane*, *isitabane*, *setabane* (all: gay person). Some of the terms indexing sexuality also denote gender, such as *moffie* (Afrikaans, a male homosexual) and *lesbian*, but most do not, at least not overtly. I included in the list of search terms both standard and slang terms, and those regarded as offensive, although formal terms are more likely to be found in a genre like news reporting. Of these, the more formal terms *gay**, *lesbian** or *homosexual**'[1] were by far the most productive, accounting for 349 articles over 11 years, versus 36 from all the other terms combined. Each report containing at least one of the search terms was downloaded and converted to txt format, stripped of all its metadata, such as date of publication, author, and the section of the newspaper, which was saved separately. The output was a topic specific corpus (Gabrielatos 2007), which are often used in critical discourse studies to focus on the representation of a minority within general reporting (ibid.).

Corpora are seen as more reliable if the criteria used to build a corpus are external to the data e.g. the total output of a newspaper. Analysing the usage of particular terms when those same terms were used to select articles to build the corpus could reduce objectivity. This potential for circularity is observed by McEnery, Xiao, and Tono (2006: 14):

> A corpus is typically designed to study linguistic distributions. If the distribution of linguistic features is predetermined when the corpus is designed, there is no point in analysing such a corpus to discover naturally occurring linguistic feature distributions. The corpus has been skewed by design.

This would be true of this research if the corpus had indeed been built on the basis of a particular linguistic feature, such as a grammatical construction, or to measure the overall frequency of particular words in the context of the newspaper's entire output. But in this case, with data from a limited access repository like Newsbank, downloading all articles from 11 years of publication is neither allowed nor feasible, and so, following Baker and McEnery (2005) in their analysis of the discourses surrounding refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press, the articles were chosen simply as a subset of the articles in the newspaper, and that subset is defined by the subject matter. Collecting all the articles which explicitly reference sexuality as an identity label is, I would argue, a legitimate way to explore the discourses of (homo)sexuality in the *Daily Sun*, as long as one is aware of its limitations.

Having collected the articles, I used corpus methods to reveal patterns suggestive of particular ideological stances, as I will explain below.

Features and application of corpus linguistic analysis

Most corpus linguistics software has certain core features that exploit the advantages of computer-based language processing: speed and accuracy, as well as the ability to deal with enormous amounts of data, relative to what a human could process reliably. Corpus tools may be used to identify patterns in the features common in traditional micro-level CDA, such as over-wording, positive and negative expressive values, and experiential representation (e.g. Fairclough 2001). In this case study I use AntConc 3.4.3w (Anthony 2014), a freeware concordancing programme, and focus on its facility to produce concordance lines, as well as the computation of collocates, words which co-occur to a statistically significant extent, and show how they are useful for this critical analysis.

Concordance lines

The concordance facility is particularly useful for the analysis of ideological aspects of a corpus and enables the researcher to extract every example of a particular word in the corpus in the linguistic context in which it occurs, and then sort these in ways which reveal patterns of representation. The main aim of this study is to see which discourses about sexuality are dominant in the South African news media. Consequently, examining the context in which various terms that index these aspects of identity occur helps to identify common semantic prosodies, in other words, the ways in which 'speakers establish and maintain *connotational* or *evaluative harmony* within a stretch of discourse by co-selecting items of a consistent evaluative/attitudinal force' (Morley and Partington 2009: 143–144, emphasis in original). This means that language users typically maintain a consistent attitude to their subject matter in a text by choosing words which carry roughly the same degree of positivity or negativity. These patterns of connotation and evaluation can be traced by searching for the linguistic context of the terms in focus, such as *gay** or *moffie** in this study. Through the examination of the concordance lines generated in this way, patterns of prosody emerge from the data and reveal the discourses underlying the language, the commonsense assumptions that the publication builds on, and perpetuates. Ultimately, these evaluative patterns of meaning can, through reiteration, prime the reader to view identity in certain ways (Hoey 2005).

What this concordance function relies upon is entering a search term which the software finds and then lists each occurrence, or token. The multilingual list of terms discussed above was used to interrogate the representation of sexuality in the corpus. It is significant that heterosexuality is not referenced explicitly, apart from assumptions about husbands having wives and vice versa, which supports heteronormativity and emphasises the marked, even deviant, status of various other forms of sexuality. A corpus that includes multiple languages proves challenging to search, and the morphological differences between English and the local African languages add to this.

Given the origins of corpus linguistics and its software, there is an obvious lexical emphasis, which Morley and Partington (2009: 143) call the 'curse of the concordance node'. Most software has been developed for languages which use suffixes rather than prefixes on verbs and nouns, and works particularly well with languages like English due to the fact that analytic languages typically locate units of meaning in separate words. However, this approach to analysis was complicated by the nature of my data, and required some adaptation. The main issue is that English and Southern Bantu African languages, such as those spoken in South Africa, vary in terms of how the plural is constructed, and, given my emphasis on identity terms, which are typically nouns, this is important. So whereas in an English monolingual corpus a search for *lesbian* and its plural *lesbians* could easily be achieved simultaneously using a wildcard: *lesbian**, this is not quite as straightforward in this case, with multiple borrowings from multiple African languages. First, a different plural prefix is used according to the noun class of the word, and there are seven to ten plural forms per language. Second, the set of prefixes varies from language to language. In addition, the data show that the borrowing of these terms by English is still in progress in that two methods of forming the plural are used in parallel in this corpus: (1) applying the morphological rules of an African language and (2) using English suffixes. For example, the isiZulu noun *isitabane* ('gay'), or more commonly just *stabane*, and its plural *izitabane,* are equivalent to the SePedi/Northern Sotho word *setabane*, and its plural *ditabane*, although sometimes the English suffix method of forming the plural is used instead of the original plural prefix: *stabanes*.

The solution for this study is to create a list including all the singular forms, plural forms, and alternate spellings and subsume them under one lemma, or headword. For example, all the forms for *stabane* listed above, plus additional terms from other languages with equivalent meanings, are grouped together under one 'label', or lemma. I adopted a two-pronged approach to locate the types to include in this list. First, I used wildcards to search the data for the stems of each known sexuality term. To continue with the *stabane* example, entering **tabane* as the search term returns both singular and plural forms, from a variety of languages. Second, I searched using common singular and plural prefixes, such as *izi** or *aba**, to check other borrowed terms for potential reference to sexuality, reasoning that as this is a topic-specific corpus, there was a reasonable chance of finding additional search terms in this way. For this project, an existing lemma list compiled from the British National Corpus (Anthony n.d.) was adapted, adding all the newly found forms under the appropriate lemma, as in the following example:

gay->[gay] [gays] [gaye] [gayer] [gayest] [stabane] [isitabane] [izitabane] [stabanes] [setabane] [ditabane]

The adapted lemma list was loaded into the software so that subsequent searches supplied statistics and data for all the equivalent terms together.

A further decision was under which lemma to place the alternate forms. In the case of *stabane*, the word originally meant 'intersex', suggesting that referents possessed both female and male physical characteristics, but it is currently used to refer to gay people (Swarr 2012). This shows how language change can play havoc with the complex relationships between related terms concerning sexuality, and also illustrates how complicated it can be to map types to lemmas, which implies an equivalence in translation that is not always justified. The decision to classify *stabane* and related terms under the lemma GAY, as opposed to HOMOSEXUAL, was ultimately based on the data, on translations by users of the term in the corpus, such as the following:

> 'People shout "stabane", gay and so on at me'

The English version was chosen as the lemma in each case as these are the most frequent tokens for each concept in this corpus, and because the newspaper is written in English. Despite extensive searches for terms, the frequencies for most terms from African languages were low, with the English terms used just over 99 per cent of the time, which made the lemmatisation of the data even more important.

