

SPEAK LIKE A WO(MAN): A CORPUS LINGUISTIC AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF
GENDERED SPEECH

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By

David “Forrest” Melton Caskey III

Director: Dr. Chandrika Balasubramanian
Associate Professor of English
English Department

Committee Members: Dr. Christopher Blake, English
Dr. Laura Wright, English

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ABSTRACT

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David “Forrest” Melton Caskey III, M.A.

Western Carolina University (April 2011)

Director: Dr. Chandrika Balasubramanian

Traditionally, studies in gender linguistics have been qualitative anecdotes which view gender on a dichotomous plane. Using normative research participants and small amounts of data, researchers in gender linguistics have made an array of assumptions about how men and women speak. Women are commonly thought of as being cooperative speakers while men are typically thought of as operating out of a power hierarchy. The study conducted in this thesis tests these assumptions by applying qualitative, corpus, and discourse analyses. A corpus of transcribed spoken conversational speech was compiled and measured for various linguistic and discourse elements which have historically been touted as paradigms of gendered speech. Using a demographically diverse sample of 185 participants, 50 hours of conversation were recorded and transcribed. From this corpus, various language elements such as theme, thematic conveyors, turn-taking, laughter, referencing, expletives, adjectives, hedges, ‘polite speech’, and verbs were identified and measured for frequency of use by gender and by sexuality. The results from this study indicate that women and men do indeed use language with idiosyncratic linguistic and discourse features and at significantly different frequencies of use. When language use based upon sexuality was examined, the results indicate that queer men speak using a distinct language

variety from women and heterosexual men. Thus, the planar dichotomy of gender and language does not appear to be a valid view due to the sharp divergence from the binary by a third group based upon sexuality. The results further demonstrate that using corpus analysis is an effective and optimal approach for analyzing some aspects of language use. The quantitative composition of corpus data has allowed research, to dispel and support many assumptions made by anecdotal observation. It is my hope that the results drawn from this study inspire other researchers to use corpus-based methodology in examining gender, sexuality, and language.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It all started in an Introduction to Sociolinguistics class-- a little video clip starring Deborah Tannen speaking about how men speak compared to how women speak. Binaries, again. I was infuriated. Are we humans so simple and transparent that our language patterns, the enigma that gives us speech and thus ostracizes us from the pedestrian animal kingdom (Descartes, Lacan, Freud), can be explained, in the context of gender, by a simple binary? After all what is gender? Can gender, itself, be explained in a binary, by a simple bar code? What role does sexuality play in this? Sexuality certainly cannot be defined by a dichotomy, or can it?

These were the discursive ramblings of thought that initially entered my mind when exposed to the concept of gendered language binaries. I knew I had to probe into this further. Initially, my research began with a simple case study assessment of a non-normative speaker—myself. Granted, I am male, white, educated (or in the process thereof), middle class; therefore, I would be considered normative from an anthropological standpoint. But when juxtaposed next to others who complement my demographic profile, I felt that I spoke a different language. A ‘dude’, ‘bro’, or ‘chick’ has never fallen from my lips, but alas, perhaps the reason for this could be the non-normative nature of my sexuality—that of a gay man. Aha! So this must be where the term ‘feminine’ gestures. However, upon closer examination of the speech of my female environs, I didn’t feel as if my speech was necessarily ‘feminine’ either. At this point, a feeling of sad nostalgia occurred—neglected and unseen by the empirical eyes of the academic world— my demographic felt like the unpicked kid on the 2nd grade kickball team. Where in this binomial

script of language and gender do men who are just not so MEN fall? And what about queer men? Do they too vacillate along this plane in accordance with their own ‘femininity’? If so, then what about guys like me who are men but not MEN and queer but not QUEER? In this respect, what makes one QUEER? It seemed evident that one of the most apparent factors in such a designation had to be language.

Background

Obviously, my self-deconstruction only led to more questions and more confusion. The most practical solution at addressing this problem appeared to lie in an ancient manner of unraveling truths—take it apart and then put it back together. In order to do this, I had to start at the source of the confusion— Deborah Tannen. I read her book(s). She had some rather interesting points— women are polite and inclusive speakers while men contribute less to the conversation and tend to be more domineering in their ‘holding the floor’ tactics. However, a mere read of her anthology is not enough to ‘take it apart and put it back together’. In order to understand deeper, I had to look deeper and ask questions such as: Who is she basing her research on? What are their demographics? Is queerness a factor? How many people were involved in these studies?

The answers to the above questions left me unsatisfied and even more inquisitive.

Who is she basing her research on? White males/females, middle-aged, middle-class, educated, heterosexual.

What are their demographics? While males/ females, middle-aged, middle-class, educated, heterosexual, from urban environments, personal friends (mostly academics).

Is queerness a factor? No. Despite the fact that 2 of her ‘Thanksgiving Day dinner study’ participants are gay, sexuality is not considered in Tannen’s gender and language inferences in any of her published research.

How many people were involved in these studies? After reading the canon of Tannen's literature, most of the participants across her research involve anecdotes from brief excerpts of conversations amongst friends as well as observations of children interacting with each other. One of Tannen's most famous studies (1984) involves a longer and more in depth analysis of a 'Thanksgiving Dinner amongst friends' but her analysis of this conversation was limited to the small number of people who participated in this conversation—6.

Surely, Tannen was not the only person to conduct such research and contribute to the gender dichotomy using solely qualitative methods and normative research subjects. Her books are filled with citations indicating other research existed before hers, and since most of her books are written in the 1970s and 1980s, others must have been inspired by her work on gender and the expression of masculinity by men and femininity by women in language. Perhaps, other scholars, previous and subsequent, have used different, quantitative data and non-normative subjects, research practices to break the dichromatic black and white assumptions of gendered language use. Perhaps in the near 30 years since Tannen's Conversational Style was written, the gender plane has become less planar and thus more circuitous and inclusive of societal fringes and non-traditional groups. Perhaps, with contemporary modes of thought, it would not be difficult to conceive, from an academic perspective, that gender and sexuality might not fit into a projected polarity of classification; that maybe when gender and sexuality do not align as expected, language follows in tandem as a hybrid vehicle of self, community, and subversive expression. At least after all this time, the blacks and whites of language and gender designation must have now evolved into a larger and more subversive spectrum of color providing alternative labels to account for the pinks, mauves, taupes, and magentas of the world.

I had hope that this linguistic rainbow existed complete with a pot of scholarly gold at its end; however, such a treasure has only recently begun to be unearthed. Only in the past few years have scholars started shelving their trusted analytical tools of qualitative-based binaries and started using more contemporary and apposite methods of defining language based upon gender. Recently scholars have begun to use larger methods of analysis, such as corpus analysis, to provide quantitative data to the gendered language discussion. By using a corpus based quantitative approach, linguistic and discourse elements are easier to identify, observe, and examine with more precise results. In addition, in the past decade, much research has been conducted on the language patterns of non-normative individuals—ethnic minorities, ESL speakers, queer individuals, and (gasp) people from outside of the university community. However, the majority of this research has been largely anecdotal; hence the need for applying modern day approaches such as corpus analysis to study the language of contemporary language groups.

The Problem

I believe that conclusions and assumptions about gender and language cannot be adequately derived from isolated observations of a particular and discrete demographic. In order to detect patterns of language based upon gender, quantitative methods such as discourse and corpus analysis are the most effective tools in achieving the goal of detecting language differences based on gender. Such tools, though more time consuming in their collection and dissection than qualitative means, allow one to take a large sample of information from different societal groups and make correlations based on actual data with the size of the corpus eliminating extraneous variables.

The weakness of a qualitative approach is the size of the scope. For example, if a study is being conducted on one conversation of a group of academics talking over dinner then a number of variables could affect how the speakers perform their speech. Perhaps, speaker A has a headache; therefore, the maleness of his speech is being assessed based on how he is speaking at that moment—a curmudgeon of his normal self. Maybe, speaker B is having an affair with speaker A but she (B) is married to speaker C who is also present at the dinner. Such a construct would affect how speaker B interacts with her interlocutors. The value of using large samples of data and thus creating a corpus lie in the fact that these variables, headaches and extra-marital affairs, would be eliminated. The researcher is given the freedom to control the groups based upon the idiosyncratic factors one wishes of their subjects. Such a tool is rational and invaluable to use when evaluating the language of broad groups of people such as by gender and sexuality.

Another primary factor to consider when creating a quantitative database of language is the register from which the language existed in the environment of its produced utterance. Language, when being evaluated on its gendered plane, must be real, authentic, and unedited. Spoken conversation is the closest register which satisfies these parameters; a recorded spoken conversation captures the production of language in its most unedited moment from creation to elocution. Granted, a spoken word is oftentimes self-edited and self-monitored in the transformation from its cerebral existence to its vocal one, but the discursive forces acting on this self-editing/monitoring process of speech within a group often stem from the relationship of the speech—creating--individual to the construct of the group itself. This instantaneous creation of speech, dictated by the self and their relation to the group, creates the most authentic and

dynamic interaction of speech available for study. Written speech is often edited by a second or third party and thus manipulated by the intentions of a publisher or overly-conscious editing process. Spoken words captured from interviews and celluloid means are usually, if not always, scripted, or the environment itself is scripted and fabricated with the intent of an audience always being present; therefore, the audience moves from the group itself to a larger unknown environment. The most organic environment for natural speech is the conversational spoken word, an environment where speech is produced, received, and negotiated in a free-range non-edited habitat.

Thus far, I've identified the needs of a modern and valid approach to investigating language and its relation to gender. Such an approach must account for a diverse demographic including non-normative speakers; it must include data of a large enough size to eliminate temporal variables in order to establish validity; and it must stem from spoken conversation as the near instantaneous nature of this register is authentic and unedited by a second or third party. Therefore, creating a corpus from a large sample of conversation, and thus analyzing that corpus from a linguistic and discourse level, is the best manner of making examining language and its relation to gender.

My intention with this thesis is not to discredit such seminal scholars such as Deborah Tannen, or those such as Robin Lakoff whose work began the binary code of gender and language. Their research and the assumptions gathered from their research was conducted at time when the analytical conveniences of today did not exist; computers had yet to become household names and recorders were monstrosities intimidating the most gregarious of conversationalists into subversion. Without computers or adequate recorders, the task of collecting quantitative data,

transcribing it, creating a corpus, and analyzing it would have been enormous in task and time. Also, the assumptions of gender made by researchers such as Lakoff and Tannen were penned thirty to forty years ago. Since then, the mercurial elements of historicity (Foucault) have affected how women are perceived, treated, and act within society. I believe that within the past 30 years, ‘a woman’s place’ (Lakoff) in society has changed along with her language. Therefore, I do not see Lakoff and Tannen as flawed researchers, but as scholars who acted in the best of their abilities given the instruments that had to work with at the time. However, the one constant in life is that time does change and with that so do instruments, perceptions, voices, and language--- so it is now time to reexamine the binary code of language, gender, and gender’s Achilles heel—sexuality.

The Plan

With this thesis, I intend to contribute to the scholarship begun by Lakoff and Tannen concerning how people express their gender and sexuality through language. I have identified various methodological holes apparent in the iconic research by my predecessors as well mentioned some of the approaches I have taken to fill those gaps. Listed below is a brief delineation of my plan for this study. A more comprehensive and detailed explanation is available in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

- Research participants were chosen outside of the normative environs of academia. Participants were restaurant workers, business people, writers, artists, dancers, hotel workers, fashion designers, vagabonds, real estate agents, actors, musicians, and much more. This study also included individuals who originated from 21 different states as well as a multitude of racial backgrounds and income levels. The diversity of such

demographics and variables allows the language features under scrutiny to be more isolated as language features of a gender or sexuality as opposed to the language features of a gender or sexuality of academic social circles. Equally as important, diversifying the demographics of the subjects allows for a more comprehensive representation of American society.

- The register of language under investigation must be that of a spoken conversational environment—a conversation amongst friends and acquaintances. Any other genre or register of language would be less authentic and more edited.
- The body of language collected must be large enough to eliminate circumstantial variables; thus, a corpus will be created to allow a quantitative method of analysis. As stated earlier, and will be commented upon again later, the research involving gender, sexuality, and language has been almost entirely anecdotal and qualitative. While these studies have produced some interesting and poignant results in their contribution to gender and queer linguistics, without quantitative data the validity of these results is weakened.
- Also, a study in gender and language cannot be accurate unless sexuality is accounted for. Gender and sexuality exist in a non-planar existence and therefore binaries fail to adequately explain their relationship with each other. The two have a complex and oftentimes indescribable mutuality—one cannot exist without the other; however, one cannot necessarily be defined by the other. In order to demonstrate the multi-dimensional relationship between gender and sexuality, this study controls conversational groups based upon gender (male or female identified) and sexuality (queer or non-queer identified).

I have used the above approaches in answering the following research questions:

- What are the discourse and linguistic features which are indicative of heterosexual male speech, heterosexual female speech, and homosexual male speech?
- How do the identifiable speech characteristics of heterosexual men compare to that of heterosexual women? Queer men to heterosexual men? Queer men to women?
- What happens to the discourse and linguistic features when the groups are heterogeneous—heterosexual men with heterosexual women? Heterosexual men with queer men?
- Does the language of queer men warrant the descriptor ‘feminine’? Or does it constitute its own language variety?

Outline of Paper

Chapter 2 is divided into two main sections. The first section expands upon the research and assumptions of Robin Lakoff and Deborah Tannen. Their seminal scholarship is inextricable from nearly any study in gender linguistics. Although perceptions of women have changed and power hierarchies have moved closer to neutrality in the past 30 years, their work and insight continues to be highly influential and important to a foundation in gender linguistics.

I have also commented briefly upon feminist and queer theory. This study is first and foremost a ‘How?’ study, not a ‘Why?’ study. I will be investigating how people speak and not speculate as to why people speak a certain way based upon their gender or sexuality. Therefore, I have chosen to largely omit theoretical postulations from my review and ignored performance theories, power

theories, the word ‘hegemony’, and the taxonomy of feminist theories. I do, however, expand upon Judith Butler’s queer theory because her work has been seminal in understanding the relationship between gender and sexuality as well as highly influential for scholars in gender linguistics.

The second part of Chapter 2 chronicles the present state of research in gender and queer linguistics. Much research has been conducted testing Lakoff, Tannen, and others’ hypothesis on gender and language. Again, the methodology of many of these studies creates a tenuous relationship with the results due to their anecdotal approach. However, very recent research has begun to become more quantitative and corpus-based. Many scholars are calling for more research based upon quantitative analysis, some even calling for a comprehensive corpus of queer language to be created.

The third chapter expands upon my research methods in conducting this study. My intentions were to fill holes left in previously conducted research in the field and I delineate my methodological steps in this section. I also expand upon the discourse and linguistic features which the corpus was used to isolate and examine.

The results of my study are displayed and elaborated upon in Chapter 4; however, in Chapter 5, I discuss my results in greater detail and discuss any correlative patterns between heterosexual male, heterosexual female, and queer male speech based on the tested discourse and linguistic features. I close the thesis at the end of Chapter 5 by suggesting pathways for future research as well as advocating for corpus and quantitative methodological approaches to language research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Conducting an empirical investigation into language use based upon gender and sexuality involves many paradigms of interdisciplinary history and research. From a wide-eyed lens, the categorical constructs of such an undertaking can be identified as linguistic, gender, and queer studies. However, by decreasing the magnitude of the scope and increasing the aperture of the focus, the clearly drawn disciplinary lines lose their archetypical luster. Gender theory blends into queer theory, both of which create a symbiotic relationship with language---the performative and/or generative stage from which gender and sexuality are expressed. The combination of the three tropes introduces a fairly new field of study and research called Gender or Queer Linguistics (the double moniker exists because of recent theoretical trends that state that gender and sexuality are inextricable). However, before I address this composite field of study, I must comment on the individual components, gender theory and queer theory, which lay the foundation for Gender/Queer Linguistics as well as the research and scholarly contributions which have helped to define each field.

Each disciplinary construct contains its own theoretical underpinnings and disputes, but the patterns of theoretical evolution remain the same across genres—a theory arises and sides are chosen, a new theory emerges in contrast with its predecessor and sides are chosen, and finally another theory arises contrasting the latter theory but espousing the former. In order not to entangle myself in the overlapping reasons for why this research has been conducted on an existential level, I have stayed away from, for the purposes of brevity in this paper, asking

“why?” of my research and have, however, focused on asking “how?”. By focusing on research objectives of ‘how does one speak,’ then the web of theoretical explanation and entanglement is, for the most part, eliminated. Quantitative data expressing how people speak will be enough to satisfy my research questions for the purposes of this paper. Thus, satisfying the tenets, giving explanation to, and espousing a particular ‘why’ theory of the branches of Gender/Queer Studies and Linguistics, such as performance theory, post-modernism feminist theory, socio-cognitive linguistic theory, and various theories of power, are not necessary. Instead, I will trace the history of the scholarship of the body of research that my paper will contribute to.

Origins of Gender Linguistics—Language and Woman’s Place (Lakoff, 1975)

In 1975, Robin Lakoff’s *Language and a Woman’s Place (LWP)* was published, creating a seminal work of fusion between gender studies and linguistics (Bucholtz, 2004). LWP established a relationship between how one expresses one’s gender through language, as well as offering insight as to why this phenomenon occurs. By identifying linguistic and discourse markers of male and female speech, Lakoff’s observations influenced scholars in numerous fields (Hall, 2004) as well as creating the gendered binary—a concept which has sparked fierce debate in subsequent scholarship of Gender, and later, Queer Linguistics (Gaudio, 2004).

Lakoff identified various linguistic elements and discourse markers which categorize male and female speech. These findings, 36 years later, are still being used as paradigms in research and commentary of male and female language; they have, however, been added to and amended by subsequent scholars, many of whom I will write about in subsequent sections. In LWP, Lakoff

isolates the following characteristics of linguistics and discourse which constitute female language:

1. Females have a lexicon from which they use words which are directly relative to the interests and realities of their lifestyle. For example, “magenta” and “dart” (a sewing term, outdated now).
2. Use of empty adjectives—adjectives which have loose meaning such as “divine”, “charming”, or “cute.” Lakoff comments that these ‘empty adjectives’ are often adjectives of admiration.
3. Highly intonated questions which are often used as discourse tags in a conversation. (“It’s so hot, isn’t it?”)
4. Hedges to express uncertainty. For example, “well,” “y’know,” “kinda,” “sorta.” Hedges can also be used before larger discourse items such as “I guess” or “I think” before declarative statements as well “I wonder” before questions.
5. Frequent use of the intensive ‘so’. (“I like him soooooo much.”)
6. Hypercorrect grammar. Lakoff points out that men oftentimes drop the /g/ sound from an –ing word while women will pronounce the word in its intended entirety.
7. Superpolite forms. While this concept does include the hypercorrectness of grammar, Lakoff points out that superpolite forms go deeper into the discourse than at a phonological level. For example, women use more ‘pleases’ and ‘thank yous’ than men. Women also use more euphemisms than colloquialisms while men frequently use more colloquial expressions than euphemistic ones.
8. Women do not tell jokes.

9. Women speak in italics. Lakoff states that women highly stress words that they feel are important and directional because they are accustomed to their full utterances not being listened to.

After the release of these tenets, a resounding “Wait, I don’t speak that way!” protestation spread throughout linguistic, anthropological, gender, feminist, and sociological discourse communities in reaction to this dichotomy of speech categorization (Bucholtz, 2004). Nevertheless, the binary was created, coined, and elaborated upon by Lakoff as recently as 2004. Lakoff explained that female speech exists in contrast to male speech for two reasons—female speech has evolved due to the power constraints put upon women in society (1975) and in later works (2002) that female speech has further evolved, along with queer speech, as a counter to normative, hegemonic, and masculine speech in a position of establishing power. As I mentioned earlier, I will not delve into a Foucaultian causality of language use and power. For the purposes of this paper, Lakoff’s *Language and a Woman’s Place* is seminal in that the binary has now been conceived in scholarship on language and gender, and the linguistic and discourse principles which define the binary have now been identified.

Another important area of scrutiny, pertinent to my paper, from Lakoff’s research is her research methodology from which she composed her gendered language theory. The material from which Lakoff based her claims was largely anecdotal self-introspection and passive observations of her peers. In her text, Lakoff is unabashedly unapologetic in her choice of research subjects—herself. While Lakoff, has made some bold and interesting observations on the relationship

between language and gender, it is difficult to establish validity of her results without further observation and quantitative evidence.

Lakoff beget Tannen

The reactions of support and “Wait, we don’t sound that way” dissent to *Language and a Woman’s Place* produced 2 important ventures for research in the decades that followed. First of all, subsequent research sought to test and elaborate upon Lakoff’s nine identifiable features of female speech. Secondly, the binary created a dichotomy of extremes where society’s marginalized groups and non-normative speakers did not find resonance in Lakoff’s module with their own voices, thus, eventually assisting in giving rise to the Queer faction of Gender Linguistics.

Since LWP was published, the most publicized scholar dealing with topics of gender linguistics has undoubtedly been Deborah Tannen (a former student of Lakoff’s). Tannen’s insight into the larger discourse functions, as well as the failures of interpretation by gendered interlocutors of those discourse functions, of male and female speech sparked mainstream and scholarly interest in her research, interest which still exists today. A decade after Lakoff’s LWP, Tannen released a series of gender linguistic studies which included observations on children’s behavior and their conversational interactions (1990) , transcriptions of conversations at social events (1984), anecdotes of male/female couples negotiating conversation (1994), and introspective analysis (1986).

Tannen largely succeeds in supporting Lakoff's 9 tenets of female speech as well as contributing new insight into larger discourse functions. In Tannen's most publicized work, *You Just Don't Understand*, Tannen identifies the following features of both male and female conversation style:

- Why?—Males negotiate status, assert independence, and form hierarchies in the conversational group. Females use the conversational group to negotiate closeness and intimacy.
- Holding the floor—Amongst mixed gender groups women talk and hold the floor longer than men when power roles have already been established (in the home, with family) while men talk more when power roles are implicit and unfamiliar (work, business meetings). Men also hold the floor by telling jokes and elaborate stories.
- Interruptions—Men and women interrupt as a means of cooperating in conversations. Men interrupt to establish dominance and status while women interrupt to contribute to the conversation.
- Topics—Women talk about friends, family, job, and concerns. Men communicate about status and solutions to problems.
- Women's speech style is cooperative within the conversation, inclusive of all participants, and egalitarian. Women are more polite speakers than men using words such as "lets" to make suggestions instead of demands.
- Referencing—Name dropping is a method of status grabbing by men and connecting each other by women.
- Storytelling—females tell stories to another as an empathetic means of maintaining intimacy. Males tell stories to 'one-up' each other; thus, negotiating status.
- Conversational Gist—Men talk to provide information, women talk to convey feeling.

While Tannen does provide valuable insight and identification of marked discourse features of gender in a conversation, her work is largely speculative and theoretical, and based upon a small sample of anecdotal observations. Critics of Tannen's and Lakoff's work have criticized their overarching assumptions of gender and language because of their high reliance upon introspection, use of small samples of participants, adherence to over-generalizations of gender, and continued exclusion to non-normative speakers.

The Rise of Queer Theory

As previously stated above, one theoretical movement arises in reaction to the dominant paradigm in mode of the time; queer theory, and thus the establishment of queer linguistics, was not an exception to this natural order of theory. Queer theory arose in stark opposition to the binary system of masculine and feminine dichotomies prevalent in feminist theory during the 1970s and 1980s. Granted, Foucault (1970) would scoff at the idea of attributing the queer studies phenomenon to a single literary work; (the discursive forces of the time each played their role), however, common to all contemporary queer studies, theoretical and linguistic, is a foundation in Judith Butler's theory of gender, explained in her seminal book Gender Trouble (1990).

As exemplified in the preface (1999) of Gender Trouble, Butler significantly clashes with perpetrators of gendered binaries such as Lakoff and Tannen:

"I sought to counter those views that made presumptions about the limits and propriety of gender and restricted the meaning of gender to received notions of masculinity and femininity. It was and remains my view that any feminist theory that restricts the meaning of gender in the presuppositions of its own practice sets up exclusionary gender norms within feminism, often with homophobic consequences. It seemed to me, and continues to seem, that

feminism ought to be careful not to idealize certain expressions of gender that, in turn, produce new forms of hierarchy and exclusion” (pg. viii).

Butler’s views nearly echo those of Derrida, who claims that binaries cannot exist without power imbalances and that from these ‘inequalities of power’ stereotypes occur and preserve negative views of the less powerful side (Derrida, 1981).

The dissent over the gender dichotomy did not simply come from theorists but from linguists as well. Once it became acceptable and safe to have a queer voice in academia, queer linguistics emerged. Surprisingly one of the first linguists to comment on the language of queer men was Lakoff herself (1975). In *LWP*, Lakoff identifies three categories of men who subvert the masculine normative paradigm—homosexuals, hippies, and academics. She claims that due to their de-masculinized speech that such groups use female speech, thus, the assignment of the descriptor “feminine.”

While many studies of queer linguistics do not explicitly deny that queer men speak feminine, they nearly unanimously consent that queer speech, in general, is its own language style with a composite of unique phonological, linguistic, and discourse forms. In fact, in the past decade, recent scholarship has been prolific in attempting to identify and locate the elements of a language, divergent from a masculine and feminine plane, that holistically encompasses those whose sexuality deviates from the hetero-normative plane from which the gender binary has existed on. There has been some success in doing this; however, the same research methodology dilemmas continue to exist in establishing validity— studies are largely qualitative, anecdotal, representative of small sample groups, over-generalized; and participants are stereotypically selected based on overt queerness as well as stem from the same demographic pools of white,

middle class, educated individuals. While I see the merit in isolating the queer voice by using stereotypically queer individuals, the more flamboyant and ‘feminine’ acting representatives, for language identification purposes, the “Wait! We don’t speak that way” imperative returns for the majority of the queer community who do not fit under a generalized construct. Therefore, Butler’s counsel returns—“...be careful not to idealize certain expressions of gender that, in turn, produce new forms of hierarchy and exclusion” (1999, pg. viii).

In Reaction: The Present State of Gender/Queer Linguistic Scholarship

As mentioned earlier, members from a large spectrum of disciplinary branches resoundingly protested against the over-generalizing and demographically exclusive nature, most notably the exclusion of sexuality, of Lakoff’s and Tannen’s methodology and assumptions. However, despite many of these research efforts, much of the inquiry into how men speak and how women speak has been largely supportive of Lakoff’s and Tannen’s findings; though, much of this support has been derived from research that followed similar methodology (qualitative and anecdotal) and used normative research subjects (straight, white, educated, middle class). Dissenting conclusions and results chiefly exist when sexuality is accounted for; however, the same patterns of anecdotal methodology, qualitative analysis, and normative research subjects primarily dominate the research of sexuality-based scholarship. Unfortunately, such research practices have been widely used by the most notable and productive queer linguists.

Undoubtedly, the most prolific scholar of queer linguistics has been William Leap. Leap, originally an anthropologist, began his three decade long query into how queer people use language in reaction to Lakoff’s ‘feminine’ designation of queer male speech (1975) and

Tannen's exclusion of queerness as a variable of language use in her research (1984, 1990, 1994). Leap has sought to isolate the discourse and linguistic elements of language which are definitive to queer speech (1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2003), more specifically gay male speech. Through an abundant chronicle of scholarship and research, Leap has found the following discourse and linguistic elements to be indicative of queer male speech:

- Gay men acquire specific forms of linguistic skills and make a conscious effort at skill maintenance and renewal. These skills are usually idioms, metaphors, lexical, and phonemic.
- Language and phonemes are highly exaggerated.
- Idiosyncratic adjacency pairs in discourse— gay men's English is composed of a catalog of adjacency pairs which are endemic to gay men and temporally fluid.
- Rapid topic change that correlates with a high frequency of turn changing. Turn taking is carefully negotiated and implicitly cooperative.
- Themes/topics are often thematically shared to create group identity—sex, sexuality, dressing up.
- Descriptive imagery and metaphors.
- Inference strategies are used to make statements without being explicit—sexual and gay-oriented innuendos, nominal and polyphonic referencing, self-parody. In terms of referencing, gay men frequently use references to prominent gay characters in gay history, quotes from 'gay themed' movies and icons, and nominal referencing—words from a gay lexicon that are rooted in gay pop culture.

- High presence of humor—parody and teasing. These tactics are used to ensure cooperative discourse and undermine distractions that might threaten cooperative discourse.
- Format typing—using previously mentioned text back into the discussion.
- Scene transformation— continuity of the text is preserved by bringing new participants and themes into the discussion.
- Game playing exercises— using humor and creating mock disputes. For example, Leap provides an example of a conversation where gay men ‘argue’ over the color of a water pitcher (1996).

Leap has significantly contributed to the foundational indexing of the features of gay male speech. However, the majority of Leap’s work has been based upon anecdotal evidence of himself and his circle of friends (white, educated, middle class). Leap admits to basing his research upon a narrow demographic of subjects and suggests that future studies use a more diverse and representative demographic in selecting research participants (2004).

Also, Leap’s research is largely oriented around his central theme of cooperative discourse of gay male speech and consequently the results of his research all appear to be oriented in supporting the concept of cooperative discourse in gay male conversation. In fact, Leap, in his later work (2003), argues against isolating linguistic elements from discourse and proselytizes a more discourse and context oriented manner of analysis. However, the results from Leap’s research, as with results of Lakoff and Tannen, cannot be discarded because of the lack of diversity in their methodology. In fact, their results are a blueprint, a foundation, from which to

create more holistic research studies that are composed of a more inclusive demographic and consist of a larger sample of data from which to analyze. Their seminal work has inspired a large amount of poignant research which oftentimes has supported the implications of Lakoff's, Tannen's, and Leap's results.

Such focus on cooperative discourse has not been endemic solely to gay male speech studies. Coates (1996) postulates that the discourse style and conversation strategies used by women such as interruptions, hedges, and long floor holding turns are strategies employed to avoid conflict and contribute to the cohesion and cooperative maintenance of a conversation. Holmes (2006) likewise finds that women in power positions use 'masculine' discourse strategies, such as using direct speech and interrupting to shift topic, while simultaneously vacillating to 'feminine' speech patterns of politeness and self-parody to maintain cooperative discourse. In such studies, these discourse strategies are determined by juxtaposing female speech to that of male speech which is "hegemonic, inexpressive, contradictory, and oftentimes exists in order to have a laugh" (Coates, 2003). In addition, Kiesling (1997, 2002, 2007) has done extensive research on 'masculine' speech and, he too, finds cooperative discourse strategies, such as lengthy and humorous story-telling, 'fuck' stories, and nominal referencing such as 'dude', employed as cooperative discourse in heterosexual male speech.

It is apparent that there are conflicting ideologies surround the use of cooperative discourse. Therefore, adhering to such theoretical notions such as cooperative discourse is out of scope for the purposes of this thesis. If I were to postulate that one group (male, female, or queer) employs more cooperative discourse strategies than the other then I would enter into a theoretical eddy

which would distract from my own empirically rooted research. For the purpose of this thesis, it is evident that all three groups use overlapping and distinct methods of cooperation in engaging in discourse, holding the floor in a conversation, establishing and re-establishing group inclusionary identity, and shifting topic and theme to perpetuate the speech event. My intent is not to answer why a group does this; whether it is out of hegemonic reaction, maintaining a pyramidal power structure, or providing a stage for performance of identity is out of scope for this thesis. However, in their attempts to provide and espouse to such theoretical explanations, researchers have identified various and intriguing elements of discourse which appear to be distinct to the idiosyncratic gender and sexuality group from which they were extracted from. It is my desire, with this thesis, to test, with quantitative and corpus analysis, the already identified and speculated upon features of female, male, and queer speech using diverse demographic subjects.

Topic and Theme

In his index of gay male speech, Leap (1996) notes that gay men frequently interact under a shared and common thematic environment which is representative of gay life. He identifies topics dealing with sex, sexuality, and dressing-up as the most notable themes discussed between gay men. Likewise, in his studies of gay male spoken texts, Baker finds that sexually natured conversation topics are normalized in gay male conversations as a means of affirming and re-affirming ones place as a gay man in the conversation and simultaneously ones place in the group (2008).

As for themes prevalent in female conversations, Tannen points out that women talk about friends, family, jobs, and their concerns (1990, 1994); Eckert has found that women predominantly talk about their relations—spouses and children (1990); and Coates reiterates by finding that women mostly talk about maternal issues and pop culture (1999). Outside of Tannen, research into the thematic content of female speech is surprisingly scarce with the majority of topic identification being based upon speculation and anecdotes. Unfortunately, the majority of scholarship involves discussions as to ‘why’ women speak as opposed to ‘how’.

Insight into male conversational themes is oftentimes derived from anecdotes which create a negative juxtaposition of male speech next to a positive and cooperative view of female speech. While he acknowledges the existence of chauvinistic and hegemonic speech, Kiesling points out that not all men speak the same way (1997), and that power structures exist independently in male-only groups which also reflects a shift in discourse (2002). Identified themes in Kiesling’s research have included frequent conversations about habits and work (2006) and story-telling (2002), most notably ‘fuck stories’. In addition, Tannen points out that male themes revolve around status and solutions to problems (1990, 1994) and Coates demonstrates that men use story-telling to denigrate women and re-affirm their power position (2002). Eckert reiterates differences amongst men themselves and cautions future researchers not to generalize masculinity (2002). By chronicling the discourse and phonological patterns of speech of ‘burn-outs’ and ‘jocks’, Eckert found that the two groups speak differently on a macro-discourse level as well as on a micro-phonological level.

In conclusion, it is widely believed, by the fore-mentioned scholars, that through topic choice and other discourse practices, which will be commented upon later in this thesis, men use conversation to establish power hierarchies and status. Kiesling (1996) demonstrates, through observations of conversations at a fraternity, that men speaking with men establish power roles amongst themselves, oftentimes referring to subordinate members of the conversation by feminine nomenclature such as ‘bitch boy’. On the other hand, scholars rarely mention, if at all, power hierarchies that exist when women speak with women and gay men speak with gay men. In fact, women and gay men are predominantly thought of as being cooperative in their conversational style.

Holding the Floor

The notion of holding the floor is perhaps the most ambiguous and subjective concept which will be covered by this thesis. In its most simplistic sense, holding the floor can be defined as turn-taking in a conversation; a turn is the span of speech elicited by one speaker from the beginning to the last utterance (Sacks, 1974). However, such an interpretation is too ideal for the intricacies of spontaneous speech, and therefore the concept of holding the floor has endured many morphological transformations. For example, Edelsky (1981) sees the idea of the ‘floor’ as extensive speech and the ‘turn’ as giving the ‘floor’ up. Due to its existential and mercurial nature, the discourse features which constitute holding the floor, or turn-taking, are left to the subjective judgment of the transcriber (Wolfson, 1989), a task I personally take great delight in exerting my freedom in.

Since Sacks introduced the concept, there has been much debate as to what constitutes a turn. Sacks saw turn taking in a 'one person speaking at a time' paradigm (1974). However, conversations rarely exist this ideally. Conversational speech frequently consists of overlapping utterances (Coates, 1997), simultaneous speech (Reisman, 1974), minimal responses and back channeling (Schegloff, 1972), and interruptions (Zimmerman and West, 1975). The scholarship surrounding the reasons of why such occurrences happen is varied and tends to gravitate back to hegemonic hierarchal power theories (Zimmerman and West, 1975) and female co-operative discourse suppositions (Coates, 1997).

The most contentious debate in turn-taking revolves around the discourse function of interrupting. Zimmerman and West (1975) explain interrupting as a means of establishing power in a conversation by taking the floor from women and attribute men as interrupting at a higher frequency than women. Lakoff (1974) expands upon this notion by contributing female interruptions as a means of establishing cooperative discourse and male interruptions as an operation in establishing status and power. However, when quantitatively and empirically tested, frequency levels of interruption are gender neutral. In an examination of fifty-five conversations, James and Clark (1993) found no statistical evidence to support the 'interrupting male' hypothesis. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) also found no significant difference in frequency levels of interruption based upon gender. When the gender groups are mixed, men and women talking together, Edelsky (1981) also found men and women to interrupt an equal number. Scholars such as Coates (1997) and Tannen (1990) argue that while the interruption rates might be equal between men and women, the function of interruption is different across gender with men interrupting for status and women interrupting for cooperation. Coates (1997)

goes as far to say that women interrupt to support each other while men interrupt to change, or take control of, the topic.