Collocates

A second useful feature of most corpus linguistics software is the collocation tool, which calculates which words co-occur with the search term to a statistically significant extent. The reasoning behind using this in a critical discourse analysis is that words derive at least some of their meaning and their associations from the words around them, and especially from those words with which they frequently co-occur (Baker 2006). The tool allows the researcher to explore not only the ways in which words group together, but, by looking at their context and frequency, also the significance and meaning of patterns of collocation (Bambrook, Mason, and Krishnamurthy 2013). For example, if the words *killer* or *killers* occur more frequently in the environment of the word *lesbian* than do other words, and than they do without the word *lesbian*, as is the case in this corpus, then the reader of the text will gradually be 'primed' to associate *lesbians* with *killer(s)*, rather than with more positive words (Hoey 2005). There is a variety of statistical measures of this relationship, but in this study the mutual information (MI) measure of collocational strength was used, as this favours open-class words such as nouns and verbs, which are usually the emphasis in this kind of research. I investigated words which scored at least 3.84 on the MI measure, as this indicates at least a 95 per cent confidence level, although most of the collocates scored much higher than this. AntConc searched for collocate candidates in the words appearing from four to the left of the search term to four to the right, where the mutual 'colouring' of meaning between words is strongest, with a minimum frequency of three. Identifying the words which most frequently and most significantly co-occur with the terms for various sexual identities in this corpus reveals the discourses about sexuality which have been incorporated into the texts as common-sense assumptions.

The inclusion of corpus linguistics in a critical analysis does not involve mimicking the steps and elements of a traditional critical discourse analysis; instead the researcher uses the software tools to explore patterns which are likely to reveal the ideological flavour of the data, such as the central preoccupations of the texts via frequency, the concepts which tend to be associated with each other through the analysis of collocates, and their positive or negative values via concordance lines. The following section explores how both concordance lines and collocates have been utilised in the analysis of the *Daily Sun* data.

The analysis of the corpus

The relatively small number of news reports reflecting non-traditional sexualities, even in this topic-specific corpus, is potentially problematic for analysis. In 11 years of reporting, GAY*,* the most frequent of the sexuality lemmas, is only found 1,057 times, or 79.7 per 10,000 words, in the specialised corpus. While this might seem quite common, it represents an average of just 96 tokens a year in a daily publication, and one article alone can account for several tokens. Despite the small number of examples to work with, there are clear patterns in terms of concordance lines and collocation patterns to interpret. In the discussion which follows I will explore the dominant semantic domains associated with each of the most frequent sexualities mentioned, supported with examples from the concordance lines and evidence from the collocation scores.

The terms *lesbian*, *gay*, *bisexual*, *transgender*, and *intersex* tend to collocate quite strongly with each other because of the tendency for these terms to occur as a string of five or six words, in the same order each time. *Gay* co-occurs with *lesbian* relatively frequently (92 times out of the total frequency of *lesbian* of 316, or just under a third of tokens), but it also occurs frequently elsewhere, which accounts for the fact that the MI score is not especially high at 5.4. *Transgender* and *bisexual* both score over eight, because although they only occur 23 times each in the span around *lesbian*, they seldom occur elsewhere. This supports the interpretation that these identities are often seen to belong together as a collection of 'non-traditional' genders and sexual orientations, and it could be argued that this serves to 'other' them. In the case of the fairly formulaic n-gram *lesbian gay bisexual* (*transgender*) (*queer*) (*intersex*) (where bracketed items are not always included), while the commonly used string has expanded over time in the interests of inclusivity, it also creates the impression of being a 'catch-all' category for those who do not adhere to dominant expectations concerning sexuality or gender. In addition, the use of 'one label for all' serves to obscure differences between the component groups, when there are considerable differences, and differences of opinion and politics, between people claiming these identities.

HOMOSEXUAL

This lemma, which includes the type *homosexuality*, appears 158 times and seems to be neutral as to gender, in contrast with either GAY or LESBIAN, and in fact tends not to refer to individuals but more commonly to modify sexual acts, or laws. The strongest collocates of the lemma (MI ≥ 6.1) are listed in Table 39.1, presented from highest to lowest MI.

The vast majority of collocates fall into two broad semantic domains: the legal position on homosexuality and gay relationships in various countries (such as, *jailed*, *rights*, *illegal*, *law*, *country*), and moral stances on homosexuality, especially those of religious leaders and communities, chiefly from the Christian church (*prejudice*, *discrimination*, *anti*, *god*).

The concordance lines confirm these twin emphases with the three most frequent nouns following *homosexual* being *act/s*, *marriage*, and *right/s*, and the most common predicates of *homosexuality* are *illegal*, *unnatural*, *foreign*, *taboo*, (not) *holy*, and *punishable*, suggesting strong disapproval. However, the publication lacks a consistent stance while addressing these two aspects. The news reports vary in terms of whether they are against homosexuality

Table 39.1 Twenty strongest collocates for HOMOSEXUAL by MI: 4L to 4R, minimum frequency 3

Collocate	*MI score*
outlawed	11.45
illegal	11.07
acts	11.00
punishable	10.77
engaging	10.77
jailed	10.31
prejudice	9.65
activists	8.77
discrimination	8.31
orientation	8.27
uganda	8.15
rights	8.08
anti	8.07
marriages	7.93
law	7.79
against	7.65
god	7.56
country	7.33
should	7.08
outlawed	6.43
illegal	6.27
acts	6.12

Table 39.2 Selected concordance lines for HOMOSEXUAL

marriages. Dube said his church is against	homosexual	marriages because they
won't tolerate homophobes (people who treat	homosexuals	badly) in Mzansi. Gigaba was
warned that the punishment for engaging in	homosexual	acts is death by stoning, burning
God made us who we are God did make	homosexuals	and they are here to stay!
Mugabe has for decades spoken out against	homosexuality	and has again threatened
Zulu Royal House must learn to accept that	homosexuality	exists in our country. Who are

or in favour of legalisation (in countries where it is illegal). There are, for instance, religious pieces advocating tolerance and understanding, and commentaries that oppose legalisation, and vice versa. There are also some carefully neutral reports, particularly concerning the legal situation in other countries. In several cases, only the headline reveals any kind of evaluative dimension through the use of exclamation marks. The concordance lines in Table 39.2 reflect the diversity of views expressed in the data.

GAY

While GAY is often assumed to refer generically to both men and women, it is clearly used in this corpus to refer mostly to men. Of the 150 human reference tokens that pattern with GAY, exactly half (75) refer to males, as in *gay man* (25) or *gay men* (29), and there are 21 instances of *he is gay*. While the rest are unspecified as to sex, such as *gay couple* (45), it is reasonable to assume that at least some of these are male.

Lesbian, of course, refers only to women, meaning that in the much repeated list '*lesbian*, *gay*, *bisexual* …' *gay* once again refers exclusively to men. One of the strongest collocates of the lemma GAY is the identity label *lesbians* (MI 6.6), further supporting the idea that the word *gay* is used in these contexts to refer to men only. This throws into question who is referred to in *gay rights* (29) and other supposedly gender neutral phrases such as *gay community* (20) and *gay marriage* (20); whether GAY is really used as a true generic. One explanation for this could be that the term is following the lead of *man*, used to refer to males only but also often claimed as a generic. It could be argued that in both cases the restricted use undermines the potential for general reference. Other strong collocates of GAY include further identity terms, such as *trans* (7.2), *intersex* (7.2), *transgender* (7), and *bisexual* (MI 7), although the first three in this list refer to sex, rather than to sexuality, suggesting a tendency in the reporting to associate these identities with each other, as 'others'.

The collocates of a search term often cluster into semantic domains, with groups of words relating to particular areas of experience, allowing the researcher to identify particular discourses and ideological stances in the data. In this data, tokens referring to gay pride parades and parties are common (*waving*, *marching*, *banner*, *thousands*, *parade*, *flag*, *proudly*, with MI scores ranging from 7.2 to 6), and in context these reflect, for the most part, a positive view of gay people. But there are also those which reflect the condemnation of gay lifestyles expressed by parts of society. *Bashing* (MI 6.9), *penalty*, and *outlaw* (both MI 6.8) refer to the impact of social disapproval, while *disgrace* (MI 6.2) and *pastors* (MI 6) reflect the fact that anti-gay sentiments are often couched in religious terms. *Okay* (MI 7.2), while apparently a positive term, appears most frequently in phrases like (*being) gay is not ok(ay)* (frequency 12), which underlines the importance of checking the usage of collocates in the concordance, and avoiding assumptions that their denotational meaning is being used without qualification. The diversity with respect to positive and negative evaluative terms in the collocates for GAY reiterates the diversity in stance in the reporting on matters of sexuality.