The debate over interrupting, its form and function, is convoluted and contentious. For the purpose of this thesis, I will take the transcriber license afforded to me by Wolfson (1989) and designate any break or overlap in speech by an interlocutor as an interruption including minimal responses ('mmmhmms' and 'yeas'); and I will also attribute a greater discourse function to the interruption such as labeling turn changes as clarification requests, supportive information, or topic change. The sole function of interrupting is not to take control of the floor and change topics; the majority of the time, interrupting functions as a cooperative and supportive discourse strategy (Tannen, 1990, 1994). Once interrupted, the speaker holding the floor will continue talking or use the content of the interruption to amplify or intensify the nature of the discourse. I will elaborate more upon this methodology in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

Referencing

As the form of turn-taking is rooted in overlaps and interruptions, the concept of referencing overlaps in its larger global communicative functions. Referencing is the linguistic and discourse means by which interlocutors establish relationships with each other as well as to their larger discourse community. For example, the lexical term 'dude' is identified as a heterosexual male word which in use seeks to establish a connection to a heterosexual male identity thus establishing a heterosexual male solidarity (Kiesling, 2004). Likewise, Leap, christening such referencing as 'gayspeak', explains referencing as the linguistic and non-linguistic elements which establish membership in an identifiable community such as being queer (1994). Leap

elaborates that a certain lexicon and prosodic behavior exists which is used to express a connection to a queer community. Jacobs (1996) expands upon Leap's 'gayspeak' concept by delineating a categorical taxonomy for 'gayspeak':

- Non-sexual—'sister'
- Sexual relationship—'partner'
- Self-identification—'gay, queer, lesbian'
- Age—'chicken, mother'
- Specific settings—'tea room'
- Gay or nongay behavior—'screamer, bull dyke, clone, femme'
- Integration into the community—'closet queen'
- Roles in the community—'fag hag'

However, the lexicon of an emerging linguistic group is a dynamic construction (Alim, et al., 2009) that is rarely, if ever, stagnant but instead fluid and mercurial. This fluidity, though, is of a viscous consistency and lexicons of group identity tend to cycle within the communal organism in which they exist. For these reasons, the mid-1990s 'gayspeak' lexicon identified by Jacobs (1996) and Leap (1993,1994) is not necessarily outmoded but is instead expanded upon with new terminology while simultaneously retaining the atavistic contours from its generational predecessors. For this reason, I must invoke my inner-epistemic acquaintance with the lexicon from the identifiable groups in which I belong too—a queer male who frequently interacts with heterosexual males and females—in order to access these lexicons of in-group referencing.

The etymological roots behind queer referencing is oftentimes derived from three notable sources—the intimate and intrinsic relationship of gay men to women such as the 'diva' personality (Barrett, 2004), the shared sexual nature of queer culture (Leap, 1994; Cameron and Kulick, 2003) and the almost ubiquitous fascination with queer iconic pop culture (Harvey, 2000; Koller, 2009). Under this paradigm, the concept of referencing splits into two taxonomical

banners—nominal and polyphonous. Nominal referencing can be described as the use of single words in conversation which establish membership within the conversational group under a larger construct of group identity such as ‘girl’, ‘bottom’, and ‘Mommie Dearest’(all three of these examples are examples from the triad of influence upon queer referencing). On the other hand, polyphonous referencing is the strings of speech, quotes or reported speech, which stem from pop culture but is used to establish the same group identity motives as its nominal counterpart. For example, a dated but widely known queer polyphonous reference is “no more wire hangers”, a quote from *Mommie Dearest* which means in ‘gayspeak’ “I am very angry.”

My primary intention for including referencing as a measurable denominator in this thesis can be traced back to Tannen. Tannen (1990) identifies referencing as a notable feature of the difference between male and female speech. According to Tannen, men name drop as a method of status grabbing while women name drop as a method of connecting to each other. By name dropping, Tannen means names common to members of the group. This manner of referencing differs from the referencing explained above in that Tannen uses the concept to promote group identity within the group though without a larger group identification such as sexuality as gender. Polyphonous referencing has also been identified amongst women in conversation by Harrington (2006) who found that women use reported speech much more often than men do.

Interestingly, Morgan (1999, 2004) has found that African American women use similar referencing strategies as gay men. While Morgan does not directly make this correlation, in fact she does not mention gay men at all, she identifies features of African-American female speech which are nominal and polyphonous referential. According to Morgan (2004), African-

American women use the concept of signifying to create in-group meaning. For example, “I like your hair” means “that your hair is ugly” and “girl” means friend (a usage similar to the gay male application of the term). Alim (2009) has conducted extensive research on referencing and signifying of African American regardless of gender and found African-Americans indeed use referencing strategies which express simultaneous membership in the direct conversation as well as with a larger identifiable group. Similarly, Freddy (1992) began a lexical index and taxonomy in an analogous vein to Jacob’s (1996) which indexes in-group words of African American speech.

It appears that referencing does exist across gender and sexuality; however, the definition of referencing is interpreted differently. Indeed masculine referencing exists with ‘dude’ (Kiesling) as well as a larger African-American referencing system (Alim, 2009; Freddy 1992). Similar strategies are employed by gay men (Leap 1994) and are highly dynamic (Jacobs 1996) as well as by African-American women (Morgan 1999, 2004). This oversight by Tannen and others on the use of referencing beyond name-dropping could be attributed to the use of normative, idealistic men and women as subjects. For the purpose of this thesis, I will examine the nominal and polyphonous referencing styles actualized by scholars such as Kiesling, Leap, Morgan, Alim, and Jacobs—referencing which goes beyond in-group referencing but establishes an existential relationship to a larger discourse group.

Expletives

Lakoff (1974) mentioned that women speak with super-polite forms such as through euphemisms while men use more colloquial expressions such as expletives. For the purpose of this thesis, I

will focus on expletive use. By using the BNC (British National Corpus) as his database, Baker (2008) delineates expletive use by gender. He found that out of 7 expletive words (fuck, shit, piss, cunt, cock, bastard, hell) women use explicit terms 987 times out of one million words and that men use explicit terms 1480 times out of one million words. However, there seemed to be gendered preferences for words. Women more frequently uttered 'shit', 'piss', and 'hell,' while men more frequently used 'fuck', 'cunt', 'bastard', and 'cock'. With my corpus, I plan to measure frequency levels of expletives across gender and sexuality as well as tag words for their gendered connotation in themselves. For example, 'cunt' is a misogynistic word, 'fag' is a homophobic word, 'douchebag' is a misandric, and 'mother fucker' is a gender neutral word. I will explain this methodology in more detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

Adjective use

Another one of Lakoff's nine tenets is the frequent use of empty adjectives by women (1974). Empty adjective cited by Lakoff are 'divine', 'charming', or 'cute,' and she further explains the concept of empty adjectives by stating that they are often adjectives of admiration. My initial responses were, 'Do men not express admiration?' and 'What else constitutes an empty adjective?' Unfortunately, I will only be able to comment upon the former question (in Chapter 5 of this thesis) because after an extensive search of the literature I could only find what I consider hackneyed explanations as to an explanation of the enigma of empty adjectives. It seems the most consistent definition revolves around-- adjectives which do not give an exact description of the noun in which they modify. A synthesis of more contemporary literature lists common empty adjectives as 'lovely', 'adorable', 'divine', 'charming', 'awesome', and 'sweet'; and empty neutral adjectives as 'great', 'terrific', 'cool', and 'neat.'

I feel that I cannot make an unbiased or valid judgment in sorting adjectives as empty, neutral, or full. In fact, testing some of the more ubiquitous empty adjectives, Baker (2008) measures frequency rates of empty adjectives using the BNC. He found that women do indeed use empty adjectives at a higher frequency than men, but Baker points out that women are not the only users of these words. In fact, men were found to use empty adjectives such as ‘super’ and ‘terrific’ at higher rates than women.

Instead of adhering to an orthodox interpretation of this ambiguous concept, I chose to use Biber’s semantic groupings of adjectives (1999). Through his extensive and meticulously organized corpus, Biber has identified the following semantic categories of adjective use in conversation:

- Descriptive: size/amount—big, little, long
- Descriptive: time—new, old
- Descriptive: color
- Descriptive: evaluative/emotive—good, best, right, nice
- Classifiers: relational—same, whole, different
- Classifiers: topical—political, public, social (rarely used in conversation)

Using Biber’s semantic groupings of adjectives, I also straddle another one of Lakoff’s tenets—color use. Lakoff states that women use more precise color terms, such as magenta and puce, than men. Also, Leap (1996) finds that gay men use precise color terminology as well. When tested using corpus analysis, Baker (2008) finds that such terminology is rarely used and not

significant enough to make a generalization upon. Baker does note that both men and women use precise color terminology.

Hedges

For the purpose of this thesis, I will depart from Biber's semantic groupings to account for hedges in conversation. Hedges are multi-dimensional in that they are semantically an adjective but are used as a strategy of holding the floor when a speaker has the floor as well as a marker of uncertainty about a statement about to be elicited. Lakoff uses the following example to exemplify a hedge—"I guess it will rain this afternoon" as opposed to a more declarative "It will rain this afternoon (1974, pg. 79). Lakoff explains that women use this discourses strategy to seem uncertain in order not to appear incorrect and vulnerable.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) explain that hedges can be lexical modifiers such as 'probably', 'sorta', 'kinda', and 'fairly' or exist as discourse particles such as 'you know', 'of course', and 'like.' In defending the frequent use of hedges by women, Coates (1993) returns to her argument that hedges have another purpose by acting as a discourse agent to facilitate cooperative dialogue and inclusion amongst the interlocutors.

However, contemporary research has been finding that men also hedge when speaking. In her study with Native-American tribesmen speaking English, Trechter found that men do indeed hedge at a frequent rate (1999). Also, Kiesling (2003) has found through recording fraternity member speech that men hedge but using unconventional utterances such as 'Dude, I don't know dude, I'm just like man.' Such a 'sentence' could not only be seen as an entire hedge in itself but also enumerates the multiplicity of function of the word 'dude' in male speech. Baker, again,

tested the commonly identified hedges of ‘perhaps,’ ‘maybe,’ ‘possibly,’ ‘sort of,’ and ‘kind of’ and found that men use hedges more than women (2008). He attributes this phenomenon to the change in speech patterns from Lakoff’s 1974 observations to more modern examples of speech. Or perhaps, in order for hedges to normalize, a more broad demographic needs to be tested.

Stories and Jokes

Tannen notes that men hold the floor by recounting elaborate stories and telling jokes, but that women talk for longer periods of time, longer turns (1990). In later work, Tannen contextualizes and expands upon her theory, stating that in mixed gender groups women hold the floor longer than men when power roles have already been established and that men hold the floor longer than women when power roles are unknown such as at work or business meetings (1994). Lakoff also bluntly states that women do not tell jokes (1974). Tannen (1994) and Coates (1993) delve deeper into the male/joke relationship and infer that men joke in order to ‘one-up’ each other and thus establish a power hierarchy.

Earlier in this chapter, I outlined various themes and topics which investigators have identified as being indicative of male, female, and queer conversation. However, I did not comment on the manner in which those themes were conveyed. If the hegemonic man expresses his thematic universe through stories and jokes, and gay men, likewise, use elaborate woven stories ornamented with humor (Leap 1994), then in what medium do women express themselves? Are they simple passive observers of conversation, regulated to minimal responses, hedges, and empty adjectives?

Sadly, the answers to these questions are largely unknown. There has been little research which connects the topics and themes of female speech to the manner in which these expressions are conveyed. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet depict the consequences of this perceived voicelessness by commenting upon the few women who hold power (Congresswomen, CEOs, and President) or influential positions (medical and technical research (2003). With this corpus and requisite thesis, I intend to find the schematic void from which women express their thematic selves.

Polite Speech

Much of what has thus far been discussed is widely regarded as elements of polite speech—hedges, cooperative discourse strategies, the circumvention of expletives, empty adjectives of admiration, and minimal responses. However, there are some miscellaneous elements of polite speech which need commenting on. Tannen again creates a curious dichotomy by stating that men make demands and use imperatives while women use modals and cooperative auxiliaries such as ‘lets’ when the function of the speech is a request (1990). By using inclusive terms such as ‘lets’ women satisfy the positive politeness paradigm laid out by Brown and Levinson who from a linguistic standpoint describe positive politeness as inclusive and empathetic behavior (1987).

However, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet caution that politeness is a highly subjective and conspicuous ideal; thus, a person conducting research with politeness must take all extra-cultural variables into consideration (2003). For this reason, I will operate under Tannen’s construct of politeness mentioned above and measure frequency of modal questions, ‘do’ questions,

imperatives, 'have to' statements, 'do' statements, and tags; however, when taken out of context it is difficult to graft an accurate measurement of politeness from these elements (Baker, 2008).

Verbs

Thus far, I have been operating under a construct of responding to seminally espoused to linguistic and discourse features and theories present in the study of gender and queer linguistics. However, with this last section of research there is no constructive scholarship pertaining to the subject of verb use. Some research does exist on the periphery of my interest such as Sunderland's gendered verb study of children (2004) or Harvey's study on the verb use attributed to depictions of gay sex (2000), but in extensive search I have not encountered relevant commentary on the semantic categorization of verb use by gender or sexuality. If it is correct, as others have ascertained, that women speak from emotion with notions of cooperative discourse, and men communicate stories to negotiate power, and gay men talk about sex using humor, then it is self-evident to me that verb use must be a measurable dynamic with relation to gender and sexuality. Biber (1999) has identified semantic categories of verbs which indicate a drastic shift in frequency levels amongst semantic categories when register such as conversations, fiction, news, and academic writing are the variables. I intend to use Biber's semantic groupings of verbs to measure verb frequency use. I will elaborate upon this methodology in more detail in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to measure the multi-dimensional ontology of language and its symbiotic interrelationship with its speakers, a researcher must furnish his or herself with an assortment of contemporary representative analytical tools, especially when the host organisms of the discourse are as enigmatic as gender and sexuality. In naturally occurring dialogue, language is encapsulated in its unedited natal state, thus perpetuating the need for optimum research methodology. I believe that by creating a corpus of naturally spoken dialogue and examining the collection of data with modern and thorough analytical means such as corpus analyses the complex discursive structure of language becomes much more apparent.

Creating the corpus

First and foremost, a corpus of language was collected and assembled. Wolfson (1989) has argued that capturing spontaneously spoken speech is the most ideal manner of observing human expression through language. For this reason, I have recorded, transcribed, and compiled the spontaneous spoken word as it appears in conversational discourse.

The constructs under investigation in this study are gender and sexuality and how these are realized by language; therefore, the producers of the speech were selected for their identification in a definable group based on sexuality and gender. For the purposes of this thesis, the speech and interactions of heterosexual males, heterosexual females, and queer males comprise the body of the corpus. There are five discernable groups and thus five distinct sub-corpora:

- Heterosexual Females
- Heterosexual Males
- Queer Males
- Mixed: Hetero-Females and Hetero-Males
- Mixed: Hetero-Males and Queer Males

Participants

After recordings are made and transcribed, the data, and thus the corpus, reflects 50 distinct conversations totaling 50 recordable hours from 185 speakers. I have used participants, described below, who reflect a larger portrait of American culture and diversity. As mentioned in chapters 1 and 2, the majority of previously cited research is largely anecdotal and based upon small samples of conversational observation. This study will be a unique contribution to a larger body of research and scholarship in gender linguistics as it is corpus--based and thus operating from a quantitative and corpus paradigm. Instead of making assumptions about language from isolated conversation samples, a larger body of language and its speakers will be represented and analyzed. Such an approach weakens researcher bias as well as provides more valid and authentic data.

The groups represented in this corpus are representative of a compilation of 50 discrete conversations which have been separated into five distinct categories and thus five distinct corpora based upon the following denominators:

- Female Group—10 conversations, 10 hours of transcribed and measurable speech, 35 participants, heterosexual female only interlocutors.
- Male Group—10 conversations, 10 hours of transcribed and measurable speech, 35 participants, heterosexual male only interlocutors.
- Queer Group—10 conversations, 10 hours of transcribed and measurable speech, 35 participants, homosexual male only interlocutors
- Heterosexual Male/Female (M/F)-- 10 different conversations of one hour each. Each conversation consists of an equal number of heterosexual female and heterosexual male participants (2 males, 2 females) equating to 10 hours of speech from 40 participants.
- Heterosexual Male/Queer Male (M/Q)-- 10 different conversations of one hour each. Each conversation consists of an equal number of heterosexual male and queer male participants (2 hetero-males, 2 queer males) equating to 10 hours of speech from 40 participants.

The two primary components which make this study unique in its contribution to gender and queer linguistics are the methodology of analysis (quantitative and corpus based) and the diverse, but culturally representative, demographic composition of the participants. Of the 185 participants in this portion of the study, the following demographic characteristics were represented:

- Age—ages range from 18-68 with the majority of speakers being between 25 and 40.
- Race—from the 185 participants: 117 are Caucasian, 26 African-American, 24 Hispanic/Latin-American, 11 Asian-American, 5 are of mixed-race, and 2 Indian-Americans. The racial diversity represented in this study is closely proportionate to the racial representation of the United States, according to the 2010 U.S Census.

- Location—recordings were made of conversations in Western North Carolina; San Francisco, CA; San Luis Obispo, CA; Seattle, WA; Washington, D.C; New York, NY; Fernadina Beach, FL; New Orleans, LA; Shreveport, LA; Johnson City, TN; and Folly Beach, SC.
- Education—Participants identified their last year of completed education. While the majority of participants had a Bachelors degree, many of the subjects were high-school dropouts, received GEDs, were currently enrolled in college, had a Master’s degree, or had received an MD or a PHD.
- Employment— In contrast to the canonical practice of studying professors and their middle-upper class of immediate environs, this study involves only 2 university professors, 6 lawyers, 3 medical doctors, 2 CEOs, and 3 medical researchers. The remainder of the participants have a variety of jobs such as restaurant workers, cooks, bike messengers, an exotic dancer, office workers, salespeople, retail workers, teachers, law office clerks, 2 prostitutes, a drug dealer, a city council member, musicians, artists, writers, and the unemployed.