The isiZulu word *isitabane*, or more commonly just *stabane*, and the SePedi word *setabane*, mentioned above, all originally meant intersex (Swarr 2012), but are now used as synonyms for the English *gay*, and so are included in the lemma GAY. These terms are frequently used to insult (ibid.), rather than simply to refer neutrally to people or sexuality, as the representative concordance lines in Table 39.3 show.

GAY also patterns with other words to form compounds such as *anti-gay* (27). Just under half of the instances of *anti-gay* (11) refer to legislation in other countries (Table 39.4).

This is supported by the strongest collocates with *anti-gay*: *laws* (MI 9.3), *bill* (MI 9.0), and *Uganda* (MI 8.3). What is said about these laws is significant: they are described as *wrong* and *unfriendly*, and there are calls for them to be *slammed* and *condemned*. Because they are only used once each with *anti-gay*, these words with strong negative sentiment do not show up in the list of collocates, but nonetheless build up a prosody of opposition to the anti-gay laws being discussed. Examining the text surrounding important terms for individual tokens which together suggest a semantic domain, with or without evaluative stance, is a productive strategy in this kind of analysis.

Apart from the references to laws, which constitute 11 of the 27 anti-gay concordance lines, 9 uses refer to *activism* and negative behaviour directed at gay people, or the people engaged in that behaviour (Table 39.5).

Here anti-gay behaviour is referred to as a *hate campaign*, as a *movement* which is *bubbling up*, involving *gestures* and *insults* by *protesters* and *activists* on radio and online.

Table 39.3 Selected concordance lines for **tabane*

of the road laughed at him and said	Isitabane	esimbi kanje, meaning he's an ugly gay
eyes he finds hard to resist. SePedi confusion	"Setabane"	refers to a gay person, rather than a
Senyaka come off stage angrily calling Ayanda a	stabane	and slapping him. We didn't know what
verbal abuse has been increasing. "People shout	"stabane",	gay and so on at me. "I should

Table 39.4 Selected concordance lines for *anti-gay*: legal aspect

to cut aid to governments that pass	anti-gay	laws. In recent months, Nigeria outlawed
after the East African nation strengthened its	anti-gay	legislation last week. A foreign ministry
a bold and unfriendly step in its	anti-gay	laws. The stance has seen the
government should have condemned the	anti-gay	bill recently signed by Ugandan President

Table 39.5 Selected concordance lines for *anti-gay*: anti-gay 'activism'

waiting for, he said. In Nairobi, Kenya,	anti-gay	activists have protested against legalisation
law, said Heterosexual Pride Day is not	anti-gay,	but a protest against the privileges
for comment. Police say Morales yelled	anti-gay	insults before he shot Carson in
Joe allegedly received death threats from	anti-gay	listeners. However, the station has rallied
transsexuals in Roman Catholic Lithuania.	Anti-gay	protesters make gestures at police during

This representation is difficult to characterise, as it seems to use both positive and negative associations. While most of these words are negative, the inclusion of terms associated with the anti-apartheid struggle, like *movement*, *protesters*, and *activists*, links the reported behaviour to a just cause, one that is historically important and still salient in South African society. This link is therefore at odds with the condemnation of the legislation criminalising homosexuality discussed above.

On the other hand, *gay* patterns strongly with elements of the human rights discourse mentioned above. There are 29 instances of *gay rights*, of which 10 are *gay rights activist(s)* and 20 instances of *gay community*. Verbs that pattern with *gay rights* as their object include *fight for*, *recognise*, *promote*, and *respect* (four), but *gay rights activist/s* are shown to be *tortured* and *killed*, objects of *murdering* and *killing*. Once again, there is an ambivalence reflected; this time in society itself: a strong movement for gay rights, but the potential for tremendous personal danger for activists.

LESBIAN

Danger for gay people is particularly apparent for lesbians. LESBIAN shows similarities with GAY in that the strongest collocates (all MI ≥ 7.2) include other identity terms like *transgender*, *bisexuals*, *gays*, and *black*, as well as words which prove to be used positively in the concordance lines, such as *waving*, *happily*, *marched*, *lovers*, *openly*, and *equality*. But again an opposing semantic cluster emerges in contrast to the positive collocates of social agency and happiness: 15 collocates refer to harm or violence, especially murder, with MI scores greater than or equal to 7.1. These include*, killing**, *killers*, *raping*, *killer*, *faced*, *murdered*, *raped*, *killed*, *buried*, *crimes*, and *fear*.

The most frequent 4-gram including LESBIAN is *for being a lesbian*, occurring 14 times, which is preceded by *killed* (6), *murdered* (3), *hack*(*ed*) to death, *died*, *beat* (her), *taunted*, and *insulted*. Not only does this reflect the extremely harsh treatment of lesbians but also the attribution of responsibility that is tied to the victim's identity. The identity of the perpetrator as a violent homophobe is not given anywhere in the articles as a reason for their behaviour, but rather the sexuality of the woman.

The contrast with the patterns found for GAY is striking. While there is social approbation and *bashing* associated with the GAY collocates, the majority of the negative words associated with LESBIAN are very much more violent, with seven of the strongest collocates referring to the murder of the woman concerned. This, together with the fact that GAY is more often used as a modifier (as in *gay men* or *gay rights*) than is LESBIAN (412 times versus 124), suggests that GAY is used mostly to refer to a group or a movement, especially in its English form, whereas LESBIAN typically refers to the lived experience of individual gay women.

For lesbians in South Africa, particularly young Black lesbians, there is also an ever-present fear of rape (Boonzaier and Zway 2015). The strongest collocate for *rape* in the data is *corrective* (MI 11.2), which refers to the belief that gay women can, and should, be 'cured' of their homosexuality by rape. This is reflected in the data, where the practice is negatively evaluated, and the judgemental label '*corrective*' is sometimes flagged as problematic with scare quotes or another distancing mechanism, such as being preceded by the disclaimer '*so-called*' (Table 39.6).

This tendency to represent lesbians in terms of the physical violence they may suffer as a result of extreme moral disapproval, tends to obscure other, more positive and agentive, elements of their lives and, as Boonzaier and Zway (2015) argue, thrusts gay women into complete and permanent victimhood.

Table 39.6 Selected concordance lines for *corrective rape*

an organisation which helps lesbians fight	corrective rape	and hate crimes. Now she is more
harassment or criminal violence – gay bashing,	corrective rape	, and murder – directed at gay or
lesbians still live in fear of so-called	corrective rape	, mindless violence, and even murder
Atteridgeville, west of Pretoria, was a victim of	corrective rape	. The Department of Justice condemn
world has joined the battle against so-called	corrective rape	. This practice is seen by many in
the need to address the practice known as	corrective rape	, which is a violent and criminal

MOFFIE

Lemmas which are not particularly frequent represent a problem statistically, although they can nonetheless contribute to the analysis of the data. The Afrikaans lemma MOFFIE, which refers to an effeminate gay man, is just such a case. While it is not frequent enough to generate statistically significant collocates, the concordance lines reveal some commonality with other terms: in 80 per cent of the tokens, *moffie* is used as an insulting term of address, like *stabane*, but this is often combined with violence, as is frequent in the representation of lesbians. The linkage between gender and power is further reflected in a '*moffie*'s' loss of hegemonic masculine power when a man reportedly says he 'wouldn't be ordered around by a moffie'.

These connections draw out the intersectional nature of identity, especially in relation to gender, and its representation in this corpus. It is difficult to separate notions of sexuality from elements of gender and the data reflect this. They also reflect the subordinate status of females, and those associated with 'femaleness' by virtue of the kind of sexuality they perform.

Implications of the case study

Corpus linguistics has proved to be a productive method to explore the discourses of sexuality in the *Daily Sun*. Incorporating terms from a variety of languages in a process of lemmatisation means that the ideological construction of sexuality can be revealed irrespective of the languages used. The data reveal ideologically interesting patterns in the representation of attitudes towards sexuality in South African media.

Simple frequency counts can be revealing, even in a specialised corpus. The tendency for the frequencies of terms like *stabane* to be significantly lower than *gay*, for example, suggests that English terms are being borrowed into African languages, rather than the incorporation of the indigenous terms into English. This is possibly in parallel with the incorporation into South African life of identities seen as Western in origin themselves, like homosexuality. It may also be due to the fact that the more formal *gay* is used in ways that are more neutral in evaluation, and without the strong negative value of *moffie* or *stabane*, thus making it less problematic to use in the press than most of the borrowed words for homosexuals, which tend to be insulting slang forms of address, rather than labels.

Statistical measures like those for collocation are very useful in CDA to suggest directions for finding patterns of meaning, such as the violent terms associated with *lesbian**, but analysts should always consult concordance lines, especially in small corpora, to find semantic prosodies and to ensure that the co-occuring terms are being used with their apparent meaning, such as the example of *ok* discussed above. Combining collocates with concordance lines reveals intersectionality in representation in this corpus, in the degree to which the depiction of gay people in South Africa is gendered. First, *gay* itself tends to refer to males, and so does not function as a true generic. Second, the collocations and concordances lines that pattern with *lesbian* and *moffie*, and *gay*, and *homosexual*, show starkly different discourses about how these individuals are viewed, based largely on gender: *moffie*, a term to refer to more effeminate men, is associated with violent treatment in similar fashion to that which is meted out to women in general, and gay women in particular.

Analysis of the HOMOSEXUAL lemma in its concordance lines reveals the divergent discourses in the corpus, which in turn reflect the multiplicity of worldviews in the country. Words reflecting daily violence and hatred exist alongside excited fandom for openly gay performers; pleas for tolerance and acceptance are countered by warnings of eternal damnation. It seems that it is entirely possible for a country with the highest rape statistics in the world to also have a remarkably progressive constitution. It is polarised and it is contradictory, and it is reflected in the language of the *Daily Sun*.

Future directions

The case study discussed in this chapter has revealed some of the methodological challenges of working with a relatively small, multilingual corpus, collected from a limited access database, and I have described the strategies I employed to try to extract ideological patterns in the linguistic representation of non-heterosexual sexuality in the *Daily Sun*. Examining a larger corpus which included the entire output of a publication would test the success of these strategies. It would also be interesting to use a corpus with a higher proportion of tokens from languages other than the main one, especially if this allowed for lemmas that were not dominated by types from one language, as GAY was by *gay* in this research. Finally, the methods described in this chapter could usefully be adapted to explore the patterns in usage in a range of identity labels, such as those relating to gender or (dis)ability. Despite the difficulties mentioned, I was nonetheless able to harness the available corpus tools to reveal complex and ideologically significant patterns of representation in the data.

Note

1 An asterisk * in a cited word form indicates a 'wildcard', a placeholder for one or more letters that may occur in that position. For example, *lesbian** indicates a set of words which includes *lesbian*, *lesbians*, and *lesbianism*.

Further reading

Baker, P. (2012) 'Acceptable bias?: Using corpus linguistics methods with critical discourse analysis'. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 9(3), pp. 247–256.

This article not only sets out how corpus linguistic methods may be used to reduce the subjectivity of critical discourse analysis, but also thoughtfully critiques this combination and the pitfalls of interpretation.

Edwards, M. and Milani, T. (2014) 'The everyday life of sexual politics: A feminist critical discourse analysis of herbalist pamphlets in Johannesburg'. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 32(4), pp. 461–481.

Edwards and Milani demonstrate the combined use of CDA and corpus linguistics to analyse the representation of gender and sexuality in pamphlets advertising the services of herbalists in South Africa, a very different multilingual genre.

Schmidt, T. and Wörner, K. (eds.) (2012) *Multilingual Corpora and Multilingual Corpus Analysis*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Multilingual corpora are the focus of this book, which approaches their analysis mainly from a language contact point of view, such as learner corpora and translation and interpreting.

Related topics

Non-binary approaches to gender and sexuality; sexuality as non-binary: a variationist perspective; leadership language of Middle Eastern women; XML mark-up for nomination, collocation and frequency analysis of language of the law; multimodal constructions of feminism

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Women victims of men who murder

XML mark-up for nomination, collocation, and frequency analysis of language of the law

Amanda Potts and Federica Formato

Introduction

Corpus approaches are increasingly being adopted in a number of fields concerned with the study of language, gender, and sexuality. Tools and methods from corpus linguistics are praised for decreasing analysis time, reducing subjectivity, heightening generalisability, and providing potential for triangulation when combined with methods from a wide range of (interdisciplinary) fields (Baker 2006). However, corpus approaches have been criticised for 'counting what is easy to count' (Stubbs and Gerbig 1993: 8) and divorcing data from context critical to interpretation (Baker 2010). Most problematically for new adopters, there are no instruction booklets or proscribed steps for 'good' corpus linguistics (and many warnings that it is easy to do 'bad' corpus linguistics). Indeed, there are very few agreed guidelines about exactly what a corpus *is*, except that it must be a machine-readable text of some description. Students often ask, 'How big is a corpus? Do you measure: in words, utterances, authors, or texts?' This is slightly easier to answer than, 'How long is a piece of string?' but only just.

Some scholars believe that corpus approaches will not be appropriate or even fully functional with their data, due to restricted size. Many of these scholars are working with 'opportunistic corpora', which 'represent nothing more nor less than the data that it was possible to gather for a specific task' (McEnery and Hardie 2012: 11). Some datasets are extraordinarily difficult to scale up: for instance, corpora of dead or dying languages. Others are very time-consuming to collect and/or process, meaning that any gain in size is accompanied by an extreme expenditure of labour, as is the case with spoken corpora. Finally, some corpora are simply restricted or entirely closed: the works of Shakespeare or Dickens, for example, are no longer growing; whereas certain texts (e.g. US presidential inaugural addresses) are released at set intervals, and while it is possible to collect all of these at a given point, the resulting corpus will not number in the millions of words anytime soon.

In this chapter, we make use of one such opportunistic corpus (a collection of sentencing remarks from England and Wales) to explore legal representations of female victims of homicide perpetrated by men. The case study presented here follows on from pioneering studies undertaken with explicit emphasis on femininist standpointism, which seeks to free women's experiences within the legal system (as both offenders and victims) from 'the need to be consistently positioned in relation to male knowledges and understanding' (Moore 2008: 53). Feminist criminological work has 'followed the same pattern as that for offenders, with the primary task firstly focused on making women's victimization visible, and secondly on correcting distorted characterizations of them' (Silvestri and Crowther-Dowey 2016: 22). This case study does draw upon the dualism of women as victims of male violence, but in exploring the language that supports the legal narrative emerging from these cases, we seek to uncover more nuances in the constructions of female victims.

With this aim, we have collected 14 judicial sentencing remarks from England and Wales, comprised of 27,931 words. These remarks are drawn from cases where women are the victims of homicide perpetrated by men, which is a type of violence particularly associated with gendered meanings. We hope to demonstrate how corpus linguistic techniques – including frequency, collocation, and concordance analysis, but specifically XML mark-up (a way of inserting searchable data about discursive features into the corpus) – might be used to assist in the analysis of social actor representation (van Leeuwen 2008). By exploring nomination and agency in particular, we show how corpus linguistics tools might be used to highlight interesting findings, even in quite small data sets.

XML mark-up

As critical discourse analysts, we are interested in the ways that social actors are represented in powerful texts, such as legal discourse. Methods of referring to social actors within our sentencing remarks corpus (and most others) are extremely diverse. To allow for precise analyses of the language, references to social actors should be both disambiguated (e.g. establishing whether *she* refers to a victim or to a witness) and linked (e.g. indicating that *Rebecca Godden*, *Becky*, *she*, and *her* refer to the same social actor). This opens up the opportunity for search-and-recall on a large array of search terms that are unrelated at the word level but are nearly synonymous at the discourse level.

To allow for the use of corpus techniques such as frequency, concordance, and collocation, we have incorporated XML mark-up (Hardie 2014) to enrich the sentencing remarks corpus with initial linguistic analysis. XML mark-up is a way to store extra information about lexical items by wrapping them in tags. For instance, if we are interested in analysing social actors in texts, we can begin to 'tag' references to them. As *Ms Symonds* is one such reference, we can add the following tag around the name:

- <actor>Ms Symonds</actor> was sitting in the corner of the sofa

Now the computer will know where actor begins (marked with open angle brackets) and ends (signalled with closing angle brackets, indicated by a forward slash). However, *Ms Symonds* carries more information to the human reader than merely the fact that this is a social actor. For instance:

a) *Ms* indicates that this social actor is likely a woman;
b) In this clause, the social actor is in the nominative position, as the agent or 'doer';
c) The term of reference here is a given name, rather than a pronoun or a common noun.