As mentioned in chapters 1 and 2, the majority of previously cited research is largely anecdotal and based upon small samples of conversational observation. This study will be a unique contribution to a larger body of research and scholarship in gender linguistics as it is corpus--based and thus operating from a quantitative and corpus paradigm. Instead of making assumptions about language from isolated conversation samples, a larger body of language and its speakers will be represented and analyzed. Such an approach weakens researcher bias as well as provides more valid and authentic data.

Features Analyzed

First and foremost, as mentioned earlier, this study examined *how* language is used in accordance with gender and sexuality, not *why* it is used. The quantitative data derived from this study helps to explain which linguistic and discourse elements define speech as gendered or of a particular sexual orientation. As outlined in Chapter 2, there has been considerable speculation, based upon anecdotes and hetero-normative speaker observation, as to what linguistic and discourse elements constitute gender and sexuality. This study seeks to provide a corpus-based analysis and interpretation of the results which rely upon frequency measurements from a large database of spoken conversational input, a methodology which has largely been ignored as a means for measuring language by gender and sexuality (Baker, 2008) though has notably succeeded in examining other genres of linguistics and sexuality (Biber, 1999).

The discourse and linguistics elements under investigation in this study have been identified by reviewing the literature of previous gender and queer linguistic studies as well as by my own observations in listening to, transcribing, and analyzing the data. The corpus was analyzed using three different methods of analysis—quantitative analysis, conversation analysis, and discourse analysis. Quantitative analysis accounts for measuring the frequency of a particular feature. Conversation analysis is beneficial in that each conversation is contextually analyzed for patterns of language use. While discourse analysis is useful in that the patterns identified from conversation analysis can be compared and contrasted from two or more distinct conversations to investigate when the patterns are broken and under what contextual parameters. Discourse analysis is used to examine the latter two sub-corpora—female/hetero-male and hetero-male and

queer male. The following are the discourse and linguistic elements that have been identified and measured, listed under the analytical tool that was applied in their analysis:

Conversation Analysis

- Topic and theme—the tropes which are expressed in conversation.
- Discourse conveyers—the larger discourse means by which the themes are expressed. Examples include stories, jokes, and flirtation.
- Holding the floor/turn-taking—the manner by which interlocutors take turns in a conversation. This discourse strategy is exemplified by interruptions, questions, and minimal responses. As explained in Chapter 2, these strategies are normally used as cooperative discourse constructions.

Quantitative Analysis

- Referencing—words that are used to express group membership. Oftentimes, these words express a larger global membership in an identifiable group.
- Expletives—words that are used that are normally socially unacceptable. These words typically express a negative gender or sexuality denotation.
- Polite speech—adapted from Tannen (1990), the manner by which questions of request are elicited such as through modality of the ‘do’ auxiliary.

- Adjective use—Biber (1999) has devised a schematic foundation for separating lexical units of syntax into semantic categories. I have adapted Biber's taxonomical system and separated adjectives by semantic family.
- Hedges—words used as fillers in an utterance such as 'like,' 'kinda,' 'sucha,' and 'I guess'. Hedges have been identified as being multi-functional lexical units; they exist as fillers to hold the floor, express uncertainty, distance oneself from the utterance, and establish cooperative discourse.
- Verb use—little research has been conducted on the role verbs play in gender and sexuality identity construction through language. I have also used Biber's taxonomy of lexical verb semantic categories to measure verb use by gender and sexuality.

Data Collection

Permission to do this study was granted by IRB and therefore the data collection methods were formulated to follow their guidelines. For example, participants were required to sign a consent form which assured them of their anonymity. In order to provide anonymity, participants names were not used in any of the transcriptions and names and places that were referred to in recorded conversations were abbreviated. In addition, I am the only person who has listened to the recordings.

Participants were recruited by a variety of means. Sometimes I asked friends of mine to record themselves when they were socially engaged with two or three other people. I also recruited people on Facebook and had people I know recruit people on their Facebook walls. A couple of times, I boldly approached strangers who were having drinks or food and asked if I could record

their conversations. Many times I would attend events and group meetings and become acquainted with people for the sole reason of being able to record them and their friends at some point. My primary reason for recruiting in this manner is I did not want this study to be solely representative of my open-minded liberal elitist friend group. Also, I wanted the study to be demographically diverse so I recorded in locations where I could find diversity, such as outside of Western North Carolina.

All of the conversations were transcribed using an Olympus WS-321M digital voice recorder. The device is small and unassuming. Transcription conventions were adapted from a synthesis of literature and examples of transcriptions are found in Chapter 4. Conversations were transcribed onto .txt files; however, when copied to Microsoft Word the corpus totals 3,000 pages of transcription.

Methods of analysis

Once the conversations are recorded and transcribed, the text will be sorted by a computer software program called MonoConc. MonoConc is a corpus software tool which allows a researcher to enter large samples of text into a database. The investigator can then identify frequency of word use, concordance line, and collocations. For the purposes of this study, MonoConc was used to measure frequencies of appearance of words. This tool is invaluable for measuring large samples of data. As for the elements of speech delineated above, MonoConc was used to measure frequency rates of verbs, adjectives, modality and 'do' auxiliaries, expletives, and referencing. These results will be tabulated and comparative and contrastive correlations will be drawn amongst the five groups of participants.

For the three larger discourse elements, theme, conveyors, and turn-taking, conversation analysis will be employed. Wetherell and Potter advocate conversation analysis for larger discourse elements noting that conversation analysis allows the researcher to analyze the activities and speech performed by the turn as well as to identify the ways in which utterances are organized into patterned sequences of interaction (1992). Conversation analysis does involve more subjectivity than corpus analysis; however, with a large database of information subjective error will be weakened.

In order to employ conversation analysis to measure my testable discourse features, I will manually read each conversation and interpret the theme, conveyor, and turn-taking pattern for each item. I will then manually calculate the frequency of occurrence for each element. The results will be tabulated and compared to one another in order to see which gender and sexuality group employs which discourse elements.

Measuring the heterogeneous groups—a discourse analysis

In literature, there has been much speculation about the hegemonic discourse employed by heterosexual men. However, as mentioned earlier, these interpretations have been made by anecdotal evidence from a small and normative, though societal non-representative, sample of the population. By mixing the groups, female and hetero-male and hetero-male and queer male, I plan to examine what happens to the discourse of each distinct group when the interlocutor composition shifts from homogenous to heterogeneous. Questions I will be asking of this data are: What happens to the frequency of occurrence of the discourse elements to queer male and

female conversations when heterosexual males are participants? What happens to the discourse of heterosexual males? By answering these questions, I will be able to speculate as to whether male discourse strategies dominate their more subjugated counterparts when conversations are mixed by gender and sexuality. Comparing discourse in such a fashion is the foundational construct of discourse analysis. Woofitt advocates discourse analysis as a contrastive tool in detecting the presence of hegemonic domination by subjugated groups (2005).

In the next chapter, Chapter 4, I will present the results of my research and then discuss the implications of the results in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This chapter will present the results extracted from the corpus. Frequency numbers of each testable linguistic and discourse element will be provided and the data of each sub-corpora will be juxtaposed next to one another for comparison. The first section of this Chapter will present the results from the homogenous groups—female, heterosexual male, and queer male. Each subsection will be divided by the discourse and linguistic element under discussion and will proceed as follows—themes, discourse conveyors, turn-taking strategies, referencing, expletives, adjectives, hedges, polite speech, and verbs. The second section of this chapter presents the results from the heterogeneous groups—female/heterosexual male and heterosexual male/queer male. These results were examined at a larger discourse level to investigate the pattern of speech changes when heterosexual men were present in conversations. This section is divided into three subsections—themes, discourse conveyors, and turn-taking strategies.

Total words/utterances

The entire body of words, back channels, and utterances (mhhhms, ewws, and ohhs) by group are as follows:

Table 1: Word count

Queer males	103,909
Males	98,836
Females	95,727

In terms of total words spoken, queer males account for nearly 5,000 more words than males and over 7,000 more words than females. The average number of words per individual conversation

for queer males is 10,390, for heterosexual males 9,883, and for females 9,572. Relatively, queer males speak enough words to account for almost an entire extra hour of conversation than females.

Topic and Theme

Topics and themes were labeled and grouped by their semantic category. By using conversation analysis, I was able to identify the following themes:

- Sexuality— any speech which involves a discussion of explicit sexuality of the interlocutors or in reference to other people.
- Relationship/Dating/Sex—any speech which discusses topics of intimate and sexual relationships, dating, and sex. This category includes discussion of attraction such as instances of utterances which operate under the theme of “he/she is so hot.”
- Party/Drinking/Drugs—any speech which involves discussion of partying, drinking, or drug use.
- People (non-gossip)—any speech which mentions and expands upon another person though not revealing secretive or intimate knowledge about that person. This person must be a personal acquaintance of at least one of the interlocutors. For example, discussion of athletes or celebrities who are not directly affiliated with any of the participants do not follow under this category.
- Gossip—any speech which reveals secretive or intimate knowledge about an individual who is an acquaintance of at least one of the interlocutors.
- Pop-culture—any speech which discusses a person, thing, or event relating to pop-culture. Referencing is not included in this category.

- Work—any speech which discusses events or themes which revolve around the speaker’s work environment.
- Sports—any speech which involves sports.
- Clothing—any speech which involves clothing, fashion, or dressing-up.
- Family—any speech which discusses the speaker’s family—parents, kids, etc.
- Suggestive—any speech which is not explicitly sexual but of a complimentary and implicitly sexual nature. For example, in Conversation 1 “you have nice nipples” is not explicitly sexual but it does imply somewhat of a sexual undertone.
- Cerebral—any speech which involves a higher cognitive processing of a theme. Examples include political discussion, psychological analysis of a person, or discussion of current world affairs. This category could be designated as one of two miscellaneous categories, the other being non-cerebral or other speech. While many of the above themes do use a high level of cognitive processing, this category accounts for all un-named themes which require some level of critical analysis or critical thought.
- Non-cerebral or other—any speech which involves themes that do not require critical thought or analysis. This category could be considered a miscellaneous category of speech which does not seek to provide an analysis or introspection on a higher cognitive issue. For example, from Conversation 1 below, “you are such a fatty” is comment which does not provide insight into a larger arena of global discourse such as a miscellaneous cerebral comment discussing the plight of Sudanese refugees or about whether or not a mosque should be built at ground zero in New York City.

Once the theme was determined, the frequency of occurrence of each theme was measured. For example, the following excerpt from a transcribed conversation of 3 queer males exemplifies the dynamic ontology of themes in a conversation. The parentheses after the speech events mark a distinct theme or topic change. In the parentheses, the first word describes the theme (Table 2) and the second word describes the manner (Table 3) in which the theme was introduced onto the floor:

Conversation 1 (QM)

B: You are such a fatty. (non-cerebral or other/joke)

N: I am a fatty. I was doing sit-ups today. I had a belly this morning.

D: You have nice nipples. You might as well show them off even in winter. (suggestive/ flirt)

N: I think it's such a bummer that girls can't do that (non-cerebral or other/declarative)

D: I know, girls should be able to uh

B: I think I'm going to buy

those stockings at V.M. (clothing/ declarative)

N: Really? Which ones? The crotchless ones?

B: no no no the crazy patterned ones

N: I'm going to buy the crotchless ones.

B: or I might just

get them and give them to D. Do you know D.? She was a bartender at the L., I don't know. Art teacher in Burnsville....well I live with her, I figured you might know her she's been around for a while but uh we're having a party MY birthday party. D. returns from A. party. (party and people non-gossip/ question)

As exemplified by B's last utterance in Conversation 1 (QM), two themes are introduced—party and people non-gossip. This excerpt demonstrates that a single turn of the floor can introduce more than one theme.

The following table accounts for the frequency of use of each group of thematic essence:

Table 2: Thematic frequency

Theme	Females	Heterosexual Males	Queer Males
Sexuality	7	9	37
Rel./Dating/Sex	122	192	210
Suggestive	4	91	89
Party/Drinking/Drugs	83	177	189
People (non-gossip)	237	151	164
Gossip	81	93	44
Pop culture	12	11	69
Work	169	104	61
Sports	2	122	3
Clothing	113	56	130
Family	166	90	35
Cerebral	62	135	109
Non-cerebral or other	185	248	272
Total	1243	1489	1412

The results from Table 2 are surprising in that even though queer males use more words, as indicated in Table 1, heterosexual males have more thematic shifts in the construct of their conversation. In addition, many of the themes discussed by queer men and heterosexual men are measured at similar frequencies while females appear to have their own clearly distinct style of discourse. I will expand upon these results in more detail in Chapter 5.

Discourse conveyors

In the *Stories and Jokes* section of Chapter 2, I delineated various theoretical and observational assumptions made about how a theme is articulated in conversation. Seminal scholars such as Lakoff, Tannen, and Leap have discerned that men, both heterosexual and queer, convey their thematic essence through elaborate stories and jokes; however, there has been little discussion

about how women convey their themes. Table 3 displays the frequency which females, heterosexual males, and queer males use discourse conveyers, the manner by which themes are expressed, to articulate their themes. Themes can arise and end by an interruption while given ornamentation by adjectives, verbs, and phonology. The discourse conveyer is the manner in which the theme exists. Analogously, a person has many non-verbal means such as going to the gym, putting on make-up, and wearing fitted clothing to express the physical theme of attractiveness. Likewise, language has many different viable means which act to convey a particular theme. Incorporating previously identified conveyers (stories and jokes) and identifying discourse conduits of my own, Table 3 demonstrates the frequency by which these discourse conveyers are used in conversation. Thus, the discourse conveyers are explained as follows:

- Stories—the means by which information is conveyed through a story such as reported speech/events and anecdotes.
- Jokes—the means by which laughter is the intended outcome of an utterance. Jokes can be conveyed as stories, hedged onto another story, or used to initiate a new theme.
- Jokes (one-upping)-- elaborated upon in Chapter 2 of this thesis, one-upping is the means by which jokes are layered onto another by interlocutors. This is demonstrated in Conversation 2 below.
- Declaratives—this manner of speech is any speech which is a statement though without the intent of humor or anecdotal elaboration. Declaratives are most often stated with the intent of providing advice, communicating a desire, or expressing an opinion.
- Flirt— the means by which sexual desire or sexually suggestive game playing is conducted by the interlocutors.

- Repeats—this is a rather dynamic conversation strategy which the utterances of one interlocutor are repeated by another interlocutor.

Conversation 2 exemplifies the concept of one-upping with jokes. The jokes are layered upon each other building onto the joke before it. Speaker K attempts to defend his sweater but gives up in the end and succumbs to participating in the one-upping. Until he begins engaging in the one-upping, he is essentially ignored in this segment of conversation.

Conversation 2 (QM)

S: did you make it yourself. <joke> Where did you get it?

K: it's from this website Virgin Black

C: it's like a \$1000 Prada <joke>

K: no its not

S: I know I was like is that a really nice designer or did you find it in a dumpster <joke>

K: it's a cheap Japanese designer. I paid like \$30 for this sweater.

C: Tom Ford looked at it so that makes the price whoaaa. <joke>

K: haha, I like it. It looks like I ran through the woods. <joke>

The frequency numbers for appearance of the discourse conveyors in the corpus are presented below in Table 3:

Table 3: Discourse conveyors

Conveyor	Female	Heterosexual Male	Queer Male
Stories	537	484	481
Jokes	228	469	877

• Jokes (one-upping)	51	220	445
Declaratives	1244	1287	1091
• Advice	98	59	111
Flirt	7	91	89
Repeats	645	268	11
Totals	2810	2878	3105

The frequency of use of each discourse conveyer indicates that all 3 gender/sexuality groups tell stories evenly while there is a large disparity in the number of jokes told as well as repeats. I will discuss the relationship between jokes and repeats in more detail in Chapter 5.

Holding the Floor/Turn-taking

In Chapter 2, I explained the multifaceted notion of holding the floor. The concept of what constitutes holding the floor operates under a larger subjective paradigm and is left to the interpretation of the transcriber and analyzer. For the purposes of this study, I will designate interruptions and turn changes (a speaker taking over the floor) as the parameters under which this portion of the study will operate. Interruptions are not necessarily always used to usurp a speaker's hold of the floor but are, nonetheless, breaks in speech; therefore, a break in speech by another interlocutor for any length, regardless of intent, is a break in the floor, even though the floor is oftentimes quickly regained. The following features were identified as interruptions and breaks in turn:

- Clarity questions—any request for more information.
- Answers—answers to direct questions, sometimes provided by other interlocutors than the person to whom the question was directed.

- Added information—any utterance which breaks the speech of one interlocutor to provide more information to what is being said. Rebuttals, or statements of disagreement, also fall under this category.
- Back channeling—minimal responses (‘yea’, ‘really?’, ‘mhhmm’)
- Same topic, different floor—this manner of interrupting is when a speaker takes control of the floor from another speaker but does not change the topic. This strategy often occurs in story layering.
- Topic change—this manner of interrupting is when a speaker takes control of the floor and changes the topic.
- Jokes—jokes are used as interrupting strategies.
- Declaratives—blunt statements which using state desire, opinion, intent, or analysis about something being said or a larger negotiable issue.
- Expressives—utterances which interrupt a speaker in order to convey emotion. Oftentimes these utterances are not lexical words; however, they do contain meaning such as ‘ewwww’, ‘ohhhh’, ‘no no no,’ and ‘riiiiiight.’
- Flirts/suggestive—statements which act to suggest sexual interest or sexual game playing.
- Ending statements—at times a speaker will provide statements such as ‘oh well’ or ‘I don’t know’ to signal that they want to end a topic that is being discussed.
- Empty comments—at times a speaker will provide empty comments as filler in a conversation either to avoid silence or express disinterest. For example, in Conversation 3, below, speaker K’s comment displays an empty comment:

Conversation 3 (QM)

C: Do yall wanna split a taco platter?

S: Let's see this taco platter?

K: Oh my God, I feel like I haven't drank in my life!

S: what kind of taco do you wanna get?

C: I like everything but shrimp.

Table 4 demonstrates the frequency in which each type of interruption or floor break occurs for each group.