Therefore, we may wish to be more nuanced in our tagging, adding more information about the item of interest. ‘Elements are the main building blocks of XML’ and the ‘structure is tripartite consisting of element, attribute, and attribute value’ (Rühlemann, Bagoutdinov, and O’Donnell 2015: 9). In our example, the element is an actor. Attributes of interest include gender (a, above), grammatical case (b, above), and name type (c, above). The values for these attributes are ‘woman’, ‘nominative’, and ‘given’. This translates into the following tag:

- <actor gender=“f” case=“nom” name=“given”>Ms Symonds</actor> was sitting in the corner of the sofa

Adding such tags to all items of interest means that the computer will be able to see (and search for) all actors at once. It will also be able to search for more fine distinctions (e.g. all actors whose names are given) or combinations (e.g. all female actors in the nominative position). Notice that these tags seem perfectly suited to our research interest. XML does not have predefined tags and it is extensible, which means that users can define new elements, attributes, or values at any time, and the computer will interpret them without issue.

This is not to say that racing into a corpus and assigning *ad hoc*, snowballing collections of tags will be helpful for research. Like all methods, a measured, scientific approach to this one is the most beneficial. Edwards (2001) wrote at length about general design principles for representing spoken language in a written/spatial medium (i.e. transcription or alternative visualisations). These principles remain salient when applying XML mark-up to enrich textual data, and therefore, we reproduce and adapt them below.

Computer tractability

As we are taking a corpus linguistic approach, working with computerised texts, the first and foremost principle is that of computer tractability. For us, ‘the single most important design principle is that *similar instances be encoded in predictably similar ways*’ (Edwards 2001: 324, emphasis in original). Human readers can tell, for instance, that *tho* and *though* are variant encodings of the same word; likewise, once social actors have been introduced in a text, practised readers will follow cohesion strategies and recognise that variants (i.e. *Georgina* and *Ms Symonds*) refer to the same person. However, unless special provisions are made, computers will treat *tho*, *though*, *Georgina*, and *Ms Symonds* as entirely unrelated entities. Why not just search for these separately? First, compiling all possibilities may be difficult or even impossible. Perhaps more importantly, searching for – and considering – one variant may lead to unrepresentative and misleading results. Adding tags which link all variants is one way of allowing the computer to read a text like a human would … only much more quickly.

Category design

Now that we have decided to mark-up a set of interest within our corpus, we must decide which categories are meaningful to our study. In our case study, we are adding XML mark-up under one element (actor) with three attributes (gender, case, name type), each with a set of possible values. To be useful, elements, attributes, and values must satisfy the following criteria:

1) They must be systematically discriminable. That is […] it must be clear whether or not a given category applies. Category membership can be based on either defining characteristics or similarity to prototypical exemplars.

2) They must be exhaustive. That is, for each relevant aspect or event in the data, there must be a category which fits (even if, in hopefully rare cases, it is only "miscellaneous").
3) They must be usefully contrastive. That is, they must be focused on distinctions of importance to the research question.

(Edwards 2001: 323)

This set of criteria will look familiar to anyone who has undertaken a study with an element of categorisation or qualitative description. Put simply: in order for resulting discussions to be meaningful, we must have a research question which necessitates one or more distinctions between categories and we must create enough categories that each instance has a good, clear fit (and no more than that). It is important to be very systematic in design, as categories 'within a contrast set usually cannot be interpreted without knowledge of the number and type of other categories in that set' (Edwards 2001: 323). When doing discourse analysis, being exhaustive in category design also comes with a built-in reward: very rare or particularly interesting cases will have attributes and values of their own, and will be identified and detailed in any discussion. Therefore, low frequency is no longer a 'hiding place' of noteworthy results, and we are no longer guilty of counting what is easy to count (Stubbs and Gerbig 1993: 78).

Visual display

In discussing how to translate information for computers, we have not lost track of the fact that humans must also read the data and these readers have expectations of written texts. In the case of XML mark-up, we must first make things a bit worse before we make them a bit better.

Figure 40.1 is an example of a sentencing remark, as provided in PDF on the Courts and Tribunals Judiciary website (2017); it is the first paragraph of *R -v- Lawrence*.

This is very easy to read, but perhaps quite difficult to analyse. Researchers interested in naming strategies might have to mentally collate the various patterns happening throughout the text. They might highlight (in various colours) or create tables or figures (in another programme) to tally features of interest.

In Figure 40.2, the same paragraph appears with XML mark-up. Admittedly, this is more difficult to read than the original. We are not used to so much 'meaningless' punctuation and data that does not conform to expected sentence structure.

However, let's search for all instances of a set (women homicide victims) in a corpus programme, Sketch Engine. Figure 40.3 shows the output for a search for <actor gender="f"/>.

Arguably, this is the easiest format to read. All of the items of interest are centred, with some context on either side. We do not need to read the entire paragraph to pick out examples of our category.

> You have been found guilty by the jury of murder. On 6 October 2012 – 2 days before the decree nisi for your divorce – you murdered your wife, Sally, by deliberately crashing your car in which she was a passenger into a tree.

Figure 40.1 Example text without any additional mark-up.

You have been found guilty by the jury of murder. On 6 October 2012 – 2 days before the decree nisi for your divorce – you murdered your <actor gender="f" case="obj" name="cat">wife</actor>, <actor gender="f" case="voc" name="given">Sally</actor>, by deliberately crashing your car in which <actor gender="f" case="nom" name="pro">she</actor> was a passenger into a tree.

Figure 40.2 Example text with XML mark-up.

nisi for your divorce - you murdered your	wife	, Sally, by deliberately crashing your car
for your divorce - you murdered your wife,	Sally	, by deliberately crashing your car in which
deliberately crashing your car in which	she	was a passenger into a tree. The way in

Figure 40.3 Example output in a Sketch Engine concordance window.

We can see, at a glance, how the social actors are referred to, and with the use of more sophisticated search terms, we can restrict the results to certain values. The data and the presentation remain separate.

In our case, XML is written by humans to be read by machines. Once it is added, it does not need to be inspected directly; it is 'hidden' behind the data that humans find most easily understood, but is effortlessly accessible to do some computational heavy lifting, when required. To demonstrate how this works in a bit more detail, we now move to the case study of sentencing remarks.

Case study: women victims of homicide perpetrated by men

Male-perpetrated violence against women is contextualised within prevailing beliefs about and attitudes towards gender (Dobash and Dobash 1998), making discursive constructions of women homicide victims a salient topic for this volume. Previous work in this area has analysed media representations of female victims (e.g. Monckton-Smith 2012) and explored the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator (Coates and Wade 2004; Ehrlich 2008; Monckton-Smith 2012). However, a common scholarly focus is scrutiny of the normalisation of imbalanced gender(ed) roles, which cannot be disregarded when investigating women as victims of violence. Conceptualisations of masculinities (of the offenders) and femininities (of the victims) can be made relevant and visible as part of a gendered legal structure in which roles and identities are interpreted and presented in language used by the judiciary. We interpret this language as 'ideological', or encoding widespread beliefs and values in relation to gender(ed) identities concerning the victims involved as well as a cultural male-oriented *status quo*.

Due to relative scarcity of forensic data, much previous linguistic research on the representation of female victims and male perpetrators of intimate violence has focused on media discourse. These studies found that women victims are often described in relation to their partners (Meyers 1997) while men are exonerated from criminal agency, depicted as having lost control or being under the influence of substances during the acts (Monckton-Smith 2012). From a corpus linguistics and stylistic perspective, Tabbert (2016) investigates the construction of offenders and perpetrators (not uniquely in relation to gender) in a corpus of newspaper articles from *The Guardian*. Her findings reveal interesting insights into how women are described, particularly highlighting their relationships (as *wives*, *mothers*, *daughters*) and their age or other perceived vulnerabilities. We will revisit many of these themes in our own case study, below.

Data collection and description

All sentencing remarks have been collected from the Courts and Tribunals Judiciary website,[1] where they are freely available for public viewing and download. The corpus is comprised of all available sentencing remarks meeting three criteria:

- Offender(s): must be adult men, only;
- Victim(s): must be adult women, only;
- Offence(s): must include murder or manslaughter.

This resulted in a corpus of 14 texts, published between 11th May 2012 and 23rd March 2017, totalling 27,931 words. A brief overview of the particulars of each case can be found in Table 40.1.

It must be noted that the very small size of this corpus does not accurately reflect the number of homicide cases in England and Wales. In the year ending March 2015, 530 homicides were recorded, with 558 suspects. Court proceedings had concluded for 285 suspects, of which 257 (90%) were male. Among these male offenders, 48% were indicted for a homicide offence and were convicted of murder, with a further 33% convicted of manslaughter.

Table 40.1 Overview of cases included in sentencing remarks corpus

Offender(s)	*Offence(s)*	*Victim(s)*	*Relationship(s) to killer*	*Words*
Steven Beards	Rape, murder	Susan Whiting	Other known	2,236
Martin Bell	Manslaughter	Gemma Simpson	Other known	4,187
Christopher Halliwell (1)	Murder	Sian O'Callaghan	Stranger	1,665
Christopher Halliwell (2)	Murder	Rebecca Godden	Other known	1,987
Michael Lane	Murder, arson, theft	Shana Grice	Ex-partner	2,190
Iain Lawrence	Murder	Sally Lawrence	Partner	1,251
John Lowe	Murder	Christine Lee & Lucy Lee (her daughter)	Ex-partner	1,567
Tony McCluskie	Murder	Gemma McCluskie	Other family	844
Peter Morgan	Murder	Georgina Symonds	Other known	3,666
David Oakes	Murder	Christine Chambers & Shania Chambers (her daughter)	Partner and other family	1,296
Ahmad Otak	Murder	Kimberley Frank & Samantha Sykes	Other known	2,876
Justin Robertson & Ben Carr	Murder (contracted by Carr, carried out by Roberston)	Pennie Davis	Other family	1,007
Devendra Singh	Murder	Charlotte Smith	Partner	1,675
Ian Stewart	Murder	Helen Bailey	Partner	1,484

In this year, 186 victims (36%) were female. There are some interesting gender differences in the relationships between victims and principal suspects: 'female victims (68%) were more likely than male victims (52%) to have been acquainted with the principal suspect', and 'women were far more likely than men to be killed by partners/ex-partners (44% of female victims compared with 6% of male victims)' (Office for National Statistics 2016). This pattern certainly holds true in our data, with only one offender (Halliwell 1) unknown to his victim, and 5 out of 14 (36%) women killed by current or previous partners.

The limited size of the data set, therefore, does not represent a rarity of criminological relationship but, instead, reflects the small number of sentencing remarks published online. It is not required by law that these are made public, and usually sentencing remarks are released only for those cases attracting particular public or media attention. Being cognisant of the possible reach of their remarks, there is an argument that judges' language is influenced by the potential for publicity. However, we believe that this awareness, combined with increased access, makes these texts all the more interesting as sites of ideological work.

Methods

Previously, we stressed the importance of principled design of XML elements, attributes, and values. This is due, in large part, to the fact that findings are difficult to interpret without knowing the full range (and population) of the total set of possibilities. In our case study, the main element is reference to social actors. In keeping with our research interest in the construction of women victims of male-perpetrated homicide, every reference to a victim has been manually marked-up for three features: sex/gender,[2] (grammatical) case, and naming convention. For the first tag, we only consider victims tagged as 'female', or WHV (Women Homicide Victims). The full range of possible attribute values for *case* and *name* for WHV appears below.

Mark-up of case

- **nom:** nominative; the WHV is the subject or 'doer' in the clause;
- **acc:** accusative; the WHV is the object or 'receiver' in the clause;
- **gen:** genitive/possessive; the WHV is the possessor of a noun in the clause;
- **dat:** dative, ablative, and locative; the WHV is the indirect recipient/beneficiary/location of an action;
- **voc:** vocative; when an WHV is directly addressed by name, but this naming is not embedded in a clause containing a verb phrase;
- **ref:** reflexive; the WHV is the subject *and* object of the action.

Mark-up of naming convention

- **pro**: designates pronoun usage;
- **giv**: use of a given name, which may include title, (reduced) forename, and/or surname;
- **cat:** reference to social actors through categorising naming strategies, foregrounding some type of identification or functionalisation.

Manual XML mark-up (as opposed to a computational approach) was the most effective method for a number of reasons:

1. High lexical variation: in the given name category alone, there are 48 naming strategies for WHV;
2. Need to disambiguate: while it would have been easy to automatically mark-up pronouns, for instance, only some of these refer to WHV, whereas others refer to female witnesses and other figures;
3. Lack of a lexicon: categorising naming strategies cannot be adequately predicted and manual mark-up allows for the emergence of organic findings.

When using search-and-recall methods, the size of the overall corpus is of less relevance than the frequency of salient features contained within the data. Therefore, despite the relatively small size of the data set, there are a number of interesting results which are indicative of the genre. Incorporating XML mark-up allows us to instantaneously search for naming strategies, cross-tabulated by gender or case. This, in turn, affords greater flexibility in the application of frequency and concordance analysis, as we shall see below.

Analysis

In this section, we present demonstrative findings to illustrate how corpus methods may be useful in shedding light on discursive choices made by the judges when constructing WHV. Analyses were undertaken in Sketch Engine, as we believe that this is the corpus tool with the most intuitive XML integration. *Please note*: when we show illustrative data, references to social actors will be in boldface and remark names will be provided in square brackets.

Naming strategies

We begin with an overview of the full frequency of naming strategies. Assigning XML attributes and values (i.e. name="pro", "nom", or "cat") allows an immediate window into the overall picture of naming in the corpus (see Table 40.2).

Pronominal references are the most common method of referring to women victims in our corpus of sentencing remarks. However, these references are extremely homogenous: each of the 650 instances are in the third person. While this is largely to be expected, it is noteworthy that in no cases have the voices of the victims themselves been incorporated to assist in reconstruction or final re-narrativisation of the crime for the public record.

Whilst the use of pronouns is far more frequent than other naming strategies, frequency data also shows that WHV are also commonly referred to (or 'nominated') by combinations of their given names. In and of itself, this fact is unsurprising due to the non-deictic nature of these references in this genre. However, as our subsequent analysis will demonstrate, the distance and solidarity relationships intimated by certain naming strategies provide some

Table 40.2 Overview of naming strategy categories with frequencies and percentages

Category of naming strategy	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Pronominal	650	62.0%
Nominative	295	28.1%
Categorising	104	9.9%
Total	**1049**	

interesting and novel insights into the gendered identity constructions of the female defendants under consideration.

Scholars have investigated degrees of power and solidarity in spoken interaction as constructed through nomination strategies (Hook 1984; Leech 1999). The trend towards discursive absence of a major category of social actors and the overall lack of dialogue in sentencing remarks makes them somewhat different from other forms of spoken interaction (though, of course, sentencing remarks are written to be spoken). However, the use of given name strategies is still central in constructing identities for WHV. Preference of one form over another has the potential to provide insights into solidarity/distance relations between the narrator and the referent – in this case, judges and victims). Therefore, we have adapted frameworks from Hook (1984) and Leech (1999) to accommodate the shift in genre and register, and to account for all items in the corpus (see Figure 40.4).

Given name strategies comprise approximately 13% of all references in our corpus of sentencing remarks. Even within this value, types are extremely diverse. In Table 40.3, we provide an overview of given name types, frequencies, and percentages of nomination.

The table shows that the most used strategy is *forename only*. In relation to the scale in Figure 40.4, this strategy can be seen to construct solidarity between the judges and the WHV. This is likely due to an effort on the part of the judges to humanise the victims through one of the most intimate attributes of social identity one can have, i.e. their personal name.

(1) Spitting blood on **Kimberley**'s body was an act of bestiality. [Otak]

↓ Greater solidarity

Initials (e.g. GM)
Surname only (e.g. Chambers*)
Title + surname (e.g. Ms Symonds)
Forename + surname (e.g. Gemma Simpson)
Forename only (e.g. Susan)
Forename: diminutives (e.g. Becky)

Greater distance ↑

Figure 40.4 Framework developed to operationalise categories of solidarity and distance between the judge and the victims. *Provided examples are from the corpus, excepting 'Surname only', which does not appear in the sentencing remarks analysed

Table 40.3 Type, frequency, and percentage of given name references

Reference type	*Frequency*	*% Nomination*
Forename only	170	57.6%
Forename + surname	90	30.5%
Title + surname	30	10.2%
Forename: diminutive	3	1.0%
Initials	2	0.7%
Total	**295**	**100%**

In Example 1, the judge empathetically constructs proximity with the victim by using *forename only* and commenting on the brutality of the actions committed by the perpetrator.