Table 4: Interruptions

Interrupting Type	Female	Heterosexual Male	Queer Male
Clarity	614	495	1589
Answers	625	488	1558
Added information	2071	2012	2455
Back Channels	1257	702	601
Same topic/different floor	380	450	378
Topic change	281	219	342
Jokes	228	469	877
Declaratives	1244	1287	1091
Expressives	220	188	171
Flirts/suggestive	7	91	89
Ending statements	13	33	96
Empty comments	9	6	48
Totals	6949	6440	9295

In ten hours of conversation, queer males have over 2,400 more interruptions than females and nearly 3,000 more interruptions than heterosexual males. I was baffled by the large disparity of these numbers and re-listened to the recordings many more times to see if I had miscalculated something. At fourteen interruptions per minute, could the hegemonic queer males, in their struggle for power, be dancing on the floors of each other's buttresses of control? Or could the

high-frequency of interruptions be a feminine exercise in cooperative discourse? After a more thorough examination, I found the missing denominator—laughter.

Table 5, presented below, demonstrates the frequency of appearance of laughter in the corpus.

Table 5: Laughter

	Females	Heterosexual Males	Queer Males
Laughter	1528	993	110

These instances of laughter were not the ‘chuckling laugh as you speak’ type of laughter, but the roaring ‘nothing is being said because we are laughing so hard’ type of laughter. The latter type of laughter is considerably more frequently employed by females than queer males and a sizable number more by heterosexual males than queer males. Roaring and barreling laughter takes up a significant amount of time, thus preventing speech from being available on the floor. While females and heterosexual males are laughing, queer males are one-upping each other, telling more jokes, and using various prosodic cues such as facial expressions and phonology to express their delight in each other’s comical decoration of the floor.

Referencing

The concept of referencing, as explained in Chapter 2, is the use of words or phrases which assist in establishing membership in a larger group identity. Indexing single referential words is a difficult task because the implicit meaning behind a lexical unit of what is known, shared, and connected to a global identity can sometimes only be available to the members of that group. Conversation 4, a conversation of four women who work together, exemplifies this dilemma:

Conversation 4 (F)

A: <laughter> I've seen quite a few um cause I'm looking for T.B. every day so I've seen S.'s name on the caller ID at least one a day he has to be crazy

E: *E. this is S. I just wanted to check on the progress of my SGA*

All: <laughter>

E: right that man

All: <laughter>

E: It's all good

A: R. called me today. She was at a conference and apparently she was on a lunch break and she was eating potato chips in my ear.

<10 seconds later>

E: I had an email from A. today. I was trying to get him to come to the conference. He is so amazingly Spanish you know?

The referencing strategy employed by this conversational group of women consists of largely intra-knowledge. The individuals who are being referenced are known only by the conversational group or by others in their immediate work environment. The referencing which exists on the floor of the above conversation is used to establish in-group cohesiveness and does not reflect a membership into a larger gender or sexuality group. However, this observation is debatable as Tannen (1990) sees name-dropping references as a female strategy to create collaborative dialogue. Similarly, Harrington (2006) has found that females use reported speech more often than males to establish collaborative dialogue. From this perspective, the discursive structure of this conversation could be seen as a referencing strategy employed by its participants to establish discourse indicative of a larger global paradigm of female discourse and identity. Thus, this is the dilemma of measuring referencing.

For the purpose of this thesis, referencing is measured as it appears nominally and polyphonously; however, references of names of individuals who are not connected to pop culture or a larger group identity will not be measured. Jacobs (1996) and Leap (1994) have identified a queer lexicon which stems from 3 identifiable sources—female imagery, sex, and

pop culture, and Kiesling (2004) attributes the word ‘dude’ as a referential term for heterosexual males. Table 6 depicts the frequency of referencing by use. Since single words are now being measured, as opposed to larger thematic and discourse units, the frequency of use will be normalized to one million words. References are divided up by their semantic grouping based upon the references’ connotation.

- Feminine imagery—queen, sister, sista, girl, miss thang, bitch, diva.
- Masculine imagery—dude, bro, brother, bra (an accented version of bro), daddy, homie.
- Sexual imagery—top, bottom, bear, slut, whore.
- Pop culture—any reference to pop culture when the reference is used to have an implicit meaning. For example, in Conversation 2 from above, D mentions Tom Ford. Amongst the queer community, Tom Ford is a fashion designer icon. Referencing Tom Ford, draws upon a globalized shared knowledge within the group.

Table 6: Referencing (per one million words)

Reference	Female	Heterosexual Male	Queer Male
Feminine imagery	1884	414	2367
Masculine imagery	229	10,674	875
Sexual imagery	292	384	1655
Pop culture	56	111	288
Totals	2461	11,583	5185

The high frequency of heterosexual male referencing could be attributed to the easily identifiable explicit masculinity of the reference. References such as ‘dude’ and ‘bro’ are easy to notice and quantify. Queer males use the term ‘girl’ often to refer to one another. This type of a somewhat signified reference is more difficult to quantify due to the duplicity of meaning of ‘girl’. All tags

of the word ‘girl’ must be discriminated for meanings of ‘girl’ meaning ‘boy’ or ‘friend’, or for ‘girl’ meaning ‘a young lady.’ On the other hand, ‘dude’ is easy to account for because its literal meaning is ‘a man who gets dressed up to ride a horse on a ranch.’ Therefore, ‘dude’ has one predominant meaning in a conversation—‘man friend’, but as explained later in this chapter, ‘dude’ does not have a sole function in a conversation; in fact, ‘dude’ contributes to conversation in many different ways.

Expletives

As explained in Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis, expletives often have a gendered connotation. Expletives were measured by frequency of use for each group and then categorized by their gendered notion. The categories of expletives are explained as follows:

- Misogynistic expletives—words that are used to insult or degrade women such as cunt, bitch, whore, twat, and pussy.
- Misandric expletives—words that are used to insult or degrade men such as douchebag, bastard, dick, asshole, and cock.
- Homophobic expletives—words that are used to insult or degrade queers such as fag, gay (as in ‘that is so gay’), homo, dyke, and cocksucker.
- Gender neutral expletives—words that are traditionally viewed by society as explicit but do not necessarily have a gendered tone such as fuck, piss, shit, hell, and mother fucker.

Table 7, below, displays the frequency levels of use by each group with the frequency normalized to one million words.

Table 7: Expletives (per one million words)

Expletive category	Female	Heterosexual Male	Queer male
Misogynistic	1661	981	1453
Misandric	1765	1507	1895
Homophobic	167	465	779
Neutral	6173	6475	5379
Totals	9766	9428	9506

There appears to be no significant difference in frequency of expletive use by gender or sexuality. Females and queer males seem to use more gendered expletives that are tagged as demeaning to their own gender/sexuality group. In a similar fashion to referencing, this phenomenon could be explained by the duplicity of words. As exemplified in Conversation 5 below, queer males oftentimes use terms such as ‘fag’ or ‘bitch’ as terms of endearment, thus giving the word a dual role as expletive and reference:

Conversation 5 (QM)

T: hey bitch
 N: haaaayyyy. What’s goin on?
 T: I’m in a hissie. I’m uh what is tha can’t decide what to drink. Vodka or wiiiine?
 N: wiiiiine!
 T: yea okay fine. But vodka gets me fag out.
 N: girl, you like get your fag out each time you open your mouth
 T: I knowwwww.

Also, certain words are able to straddle two different gender connotations. For example, I have designated ‘cunt’ as a misogynistic word. However in Conversation 6, a conversation of 3 heterosexual males, ‘cunt’ has a misandric connotation:

Conversation 6 (HM)

A: They’re all a buncha cunts.

G: cunts cunts cunts!

A: you know, each time it's on I'm like

P: wait

A: okay 5:00 Beck, cunt. Then 6 Hannity cunt

G: oh and then Bill
cunt'oreilly.

I argue that despite the use of 'cunt' in describing a man, the word still remains a misogynistic word. There are many instances where words which are intended to be demeaning to one gender can be used for another. However, the literal meaning of 'cunt' refers to a woman's genitalia and is normally used in parlance as an insult for a woman. Similar duplicity problems arise when the term 'pussy' is used for a man as well as the phrase 'that's so gay.' All of these terms when used as modifiers across gender or sexuality lines still retain their original ontological connotation.

Adjectives

Frequency of adjective use was measured using a compilation of Biber's semantic groupings (1999) as well as Baker's inclusion of hedges in his corpus analysis (2008). Each adjective used was grouped under the following categories:

- Descriptors (size/amount/time)—words such as all, new, young, little, big, and last.
- Descriptors (color)
- Descriptors (evaluative/emotive)—words such as nice, crazy, weird, odd, drunk, cute, and stressful.
- Classifiers—words such as urban, Spanish, crotchless, and veggie. These words classify a noun from other nouns and are not usually subjective interpretations of the speaker.

Adjectives, unlike references, are a more concrete linguistic category and their use is definitive—to describe a noun. As explained in Chapter 2, there has been much debate about the types of adjectives women and men use as well as some elaboration on the descriptive nuances provided by queer men in describing a noun. Table 8 displays the frequency of use for each semantic category of adjectives. The results were normalized to one million words.

Table 8: Adjectives (per one million words)

Semantic Category of Adjectives	Females	Heterosexual Males	Queer Males
Descriptors: size, amount, time	10,730	13,787	6293
Descriptors: color	394	233	471
Descriptors: evaluative/emotive	18,371	12,190	16,775
Classifiers	1568	2365	2030
Total	31, 063	28,575	25,569

Females use adjectives more than males and considerably more frequently than queer males.

Both females and queer males use a sizable number more evaluative and emotive adjectives than descriptors of size, amount, time, and color. On the contrary, heterosexual males exhibit the opposite pattern using more descriptors of size, amount, time, and color than evaluative and emotive adjectives.

Hedges

Next, I measured for hedges in speech. The hedges identified ranged from ‘uhmmmmms’ to larger utterances such as ‘and I was like oh my god.’ The most frequently occurring hedges were

‘like,’ ‘you know’, and ‘kinda’; however, the hedges identified were very diverse in form. Table 9 reflects those results.

Table 9: Hedges (per one million words)

	Female	Heterosexual Male	Queer Male
Hedges	12,105	13,117	18,891

Queer males used far more hedges than their female and heterosexual male counterparts. The most common hedge used by queer males was ‘like’ with 12,029 instances per one million words. Heterosexual males used ‘dude’ as their most frequently used hedge with 6,288 instances per one million words. The most common hedge used by females was ‘like’ occurring 6,495 times per one million words.

Politeness

The title of this section might be a bit misleading as I do not claim to measure for politeness, but simply for the elements which Tannen (1990, 1994) identifies as indicative of polite speech. As stated in Chapter 2, politeness appears in various forms, constructions, and phonological manipulations. Baker (2008) cautions researchers using large corpora against de-contextualizing data to account for politeness. For this reason, I will be testing Tannen’s linguistic elements of politeness; however, I will not be drawing any conclusions about the intent of the utterances other than the frequency of their linguistic occurrence. As previously identified by Tannen (1990, 1994), I will be measuring the following categories:

- Do questions-- S: “You don’t mind if I have lunch while we talk, do you?” (F)
- Modal questions-- G: “Would any of y’all be interested in a spoon of sugar?” (QM)

- Tags— E: “...he’s so amazingly Spanish you know?” (F)
- Imperatives— G: “Finish it, pay the bill, and let’s go.” (HM)
- ‘Do have to’ statements— J: “...you do have to meet the parents sometime.” (F)

Table 10: “Politeness” (per one million words)

Category	Females	Heterosexual Males	Queer Males
Do questions	1723	4674	5726
Modal questions	2653	465	317
Tags	1859	789	1212
Imperatives	992	4067	4138
Do have to statements	355	0	38
Totals	7582	9995	11,431

After testing Tannen’s conceptual notion of politeness, the results did indeed show a significant difference between female speech and both heterosexual and queer male speech, both of which were closely aligned to one another. If operating under Tannen’s paradigm, the results would overwhelmingly demonstrate females to be the polite gender. However, Baker cautions about making assumptions when data is taken out of context. The data does not display phonological nuances, intonation, and the contextual parameters of the event. The same linguistic elements which produce polite speech can also be interpreted as sarcasm or condescending when other dimensions of the utterance are examined. As illustrated in Chapter 2, Morgan states that when one says “I like your hair”, it doesn’t always mean something good.

Verbs

For this section, I have isolated each verb uttered in the corpus of conversation and tagged the verbs by 7 distinct categories. I have used Biber's semantic grouping of verbs to separate, categorize, and thus measure frequency of verb use. Biber (1999) identifies the following semantic categories of lexical verbs:

- **Activity**—these are verbs that signify actions and events such as make, get, go, come, and give.
- **Communication**—these are verbs that involve communication activities such as ask, call, say, talk, and tell.
- **Mental**—these are verbs that do not involve action but instead represent cognitive meaning, emotional meaning, attitude, desire, and perception. Examples of mental verbs are think, know, love, want, hate, and believe.
- **Causative**—these are verbs that express that some person or thing has brought about a new state of being. Examples of causative verbs are allow, cause, help, and let.
- **Occurrence**—these verbs report events that occur without directed activity. Examples of occurrence verbs are become, change, happen, and occur.
- **Existence**—these verbs report a degree of existence or a relationship between two existing things. Copular verbs such as be and seem are often existence verbs as well as other verbs such as live, contain, involve, and exist.
- **Aspectual**—these verbs denote a stage of progression of an event. Examples of aspectual verbs are begin, continue, keep, start, and stop.

Table 11 displays the frequency of occurrence by gender and sexuality of each category of lexical verbs.

Table 11: Verbs (per one million words)

Lexical Verbs	Female	Heterosexual Male	Queer Male
Activity	42,736	65,794	57,069
Communication	17,738	8407	6630
Mental	24,854	45,236	48,994
Causative	1023	1487	1164
Occurrence	898	1264	1039
Existence	1974	819	4821
Aspectual	4188	3480	1532

The results from Table 11 produced some startling results in frequency of use of the various semantic categories of lexical verb use among all three gender/sexuality groups. All three groups demonstrated stark differences in nearly each category; furthermore, it appears that none of the groups resembles a pattern of similarity to any other. I will expand more upon this phenomenon in Chapter 5.

Presentation of Results—Mixed Groups

Word Count

The entire body of words and utterances of each group are as follows:

Table 12: Word Count—mixed groups

Females/ Males	97,114
Hetero-males/Queer Males	100,783

The M/Q group accounts for over 3,000 more words than the F/M group. The average number of words spoken in an individual conversation for the F/M group is 9,711 while the average for the M/Q group is 10,078.

Topic/ Theme

The thematic construct, process of thematic identification, and methodology of measurability is transposed from Chapter 4 for the homogenous groups and placed upon the heterogeneous groups in this section of the study. Themes and topics were identified and measured according to frequency. Table 13, below, displays the frequency of appearance of each thematic essence.

Table 13: Thematic Frequency—mixed groups

Theme	Female/Hetero-male	Hetero-male/Queer Male
Sexuality	11	64
Rel./Dating/Sex	185	182
Suggestive	101	88
Party/Drinking/Drugs	147	190
People (non-gossip)	158	149
Gossip	60	51
Pop culture	43	41
Work	137	107
Sports	19	14
Clothing	18	88
Family	152	43
Cerebral	114	157
Non-cerebral or other	255	287
Total	1400	1461

The most unusual information inferred from Table 13 is the consistency in suggestively and sexually themed topics measured in both groups. Initial intuition would typically suggest that

heterosexual males would be tepid about engaging in sexual discourse with queer males, and likewise that queer males would be hesitant about delving into sexual topics out of a hegemonic fear. However when quantitatively assessed, heterosexual males appear to be comfortable discussing sexually themed topics with queer males. I will expand more upon these results in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

Discourse conveyors

The same discourse conveyor categories used to measure homogenous discourse in Chapter 4 have been used to measure frequency of use for the mixed gender/sexuality groups. Table 14 displays the results of their frequency of appearance.

Table 14: Discourse Conveyors—mixed groups

Conveyor	Female/Hetero-male	Hetero-male/Queer Male
Stories	513	455
Jokes	312	697
• Jokes (one-upping)	32	307
Declaratives	1189	1114
• Advice	125	62
Flirt	101	88
Repeats	199	72
Totals	2471	2795

The frequency of use measured for each discourse conveyor indicates that both groups tell a nearly equivalent number of stories to convey their themes while the M/Q group tells more than twice as many jokes as the F/M group. On the other hand, the F/M group appears to use advice and repeats twice as much as the M/Q to convey conversational themes.

Holding the Floor

The same categorical paradigm used in Chapter 4 for the homogenous groups in analyzing strategies of turn-taking will be applied for measuring the frequency of turn-taking in the heterogeneous groups. In Chapter 2, I delineated Tannen's assumptions that men tend to talk over women in order to assert their power (1994). Tannen has provided numerous anecdotes where, as she explains, men take the floor from women to establish a power hierarchy while women talk over men in order to be cooperative. In fact, many feminist researchers have referred to man as the 'master interrupter.' Since stumbling upon these assertions, I have been interested to see what a quantitative analysis of turn-taking strategies resembles when the group is mixed male and female. Table 15 presents the frequency of use of turn-taking strategies and floor holding support.

Table 15: Interruptions—mixed groups

Interrupting Type	Females/ Hetero-males	Hetero-males/ Queer Males
Clarity	578	884
Answers	554	900
Added information	2103	2365
Back Channels	969	613
Same topic/different floor	367	405
Topic change	222	277
Jokes	312	697
Declaratives	1189	1114
Expressives	243	212
Flirts/suggestive	101	88
Ending statements	12	43
Empty comments	19	20
Totals	6669	7618
Laughter	661	191

As shown by Table 15, both groups indicate a high level of turn-taking and interruptions. Since the common denominator of these two groups are heterosexual men, discrepancies in heterosexual male speech patterns are able to be identified when the gender and sexuality of the interlocutors is shifted. The results from Table 4 demonstrated that queer males use clarity questions and answers to perpetuate conversation and thus engage in a highly dynamic turn-taking discourse while females use lengthy bouts of laughter to mutually hold the floor. Due to the vacillation in turn-taking strategies, Table 15 indicates that heterosexual males adopt or somewhat conform to the turn-taking discourse of the gender/sexuality dynamic of their interlocutors. In Chapter 5 I will juxtapose homogenous data next to heterogeneous data to provide a more lucid interpretation of these results.

The results extracted from the corpora demonstrate the dynamic relationship language has with expressing gender or sexual identity. The next chapter, Chapter 5, will discuss these results in greater detail by summarizing some of the language features which express woman, man, and queer man.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

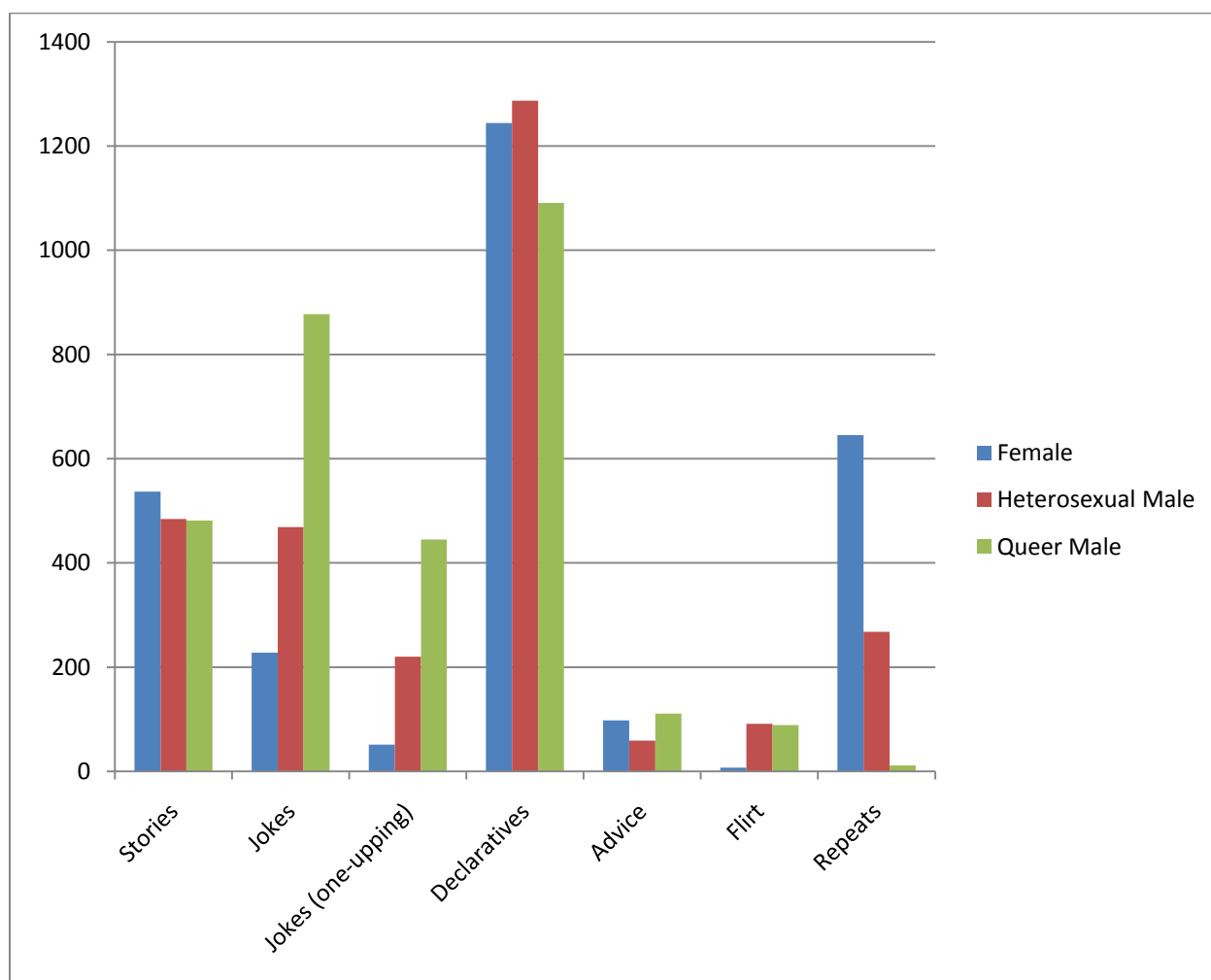
Throughout this thesis, I have stated a few overarching principles which this study operates under. Aphoristically, the foundations of procedure in this investigation are this study will be corpus-based, quantitatively and corpus analyzed, representative of a broad and diverse demographic, and contribute to a greater body of knowledge which seeks to answer questions relating to *how* people communicate gender/sexuality as opposed to *why*. As this discussion unfolds, I will inevitably take license in the creases of my results and speculate as to why a particular linguistic or discourse item appears frequently or naught. However, I will not espouse theory or pretend that my conjectures are definitive or absolute.

I believe that the corpora created in this study demonstrate that language, with its linguistic hues and discourse tones, express a difference in form and function by gender and sexuality, just not, perhaps, with the same tincture that scholars writing upon this subject in previous generations or with alternative methodologies would espouse. In fact, I believe that through this corpus the ideals of the hegemonic male, the passively tepid female, and the flamboyant and feminine queer man are realized as somewhat allegoric and not entirely representative of their larger gendered and sexualized identity. For the remainder of this discussion, I will use the corpora to connect the three gendered and sexualized entities of this study with some of the language features which define and decorate their identity as woman, man, and queer man.

Women

The picture painted by the majority of the highly-esteemed literature surrounding gender linguistics is of woman as a passive recipient of conversation. According to the corpus created for this thesis, women convey their thematic existence through stories at a slightly higher frequency rate than both heterosexual and queer men. Women also use repetitive speech at such an unequivocally high rate that the discourse conveyance strategy of repetitive speech is nearly idiosyncratic to female speech. Women stand apart from their male counterparts by not telling as many jokes and by not playing flirtatious games with each other. See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1—Homogeneous Discourse Conveyors

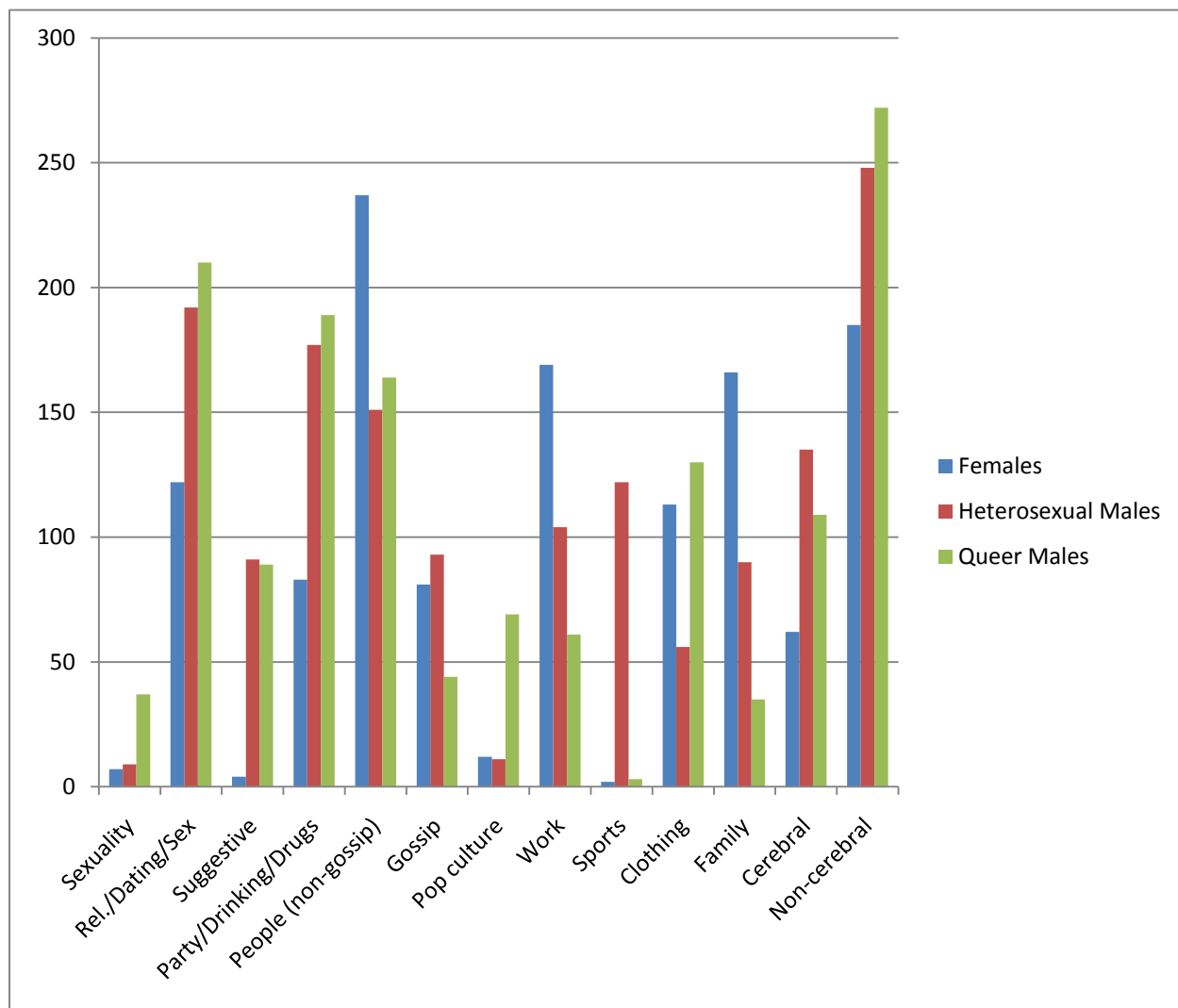


Using stories and repetition, women convey the themes which most frequently appear in their conversations. The most frequent tropes which appear in female speech are general, non-gossip, conversations about people, work, and family. The thematic existence of women stands apart from heterosexual men in that women less frequently talk about sports, parties/drinking/drugs, sex, and make suggestive comments to one another. Women also stand apart from queer men by having fewer conversations about sexuality, sex, parties/drinking/drugs, and pop culture.

However, women are not entirely separated from the thematic essences of men. Women seem to share queer men's disdain for sports while sharing their affinity for discourse about clothing.

Women, also, gossip at a near equal rate as heterosexual men and both groups seems to mutually avoid conversations about sexuality and pop culture. See Figure 2 below:

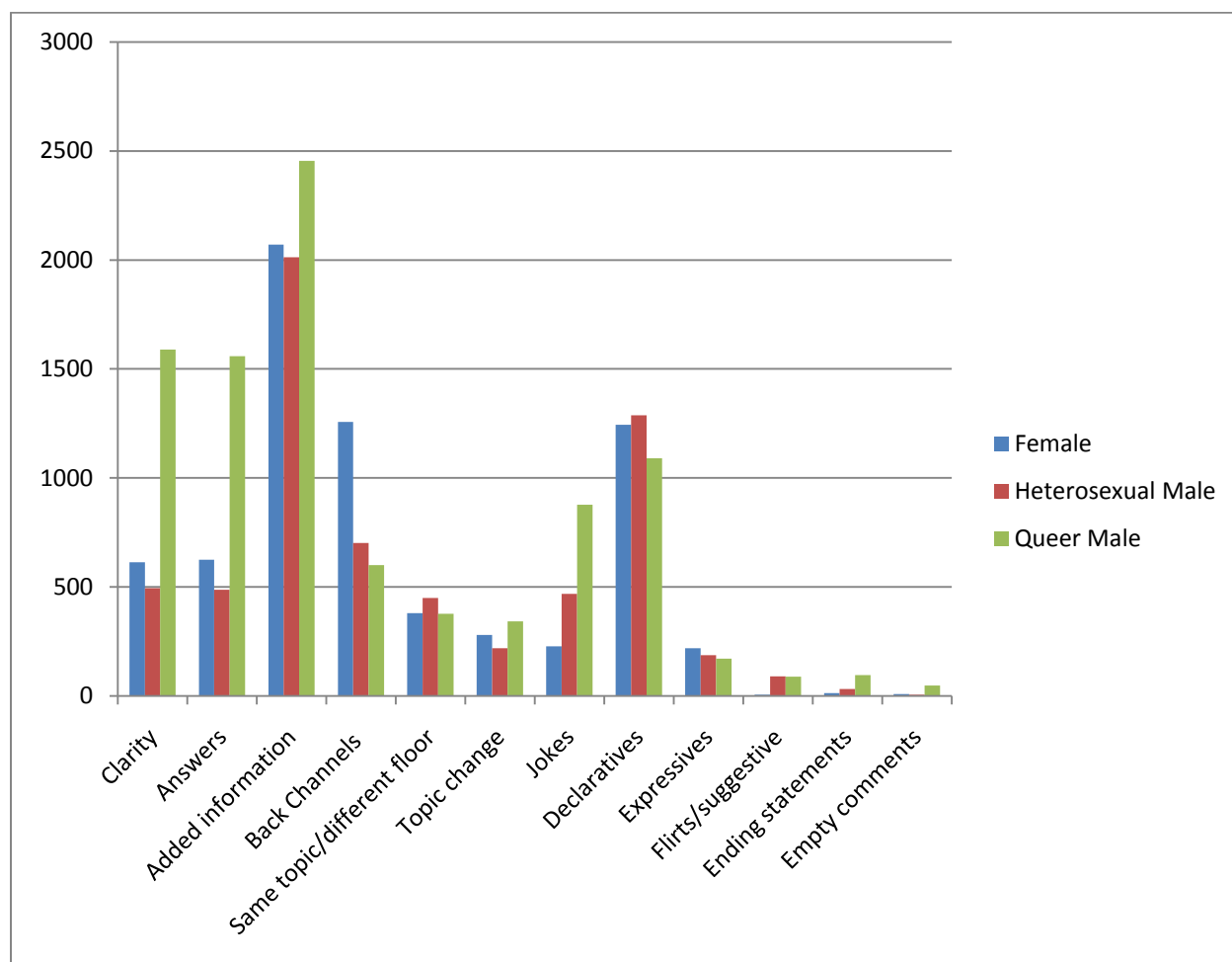
Figure 2—Homogenous Themes



Previous research (Lakoff, 1974; Zimmerman and West, 1975; Tannen, 1990; Coates, 1994) has identified men as vociferous interrupters; however other research has found no difference in the frequency of interruptions by gender (Edelsky, 1981; James and Clark, 1993; McConnell-Ginet, 2003). The results from this corpus are in agreement with the latter of the two thoughts as the corpus accounts for no difference in interruption rates between women and heterosexual men; though, there is significant disparity when moderate female rates of interruption are juxtaposed

to the high rate of interruptions by queer men. The corpus also finds that women interrupt for different reasons than men. Women tell far fewer jokes than men, though they do make jokes but use backchannels to briefly take the floor. Women also use clarification request and answer strategies to negotiate turn-taking while heterosexual men do not. While listening and transcribing the data, I found that women use laughter at a high rate as a means of turn-changing. Lengthy bouts of laughter, like repetition, appear to be an idiosyncratic discourse feature that is largely attributed to women. See figure 3 below:

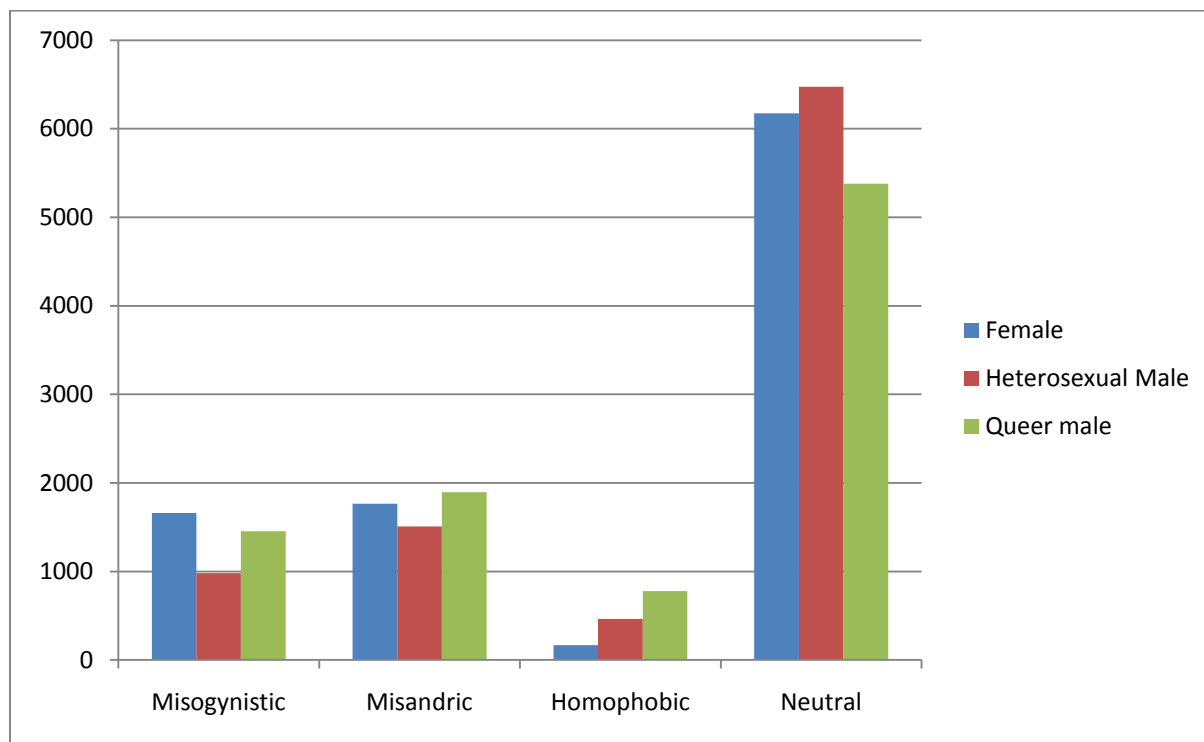
Figure 3—Homogeneous Interruptions



In relation to referencing, women do not appear to frequently use the same referential devices which I measured for this study. Tannen (1990) and Harrington (2006) identified in-group name-dropping and reported speech as the forms of female referential strategies. However, I feel as if the results of my measure of referencing are inconclusive due to the multi-layered nature and vast intrinsic knowledge required to conduct such a study on a dynamic concept such as this. Perhaps, women do indeed frequently use some form of nominal referencing but the data obtained from the corpus does not support this. Though, again, I cannot make an assumption on this matter because interpreting the results from the corpus is problematic for this particular discourse feature.