This is a strategy which might be effective in a number of courtroom scenarios: Rosulek (2008) found that defendants' lawyers used *forename only* for their clients (accused of using violence against children) and *forename + surname* for the victims. Formato (2019) and Tabbert (2016) found similar results, where forenames were employed to construct solidarity with victims of violence, while surnames (a distancing form) were mostly used for offenders. Frequent use of this strategy by judges aligns them with victims and against perpetrators in a way which might not be obvious to uncritical readers.

The other forms of nomination listed above (i.e. *forename + surname* and *title + surname*) are also interesting as expressions of judges' solidarity with – or distance from – the victims. We found that *forename + surname* is a neutral, institutional naming strategy. Conversely, *title + surname* is used to construct *traditional* gender roles: *Miss* and *Mrs* signal different (positive) ideological interpretations of the WHV's age, relationship status, and subsequent positions within our largely patriarchal, heteronormative, society. However, *title + surname* can also serve to other a person, as in the case of *Ms*, which is used for one victim who was soon-to-be-divorced, and one who was a sex worker.

Among the least used, *diminutives* are an interesting strategy to signal strong solidarity between the judge and the victim. *Diminutive* use often occurs alongside voices and perspectives of family members, bringing WHV close to the reader and (re)constructing these adult women victims as childlike and particularly vulnerable (see Example 2).

(2) Now both their children are gone and, in essence, both of **Charlie**'s parents, to whom she meant so much have had their lives devastated and made empty and, as they say in a joint statement, words cannot express how it feels to lose her in such a brutal way. [Singh]

This section has shown how naming strategies can be used to construct solidarity (or distance) between the judges and the victims in our corpus. A notable result here is the use of *forename only* and *diminutive*, which construct a sense of familiarity as well as vulnerability in the sentencing remarks of WHV.

The main subject of this chapter so far has been 'nomination', or reference to social actors' unique identities in discourse. According to van Leeuwen (2008: 42–44), naming strategies also fall under the following categories:

- **Identification**:
  - *Classification*: representation based on membership of certain major social categories such as gender, age, wealth, e.g. *teenager*;
  - *Relational*: representation based on relationships, such as personal, kinship, or work relations, e.g. *mother*;
  - *Physical*: representation based on physical characteristics, e.g. *blonde*;
- **Functionalisation**: references in terms of an activity, such as a role or occupation, e.g. *killer*.

As above, we have run a search for all XML tags in which name="cat", capturing the full frequency and range of this reference type. We coded these further within van Leeuwen (2008)'s framework; results can be found in Table 40.4.

Table 40.4 Frequency of categorising strategies

Reference type	*Sub-type*	*Freq.*
Identification	relational	57
	classification	25
	physical	0
Functionalisation		12

The most frequent categorisation is *relational identification*. WHV are *sisters* (freq. 15), *daughters* (12), *mothers* (11), *wives* (7), *friends* (7), *children* (2), *partners* (2), and *fiancées* (1). This pattern reflects the fact that most of the WHV in our corpus (and in general) are related to their killers (see Table 40.1 and Example 3 below), and echoes previous findings showing that family members often provide statements incorporated into sentencing remarks (see Example 4).

(3) … you have been convicted after a trial of murdering your **fiancée** Helen Bailey who was excitedly making arrangements for your wedding while you were planning how to kill her, hide her body and explain her disappearance as a case of an anxious woman running off because she could no longer cope with the more stressful aspects of her life. [Stewart]

(4) [Shana Grice's mother] also said: 'We have lost our beautiful, kind and thoughtful **daughter**; we miss her giggles and laughter, the jokes we shared and having her to hold and share our future lives together as a family.' [Lane]

Even considering these two explanations, however, it is interesting to note that all of the top *relational identifications* (*sisters*, *daughters*, *mothers*, *wives*, *fiancées*) are gendered; only 12 out of 57 items in this subcategory (*friends*, *children*, *partners*) are gender-neutral. When WHV are being constructed in law, they have still come as *women*, and their gendered identities as relative to others is still foregrounded.

Certainly, these results are intriguing. However, we have already stated that one perceived shortcoming of corpus methods is 'counting what is easy to count' (Stubbs and Gerbig 1993: 8), and we are aware of the pitfalls of focusing on high-level results only. Therefore, we will make a more detailed exploration of the least populous subcategory: *functionalisation.* To make sense of the forms, we grouped the naming strategies into two subcategories based on the *functions* of these people:

- **Legal role (freq. 9):** *victim* (4), *missing person* (2), *victims* (2), *vulnerable victim* (1);
- **Professional role (freq. 3):** *unnamed prostitute* (1), *breadwinner* (1) *gifted author* (1).

The role of victims within the courtroom and legal process is three times as frequent as their roles before their deaths. Interestingly, narrativisation of events leading up to the crimes already position them as *vulnerable victims*. In Example 5, we see the judge referring to Sian O'Callaghan as a *vulnerable victim* (instead of, perhaps, 'a vulnerable person') before the crime. This can be seen in relation to her physical condition at the moment of the abduction ('under the influence of drink') yet more broadly within an accepted frame for which walking alone at night is a recognised danger for young women (Mallicoat 2015; Silvestri and Crowther-Dowey 2016).

(5) You abused your position as a taxi driver, in a car clearly marked as a taxi, and as someone Sian thought she could trust; her abduction was clearly premeditated; as a young woman walking alone late at night and under the influence of drink she was a **vulnerable victim**. [Halliwell 1]

To conclude, this naming strategy seems to present victims in terms of their functions within the judicial case rather than in relation to their lived experiences before the crimes that claimed their lives. Outside of their primary identities as victims, WHV are positioned predominantly as family members, rather than people who had rich, multi-faceted lives as friends, professionals, and community members.

Case

In this section, we discuss grammatical position (namely: *nominative*, *accusative*, *genitive*, *dative*, *vocative*, and *reflexive*) of the WHV in our sentencing remarks, with the aim of gaining further insights into how these women are constructed. In this section, we briefly discuss results, a quantitative overview of which can be found in Table 40.5.

WHV most frequently occupy the *genitive* position in our corpus, followed by *nominative* and *accusative*. Though it appears that WHV are marginally more ‘active’ than ‘passive’, we must consider the *dative* case together with *accusative*, as this similarly constructs WHV as secondary ‘recipients’ of objects and actions. Taking these in combination, WHV are ‘possessors’ in 37.1% of instances, ‘done to’ 31.9%, and ‘doers’ 28.8%, limiting overall opportunities for active agency (i.e. *nominative* case) quite dramatically. In the sample analysis below, we focus on the most frequent case to demonstrate how XML mark-up might be combined with collocation analysis, or investigation of frequent co-occurrence of words.

The most frequent grammatical position occupied by WHV is the *genitive*, or *possessive*. In order to investigate what the women possess and how this can be examined, we conducted collocation analysis in the range of +1 to +3 (or one to three words to the right of the naming strategy) to capture the most frequent form: *her x* or *[name]'s* x. In doing collocation analysis, researchers must make a number of decisions, from which measure to use (one based on confidence, strength of association, or a mixture of both), to what cut-offs will apply (for instance, whether words must co-occur together a certain number of times or reach a certain statistical threshold to be counted). We applied some commonly used cut-off scores[3] and grouped the resulting collocates by semantic category in Table 40.6.

Though WHV are frequent *possessors*, what they do possess is without nuance. They are described as collections of body parts that have been acted (violently) upon, often in a

Table 40.5 Frequency and percentages of (grammatical) case

Case	*Frequency*	*% Occurrence*
Genitive	389	37.1%
Nominative	302	28.8%
Accusative	245	23.4%
Dative	89	8.5%
Vocative	12	1.1%
Reflexive	2	0.2%
Total	**1,039**	**100%**

Table 40.6 Collocates of WHV in the genitive case, categorised semantically and ranked in descending order of frequency of collocation

Semantic category	*Collocates*	*Frequency*
Body parts	body, head, neck, throat, remains, legs	64
Relationships	family, mother, daughter, father, dog, friend, sister, friends	54
Physical objects	phone, mobile, car, money	21
Life	death, life	21
Places	house, home, bedroom	18

familiar setting (their *house*, *home*, *bedroom* – all forensic sites which also carry a particularly gendered coding).