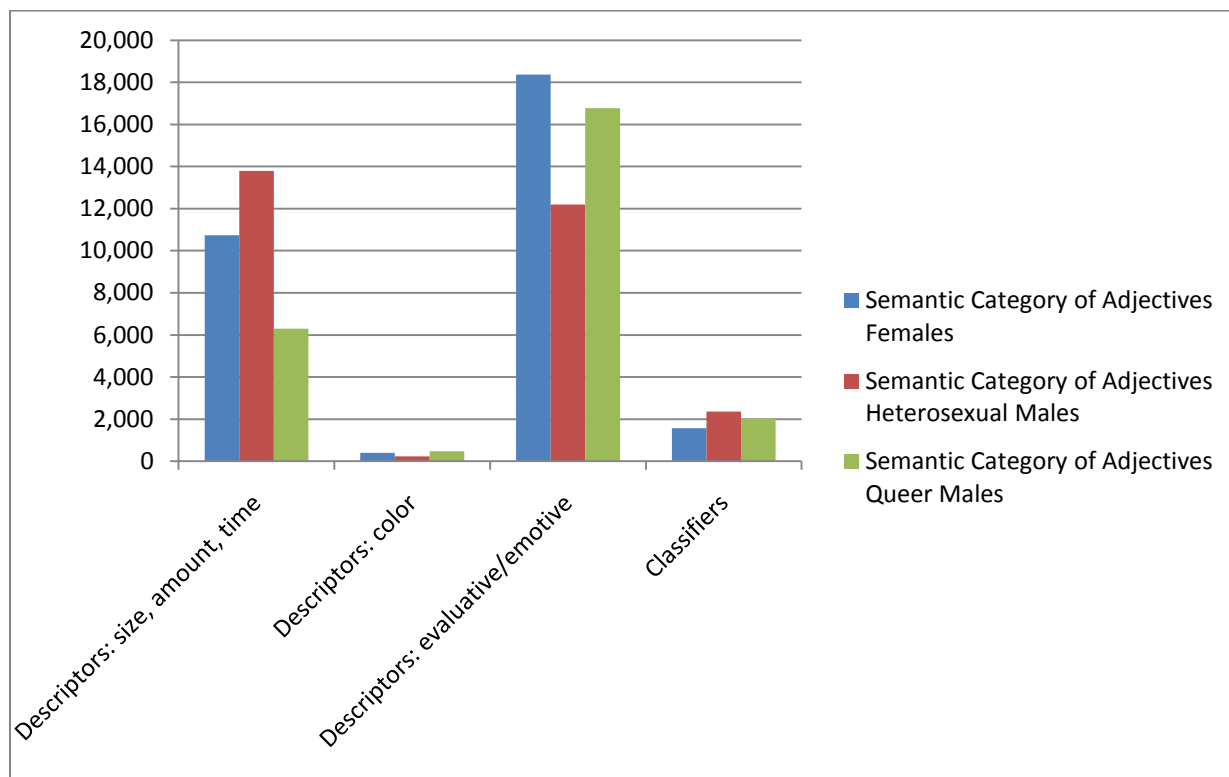
In their index of female speech, Lakoff (1974) and Tannen (1990) both cited *lack of expletive use* as a distinct feature of female speech and attribute male speech to being *filled with expletives and colloquialisms*. In fairness to the fore-mentioned scholars, generational drift and time do shape, or vice versa, one's lexicon options as well as notions of politeness. In contemporary times, according to the results from this corpus, women, by a small number, use more expletives than both heterosexual and queer men, and in fact, use more misogynistic expletives than either of the two groups of men. However, as with referencing, these results could be viewed as inconclusive to the duplicity of meaning many of these words are attributed to. See figure 4 below:

Figure 4—Homogeneous Expletive Use



This corpus also finds that women use slightly more adjectives than men in spoken conversation. Perhaps, this high frequency of adjective use by women could be connected to the high frequency of story-telling prevalent in female speech; while men are telling jokes, women are adorning their utterances with descriptive flair. Regardless, women use higher frequencies of emotive and evaluative descriptors than men, though, use far fewer classifier adjectives. Lakoff (1974) noted that women use elaborate terms for color; however, this study correlates to Baker's corpus analysis of color terminology (2008) by finding only small and insignificant usage of color terms by women. See figure 5 below:

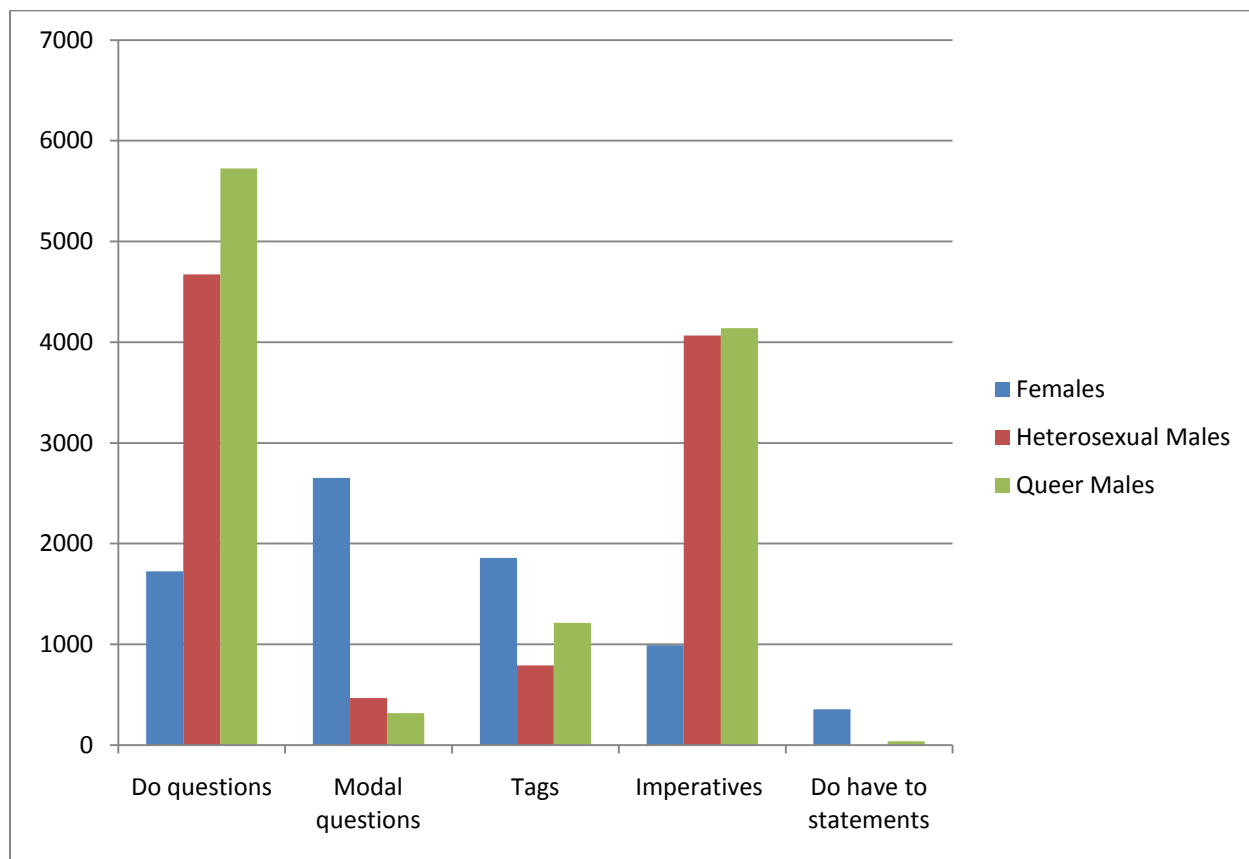
Figure 5— Homogeneous Adjective Use



There has been a lot of contentious debate about what constitutes politeness in gender linguistic literature. Baker cautions researchers that subjective perceptions of politeness are mercurial and when taken out of context speech intent can be skewed (2008). As explained in Chapter 4, politeness is constructed discursively through in-group knowledge, linguistic elements, discourse features, phonology, and prosody. Tannen identified various features of politeness that is present in female speech such as modality in questions and other features of directness that is present in male speech such as imperatives (1990). Although, I did not test directly for politeness, I did measure the frequency of use of Tannen's features. The results displayed a stark dichotomy between male and female use of question forms, tags, and imperatives. Women, by far, used

more questions with modality and incorporated more tag questions into their statements while men largely used the ‘do’ form of questions. See figure 6 below:

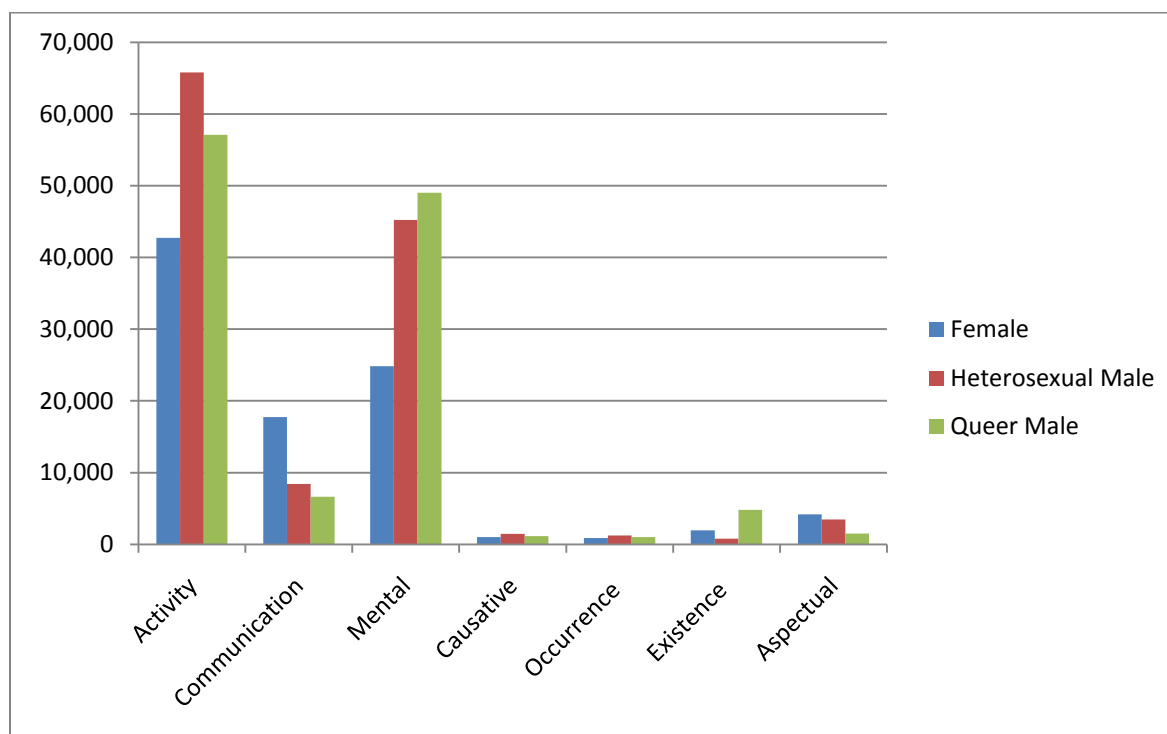
Figure 6—Homogeneous ‘Polite Speech’



Verbs are the cornerstones of discourse from which all the rudiments of an utterance revolve around. Verbs dictate the valance of a sentence by allowing and ostracizing syntactical elements as well as signifying the connection and perception the speaker has with the event, person, or thing being described. I have no evidence to back up this claim and am only relying on intuitive speculation, but perhaps verb use is a portal into the psycholinguistic mechanisms of our cognitive composition. By no means are the results from this study able to support such an

assumption, but perhaps it is a start. In order to measure frequency of use of verbs, I used Biber's semantic categorization of verbs. The corpus demonstrates that women use communicatively tagged verbs at a high frequency which is more than double than both of the male groups. On the other hand, women use a significantly fewer number of mental verbs than the two groups of men and a slightly significantly fewer number of activity verbs. Perhaps, the high frequency rate of use of communicative verbs could be somewhat accounted for by women's tendency to use reported speech in conversation (Harrington, 2006). Or perhaps, women use communicative verbs to perpetuate a paradigm of collaborative dialogue (Coates, 1994). But then again, I must remind myself, I am reporting how women speak, not why. See figure 7 below:

Figure 7—Homogeneous Verb Use



While women undoubtedly appear to occupy their own idiosyncratic language group, their existence in the traditional dichotomy is not without a contrastive focal point, the center from which nearly all language groups are juxtaposed and tangential to—the heterosexual male.

Heterosexual Men

Man, the hegemonic purveyor of oppression who wields language around in power hungry linguistic stratosphere of interruptions while arm-wrestling for control of the floor. Granted, men who actualize the descriptor above do indeed exist, as do women and queer men who fit the same description. If one wanted to make a case for the power obsessed linguistic dominance of man, then a transcript of a conversation featuring Mel Gibson or Bill Gates would suffice. In fact, a conversation analysis of Hilary Clinton or Meg Whitman might produce similar results. However, these examples are not representative of the cornucopia of diversity that exists in the English-speaking world. The majority of male speakers are not members of the hegemony, but have unfortunately been placed by troves of linguistic scholars in a speech category which does not represent their identity nor their speech. Hence, the hegemonic white male speech of lore should be designated just that—the speech of the hegemony vs. the speech of the subjugated woman. Perhaps, the results from this corpus will cause a degree of cognizance that not all men speak in an oppressive manner; that in fact, as a whole, men employ similar but distinct cooperative discourse strategies which define the linguistic and discourse idiosyncrasies of their speech.

The most frequently used thematic essences employed by men are non-cerebral or other jargon, relationships/dating/sex, and parties/drinking/drugs. However, men do not dominate the

frequency levels for any of these categories. Surprisingly, men have the highest frequency rates in the themes of cerebral, sports, gossip, and suggestive commentary (see figure 1 above). The last thematic notion might need some qualitative explanation. One would normally not assume that in homogenous group of heterosexual men that sexually suggestive banter would be a prevalent theme. However, when employing their themes men use a high frequency of jokes, stories, and declaratives. Many of these jokes consisted of a *pretending to be gay style* humor between the interlocutors. Conversation 7, below, exemplifies this behavior.

Conversation 7 (HM)

E: I got fucked so hard last night.

A: Not by any of us.

M: No you wouldn't have felt it.

A: ahhhhh

H: wait was that you?

M: exactly but

E: I'd let you top me, even if

M: you'd never feel it

E: yeah, well, everyone else is a bottom

Conversation 7 not only demonstrates the sexual suggestiveness of this style of heterosexual male humor but also displays the cooperative nature of the discourse where one joke is layered upon the next in a non-hierarchical manner.

From the data retrieved from this corpus, men also lose their title of *male interrupter*. Men interrupt, and thus have fewer floor changes and turns, than the other two groups. Men predominantly interrupt by making declarative statements as well as adding information to another interlocutor's speech and taking the floor but not changing the topic. On the other side, of the three groups, men have the lowest frequency rates in asking clarification questions and

answers. Men also use high frequency rates of lengthy laughter between turns (See figure 3 above).

Although, I've already designated the referencing results to be more or less inconclusive based on the difficulty of acknowledging and counting references, men, by far, used the most number of identifiable references than any other group. Male connotative words such as 'dude', 'bro', and 'brother' are easily verifiable and widely used by male interlocutors. Kiesling has conducted extensive research indexing the multi-faceted functionality of the word 'dude' (2004). 'Dude' can act a reference, a hedge, a minimal response, and a question, but more importantly its utterance connects the male interlocutors to the larger discourse community of their male identifiable world.

Previous studies have identified men as frequent elicitors of expletive words. However, this corpus, as well as Baker's (2008), finds no significant frequency discrepancy in expletive use by gender. In fact, when misogynistic words are accounted for, heterosexual males use far fewer expletives demeaning women than the other two groups. However, this result could be misleading as queer men and women use words such as 'bitch' as terms of endearment which could affect the misogynistic intent of the word (see figure 4 above).

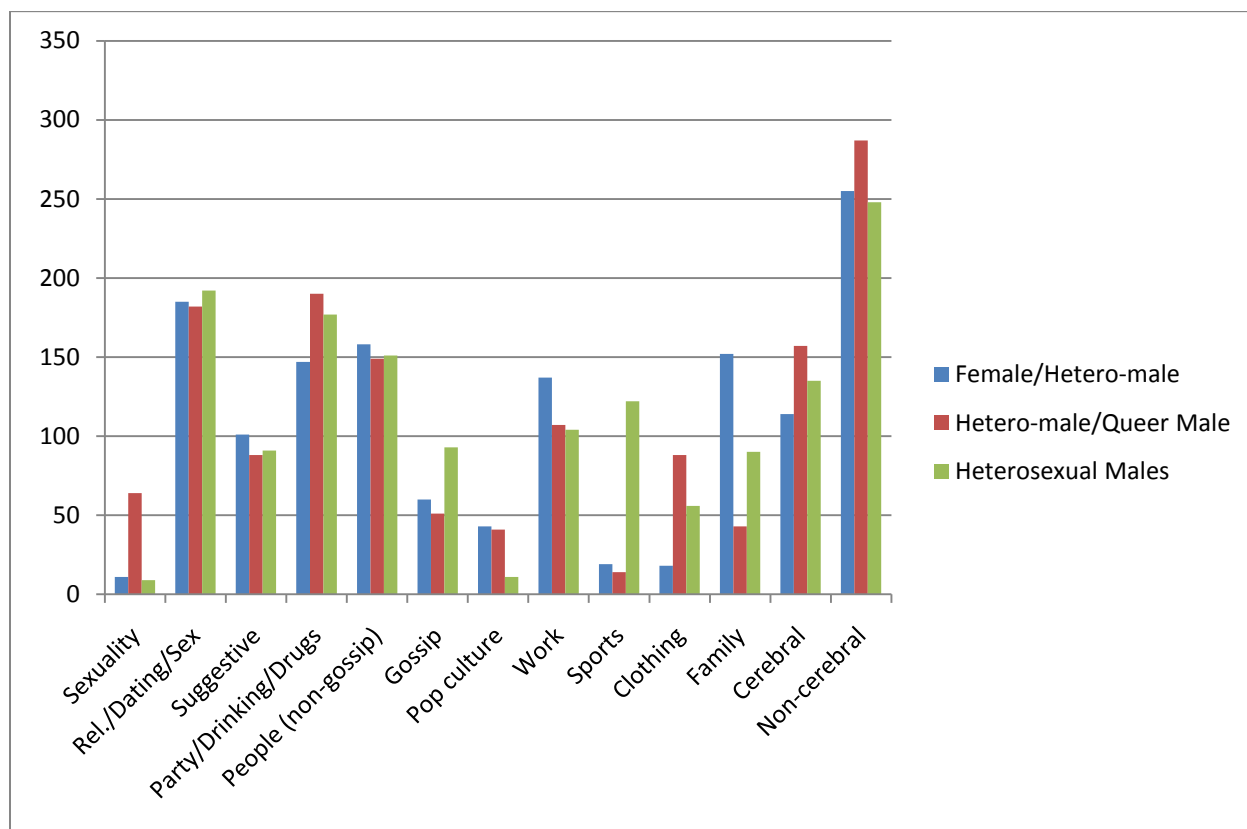
Adjective use by heterosexual men is moderate when compared to women and queer men. Heterosexual men use more quantifying descriptors that modify time, size, and amount and fewer adjectives which describe emotive or evaluative states (see figure 5 above). In terms of the manner in which requests are made and questions asked, heterosexual men more frequently use

imperatives and 'do' questions as opposed to modals and tags. These results are in stark contrast to female use of these elements but are very close to the frequency rates of use by queer men (see figure 6 above).

Heterosexual men, by far, exhibit the greatest frequency of use of active verbs as well as a high frequency of use of mental verbs. Perhaps, this penchant for active and mental verbs can be explained by the high frequency of use of sports in conversational themes (see figure 7 above).

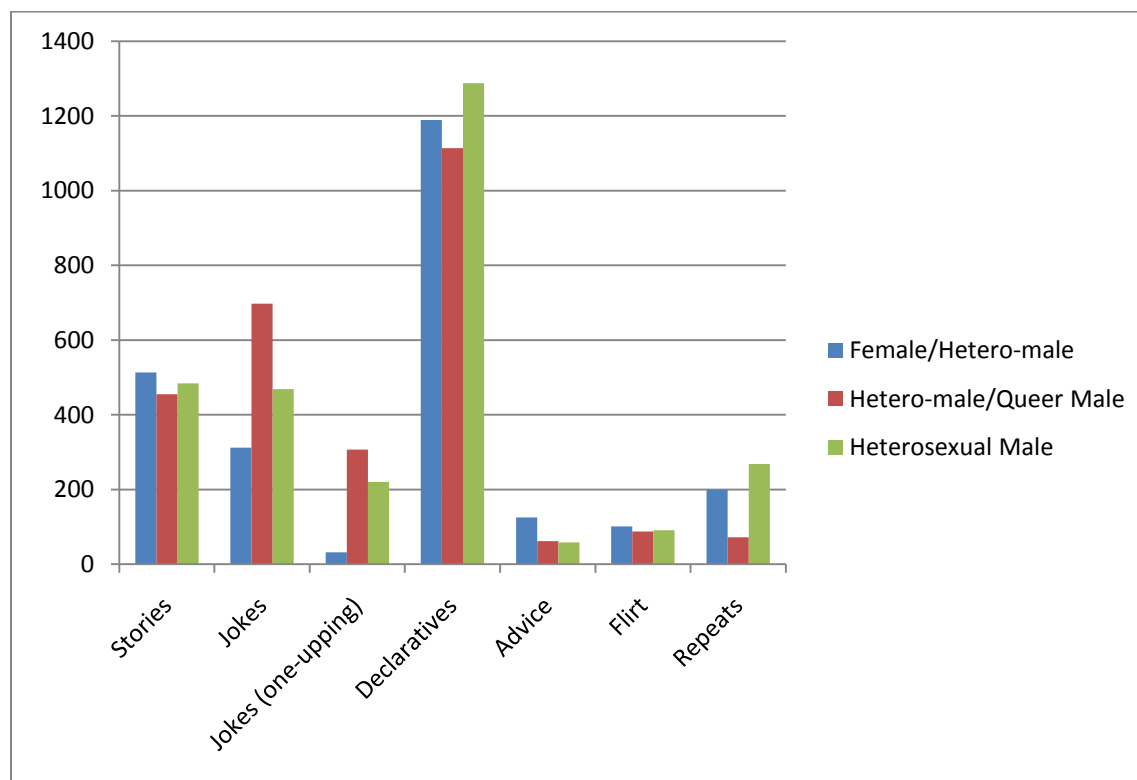
When the groups were mixed, female/hetero-male and hetero-male/queer male, I was able to analyze the shift in heterosexual male speech in three different contextual situations and thus create and examine three different corpora of data pertaining to heterosexual male speech. When the results of the three corpora are juxtaposed next to each other (as exemplified in figure 8 below), the change in frequency rates of many of the linguistic and discourse elements being measured was significant with respect to heterosexual male speech. For example, when thematic essence was measured, women used non-cerebral or other, people (non-gossip), work, and family at high frequencies while heterosexual men used non-cerebral or other, partying/drinking/drugs, and relationships/dating/sex themes at high frequencies. However, when the groups were mixed between heterosexual men and women, the themes merged and normalized in their most frequent use with non-cerebral or other, work, family, party/drinking/drugs, and relationships/dating/sex as the most prevalently occurring themes. When the group was mixed between the two distinct sexualities of males, queer themed topics such as clothing, pop culture, and sexuality discussions became largely more frequent in use than in the heterosexual male only group.

Figure 8— Heterogeneous Theme Comparison



Similar patterns of normalization occurred when all five corpora were juxtaposed next to each other to compare frequency of discourse conveyor use (figure 9 below). In categories such as jokes, where women had the lowest and queer males had the highest instances of use, frequencies again normalized. For example, when hetero-men were mixed with women, frequency levels of jokes increased from the level it was at with women-only and decreased from the level it was at with hetero-men only. On the other hand, when the groups became mixed, the frequency levels of advice increased from the frequency rate of the homogenous groups.

Figure 9— Heterogeneous Groups Discourse Conveyor Comparison



Perhaps, the groups normalize frequency levels when mixed because of the presence of the oppressive discourse entity of the hegemonic male. Such an ideology could account for an increase in joke use by women when men are present or a decrease in joke one-upping by queer males when hetero-men are present. However, such a postulation does not account for the increase in advice when heterosexual men are present as interlocutors. In fact, the heterosexual male discourse style, as exemplified by the data retrieved from its corpus, appears to be adjustable to the discourse styles of mixed interlocutors by adopting themes, discourse conveyors, and turn-taking strategies not frequently used in heterosexual male only dialogue. Through this adaptability, the high frequency of referencing, and subtle differences in expletive

and adjective use, it appears that when viewed holistically, the hegemonic male is a little less hegemonic and little more cooperative and collaborative in his discourse.

Queer men

The legacy of the queer male portrayed in scholarship and media is oftentimes an ironic metaphor of the subjugation that defines his existence-- a being that desires to be accepted and normalized into society but is regulated to the periphery of the social order by his differences, and thus those differences are perpetuated and reinforced by his dress, his mannerisms, and his language all which contribute to the cycle of an anomalous paradox. The language which defines a queer man, or the language of what a queer man is supposed to be—lisped, sexual, flamboyant—is not necessarily the language adopted by all individuals who identify as queer. However, it is a known language, one that is indigenously endemic for some but a performance for others, a language that for the latter can be turned on and off. On many occasions I've asked myself, what constitutes this language? What are the elements which stigmatize it as being queer or gay? In the discursive causality of how things came to be, these are the questions which provided original sustenance for the origins of this thesis.

Baker states that queer discourse goes beyond phonological recognition; the queerness is inextricably bound to the linguistic and discourse elements that constitute queer speech (2008). The first step in measuring the corpus to identify these elements was to identify the word count. The culmination of this word count resulted in queer males eliciting enough information to produce almost an entire extra hour's worth of dialogue in relativity to the word count of females and heterosexual males. My first point of observation is that gay men can talk...a lot. Next, I

identified the tropes which the words exist under in queer speech. The most frequently used themes of gay men are identified as non-cerebral or other, people (non-gossip), clothing, party/drinking/drugs, and relationship/dating/sex; whereas gay men tended to avoid conversations about sports, family, and gossip (see figure 1 above). These results did not diverge from Leap's observations on queer discourse where he identified clothing, people, and sex as frequent topics discussed by gay men (1994).

Leap also observed that gay men convey their themes through stories, jokes, sexual innuendos, and game playing (1994). The results from the corpus demonstrate that queer men use a highly interactive system of 'one-upping' each other with jokes. In fact, half of the jokes elicited in 10 hours of speech were instances of 'one-upping.' The corpus also revealed that mixed in between the joke layering gay men provide each other with a lot of advice (see figure 2 above). Tannen (1990) and Coates (1994) explain this system of 'one-upping' as a hierarchal means of attaining power and establishing status in a conversation; however, I did not find any evidence to support this claim.

This construct of mutually creating dialogue is further exemplified by the high frequency of appearance of turn-taking strategies such as clarity question and answer dialogue, jokes, and statements which seek to add information to the speech of another speaker. Gay men compiled over 2,000 more instances of turn-taking and breaks in the floor than women and heterosexual men which averages to 15 turns per minute (see figure 3 above). Gay men did not exhibit the same high frequency of use of lengthy laughter as the other two groups. Perhaps, this is due to

the high involvement of layering in conversation. When something genuinely funny is said, oftentimes, another humorous utterance immediately follows the utterance before it.

Jacobs (1996), Leap (1994), Harvey (2000), and Baker (2008) have all identified referencing as a definitive feature of queer speech. Harvey contributes the strategy of referencing as the nexus of camp—a colloquial term for queerly themed humor. The corpus indicates that gay men use female and sexual imagery references at relatively high frequency rates.

All three groups used a nearly equivalent number of expletives; however, gay men used the most frequent numbers of misandric and homophobic based expletives (see figure 4 above). The results of this data might be misleading due to the duplicity of many of the expletives. For example, ‘fag’ is often used as a term of endearment.

Gay men accounted for the least number of adjectives used amongst the three groups. Perhaps, there is no room for adjectives in the quick banter and turn-taking at the discourse level. Gay men did compile the highest frequency of use of color descriptive adjectives, though not at a very significant level (see figure 5 above). Adjective use was accounted for when hedges were calculated for frequency. Gay men used a very high frequency of hedges with the word ‘like’ comprising 62% of all hedges spoken by queer males.

In testing Tannen’s politeness features, gay men more or less operated under the same frequency rates as heterosexual men. Questions and requests were more frequently created with the ‘do’ auxiliary as opposed to modality (see figure 6 above).

When verbs were measured, activity and mental verbs accounted for the highest frequencies of verb use. Interestingly, gay men used more than two times as many existence verbs than women and five times as many as heterosexual men (see figure 7 above). Although, this speculation is not conclusive, perhaps the large number of existence verbs is due to a gay man's need to explain his social positioning in the world because of some internal frustration with his relationship to the confines of society. Future research will have to seek to investigate and attempt to answer these questions and assumptions.

After reviewing and analyzing the data from the homogenous corpora, I was particularly interested in the dynamic between queer men and heterosexual men when engaged in dialogue, principally when examining turn-taking strategies. The homogeneous corpora depicted the queer male discourse environment as a highly interactive and somewhat codified system of communication. I was interested to see what would happen to the data once interlocutors who were not part of the sexualized group were present. The results demonstrated that turn-taking strategies largely stayed at the same frequencies for all measurable categories except for clarity and answers. Since heterosexual males are privy in the knowledge behind 'one-upping', frequency of jokes did not significantly change when the groups were mixed. Clarity and answer strategies of turn-taking are also heavily layered upon other speaker's utterances in a similar fashion as 'one-upping' though without the explicit cadence of humor. Clarity and answer turn-taking does not have to be humorous but it oftentimes is implicitly funny. Conversation 8 of queer men talking about mutual acquaintances depicts this strategy:

Conversation 8 (QM)

J: we have hired new bus people and hostesses but very rarely only cause on the them cause they moved away they didn't quit and he's only fired 2 people

T:

A? <clarity>

J:

since I've been there. A is one of

them. <answer>

B: Why did he fire A? <clarity>

J: Actually we started a movement called Firea. <answer>

B: Wait you set her on fire? <clarity>

J: easier than drowning her <answer>

T: Oh my God

J: We'd say Firea. cause she had no idea what we were talking about cause we were trying to start a movement to get her fired cause we all hated her. <answer>

B: Was she a bad server? <clarity>

Dialogue such as Conversation 8 is common amongst queer males; it is highly involved and occurs very quickly. For those who are not accustomed to this style of communication, the rapid turns and misleading questions can be confusing. For this reason, I attribute the frequency of the clarity and answer strategy to have decreased when the groups were mixed since the heterosexual men were not necessarily all versed in this discourse strategy

Conclusion

The results produced from this study demonstrate many interrelated and idiosyncratic features of how people speak based upon their gender and sexuality. These results indicate that women and men do indeed speak differently and that sexuality, as far as men are concerned, effects language use within a particular gender group. Queer men, commonly thought of as 'feminine' in their speech, collectively comprise their own language variety group, and in fact, if correlated, more closely resemble the discourse features of heterosexual males than females. On the other hand, heterosexual men, who are often thought of as being imperious in their speech, appeared to be adaptable to the conversational nuances indicative of the gender and sexuality of their interlocutors.

The uniqueness of this study exists in its methodology. Previous research which has attempted to answer how men, women, and queer individuals speak has made speculative assumptions based upon generalized observations. Contrarily, this study displays cumulative results derived from a diverse demographic and a quantitative analysis to produce specific answers to how a gender or sexuality represents itself through language. The use of corpus-based data allows this study to eliminate many of the demographic variables which are present when observing a small sample of data; thus, a more diverse and holistic sample of the population is represented and measured. Also, corpus-based and quantitative approaches eliminate the observer bias in analysis. For example, by not directly observing the participants, I, the observer, am not able to interpret or misinterpret utterances which might cause me to take sides or generalize data. Quantitative results, if acquired with a solid methodology, do not require an extravagant subjective interpretation; the numerical validity speaks by itself.

Limitations of Research

I've demonstrated that corpus and quantitative analysis are invaluable tools in determining how a particular group of people use language. However, such analysis does have its limitations. For example, when I was measuring referencing and expletives, some degree of subjective interpretation and qualitative analysis must be incorporated into a study of these features. The factors which determine a reference and an expletive cannot necessarily be analyzed quantitatively without first undergoing extensive qualitative analysis. For this reason, I cannot state that these two portions of the study are entirely quantitatively based. In order to analyze referencing and expletives, a more extensive study needs to be conducted which creates an index

of the discourse and lexical features which constitute a reference and an expletive. This paradox was exposed in my research by the dynamic ontology of words such as ‘dude’ and ‘bitch’.

It is also difficult to make concrete assumptions based on the data from the heterogeneous groups. The corpus in these groups is a composite of female and heterosexual male speech as well as heterosexual male speech and queer speech; therefore, the gender and sexuality groups were not analyzed separately in this portion of the study and only language trends from the group as a whole are reported in this thesis. For this reason, it is difficult to draw any overarching conclusions from this data because the data does not reflect language use solely by females when mixed with heterosexual males nor does it reflect language use solely of heterosexual males when females are present. In order to make more concrete conclusions and assumptions the gender and sexuality groups need to be isolated within the corpus; for example, female language use needs to be separated from heterosexual male language use within the mixed group corpus. The same methodology needs to be applied to mixed heterosexual male and queer male groups. The difficulty in this latter dynamic is isolating the voices by sexuality. For future research, I plan to separate the groups, as described above, to be able to make more tangible conclusions to help answer what happens to language when conversational groups are of mixed gender and sexuality.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study has mostly operated under a parameter of dissecting how people speak in regards to gender and sexuality as opposed to the more abstract concept of why people speak like a man, like a woman, or like a queer man. It is difficult to find a study in the gender linguistics

discipline, or the entire field of linguistics, which does not comment upon the why of speech. Until recently, most of the literature involving gendered speech has operated under a Foucault-like construct where heterosexual men hold the power in conversations and subversive groups such as females and queers exist in reaction to a hegemonic control of language. While I acknowledge the potential credence of such an assumption, there is little quantitative evidence to support this theory. In fact, the quantitative results from this thesis seem to contradict the hegemonic theory. Perhaps, the reasoning for the contradiction could be explained temporally since much of the theoretical assumptions were made in a post-structural reaction from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Contemporary power structures are becoming more gender neutral as many strides have been made, politically and socially, to come to a balance of power.

Discursively, this balance could feasibly be displayed in modern language use. I would like for future research to examine the language of women and the language of men in power, using similar methodology, corpus and quantitative, as in this thesis. Perhaps, the hegemonic language observed and chronicled by past studies, was used by men, men who are in power. It would be interesting to see if women who are in power use similar or idiosyncratic discourses of power.

Also, the majority of my research was conducted in urban areas such as New York City, San Francisco, Seattle, New Orleans, Los Angeles, and Washington D.C. Future studies could examine the language of men and women dependent upon region. Perhaps, in rural and mid-west areas women and men speak with the hegemonic-subversive speech chronicled by Lakoff, Tannen, and Coates.

I would like to continue contributing to this corpus. I believe that with corpus analysis many of the decades-long questions pertaining to sociolinguistics can be answered or at least provide more fodder for debate. Language evolves, this is undeniable, and with it technology, perceptions, power structures, and conceptual frameworks of gender. Many assumptions were made decades ago about gender and language which might have been accurate at the time but time, language, and the above features are not constant; all are subjected to a genealogy of evolution, a multi-dimensional helix of change. The discursive factors which shape language use are no less complex and no less exempt from the same environmental prolix which affect gender, perception, performance, and power. Corpus analysis allows us to quantify and locate the language while simultaneously accounting for context. It is my hope that future research incorporates similar methodology and analytical tools for a more exact and multi-dimensional interpretation of socio and gender linguistics.

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