The second-most populous category (*relationships*) echoes previous findings from the categorisation section of this study and from Formato (2019) and Tabbert (2016), in that women's identities are dominated by their familial positioning. Here, we see that they possess far more relationships than physical objects (even in combination with places). These collocates describe relationships that WHV had to other victims, to their killers, or to remaining family members.

Of course, WHV also possess their *lives*, until the point of their *deaths*, the cause of the criminal proceedings. Intuitively, *possessing* life could be perceived as humanising and empowering these women, based on their achievements before death. However, concordance analysis shows that victims' *lives* can also be conceptualised (and negatively evaluated) in relation to the notion of the 'ideal victim' (see Example 6).

(6) Sadly **her** young life was troubled and blighted by **her** drug abuse which forced her into prostitution to fund **her** addiction. [Halliwell 2]

Extremely infrequently are WHV constructed as *possessing* physical property (e.g. *phone*, *car*). When considered together with findings from the analysis of nomination and categorisation strategies, sentencing remarks (which form the final official narrative of a case and often serve as emotional closure for families) construct victims simplistically. While judges do establish solidarity through nomination, WHV are still reduced to a collection of body parts and (disrupted) relationships, with little indication of their identities outside of the crime.

Discussion

Narratives of crime which: (1) refer to adult female victims through *forename only* and *diminutives;* (2) focus on facets of self-regarding relationships to others while obscuring nuances of individualism; and (3) reduce frequency and scope of agency, have been found to associate WHV with the private, domestic sphere. It is this very patriarchal structure within the home that manifests itself in extreme forms of male violence against women, and as such, further research on larger corpora of forensic data may prove interesting and insightful.

Conclusion

Methodologically speaking, we believe that XML mark-up has a number of strengths. To revisit the points enumerated in the first section, this technique bolsters the strengths of other corpus linguistic methods thus:

- It has the potential to reduce the influence of subjectivity and cognitive bias on analyses by necessitating that the researcher confronts every instance of a certain element within their data and to define and apply appropriate attributes and values, rather than 'eye-balling' or searching for high-frequency, obvious, or (subjectively) interesting features;
- It decreases analysis time after the initial period of mark-up by optimising searching, putting the onus on the computer;
- It heightens generalisability, as all attributes and values within a certain category/element are known and accounted for. These can then be adopted or adapted in future work, as XML is infinitely extensible;
- And as it is just a way of embedding more data about the text, it provides potential for triangulation when combined with other methods. We have included some feminist legal analysis and (critical) discourse analysis here, alongside analysis of case and naming, to demonstrate how many 'ways in' a small amount of data can provide.

XML mark-up also brings us some way towards addressing some of the perceived limitations of corpus approaches:

- We are not simply 'counting what is easy to count' (Stubbs and Gerbig 1993: 8), but rather, accounting for entire ranges and arrays of meaning-making in texts;
- By reading the data to do manual mark-up, we as researchers remain highly cognisant of the context and full content of our corpora.
- Finally, by linking items which are related at the meaning level, we are able to effectively 'stretch' small datasets, opening up the possibility to perform more sophisticated techniques (such as collocation) on opportunistic corpora.

There are, of course, further limitations to this method. The initial process of XML mark-up may be considered time-consuming; as an indication, mark-up on our corpus of approximately 28,000 words took about 24 hours to do and another 16 hours to cross-check and correct. Human coders make errors and it is best practice (though not always possible) to have two researchers on hand to help reach inter-rater agreement. Alternative methods or future directions may include the assistance of – or replacement by – computational taggers.

Future directions

The methodology presented here can be employed to investigate comparative data from several perspectives and approaches. For instance, scholars may wish to make use of XML mark-up to conduct comparative analysis with corpora of sentencing remarks for women who kill (e.g. Potts and Weare 2018) to explore alternative constructions of women in different positions in the legal system. Alternatively, scholars may wish to compare constructions of men and women in a given corpus, or to investigate agency and naming strategies in subgenres (e.g. witness statements, police reports, closing remarks), in languages other than English (e.g. Formato 2019), or different genres entirely (e.g. doctor–patient interaction, media discourse).

We hope that we have demonstrated the usefulness of XML mark-up, particularly for small, opportunistic corpora. Most corpus tools (i.e. WordSmith Tools, AntConc, Wmatrix, and Sketch Engine) are XML compatible, offering the ability to query the underlying mark-up, while keeping it hidden from view. In this illustrative case study, we have only made use of one level of XML elements, though these are easily nested. For instance, most of the judges in our corpus are men. If we wanted to restrict results to include only texts created by women judges (or to distinguish between sentencing remarks from England and Wales, or to restrict by year), we might nest additional levels of mark-up (called ‘child elements’), as such:

```
<text year=“2015” place=“Wales” judge=“f”>
  …
    <actor … > … </actor>
  …
</text>
```

In this way, researchers may combine queries for text-external data and text-internal data, or to search within layers of text-internal data. Once more: a great strength of XML mark-up is its unlimited flexibility and extensibility.

For researchers who believe that tagging might be of use to their research but are not willing or able to undertake manual mark-up, a number of alternative avenues are currently available. Part-of-speech (POS) tagging is an automated process that may help researchers to analyse, for instance, differences in frequency of certain grammatical types (e.g. interjections in women’s talk). This is available in English through CLAWS[4] using stand-alone software, a free internet interface, or Wmatrix.[5] Uploading corpora into Sketch Engine[6] also allows for POS tagging in a great variety of languages. Semantic tagging is another automated method of adding information about word and phrase relationships to the data.

Notes

1 https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/
2 To our knowledge, all victims in this corpus are cis-gender; they are referred to as both female(s) and wom(a/e)n throughout the sentencing remarks. We acknowledge the problematic nature of conflating sex and gender in this way, though we do use female/woman interchangeably here, reflecting the original data.
3 Mutual Information ≥ 3 and Log Likelihood ≥ 6.67 (for further discussion, see: Hunston, 2002; Rayson, Berridge, and Francis, 2004).
4 http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/claws/
5 http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/wmatrix/
6 http://sketchengine.co.uk/

Further reading

Johnson, A. (2015) ‘Haunting evidence: Quoting the prisoner in 19th century old bailey trial discourse. The defences of Cooper (1842) and McNaughten (1843)’. In: Arendholz, J., Bublitz, W., and Kirner-Ludwig, M. (eds.) *The Pragmatics of Quoting Now and Then*. London: De Gruyter Mouton, pp. 369–400.

Using a 15-trial, 133,000-word subsection of the *Old Bailey Corpus*, Johnson analyses patterns of quoting in legal language. Though this work does not make use of mark-up, it is a corpus linguistic study suggesting further avenues for query which would prove fruitful when combined with XML.

Lawson, R. and Lutzky, U. (2016) ‘Not getting a word in edgeways? Language, gender, and identity in a British comedy panel show’. *Discourse, Context and Media*, 13, pp. 143–153.

This is a sociolinguistic analysis of features such as talkativeness and interruption, carried out on a corpus of televised media and making use of XML.

Potts, A. and Weare, S. (2018) ‘Mother, monster, Mrs, I: A critical evaluation of gendered naming strategies in English sentencing remarks of women who kill’. *International Journal for the Semiotics of the Law*, 31, pp. 21–52.

For readers who are interested in reading a more complete, detailed study of this sort, this paper uses the precise methodology outlined in this chapter (XML mark-up on a small, opportunistic corpus) to investigate naming strategies of women who kill.

Rühlemann, C. and Gee, M. (2018) ‘Conversation analysis and the XML method’. *Gesprächsforschung [Discourse and Conversation Analysis]*, 18, pp. 274–296.

This work provides helpful, practical suggestions for implementing XML in corpora.

Related topics

Semiotic representations of women criminals; determining the impact of gender stereotyping on patient feedback; investigating gendered language through collocation; the impact of language and gender studies: public engagement and wider communication; text trajectories and gendered inequalities in institutions.

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