

Sample Unit

Introduction Unit A8: Approaches and Methodologies

Reflection Task

Make notes on the following:

- with what academic disciplines, in addition to linguistics, do you associate gender and language study?
- is gender and language study characterised by particular sorts of data and data collection?
- what do you see as the role of feminism in gender and language study?

'Gender and language' is not an approach. Rather, it can best be described as a topic, or, more broadly, 'field' of study. Within linguistics, gender and language study has links not only with sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and language change, as we have seen, but also with stylistics, pragmatics, literacy, the history of language and even historical and descriptive linguistics (e.g. Corbett, 1991).

As a field, gender and language is highly diverse, as recent work illustrates.

The programme of the IGALA3 (International Gender and Language Association) Conference of 2004 included presentations on:

- Discursive creation of gendered bodies in internet chats
- Institutionalising norms and roles of gender and sexuality in a call-in radio program
- Positioning a mature and normative heterosexual self in 'attraction talk' in 10-year-old boys
- 'Half-Japanese' adolescent girls' display of multi-ethnic and feminine cultural capital
- Language, gender and world view: oral narrative in a Berber village
- Are psychotherapy texts gendered?

- The portrayal of women in selected Polish print advertisements

As these titles suggest, current gender and language study is interdisciplinary. It crosses the boundaries of linguistics into, *inter alia*, women's studies, Queer studies, literature, philosophy, psychology, cultural and media studies, politics, history, religious studies and education. Probably associated most closely with the social sciences, arts and humanities, gender and language issues are found also in law and management and even in the natural sciences, at least in their reportage (Crowther and Leith, 1995). Students of gender and language often find the field fascinating *because* of its wide-ranging sphere of relevance. Much informs gender and language, and gender and language potentially informs much else.

Because gender and language is not a unitary approach, but rather a 'field', it can and does utilise a whole range of related theoretical approaches (for example, Conversation analysis, Critical discourse analysis, Corpus linguistics), epistemologies (views of what counts as knowledge) and methodologies.

In the 'methodologies' camp we might include:

- introspection (see Unit 2)
- sociolinguistic surveys (see Unit 2)
- focus groups (see Unit 5)
- observation, and collection/analysis of naturally-occurring spoken data (see Unit 6)

As regards 'approaches', we first look here at Corpus linguistics, and then, comparatively, at Critical discourse analysis, Conversation analysis and Feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis.

Corpus linguistics

Corpus linguistics is exemplified in Extension Unit B8 (B8.1). A corpus is a substantial body of systematically-collected and recorded data, spoken or written. So, for example, we could have a 'classroom data corpus' or a corpus of magazine problem pages. Corpora of spoken language are often created through demographic sampling (for example, people from certain age or socio-economic groups), audiorecording, and transcription. This body of data is then normally electronically scanned, so that individual words or phrases can then be retrieved, and seen as a set. Such a corpus can be 'tagged', not only for syntactic or lexical features, but for speaker features such as age, sex, social class, occupation, place of birth, current domicile and ethnicity. An electronic corpus can be made available via the internet, and can thus provide a shared resource for analysts. (The corpus of academic spoken English MICASE, for example, exemplified in Unit 2, is free and thus widely-available <http://www.hti.umich.edu/m/micase/>).

Corpus linguistics provides a valuable way to create a large body of data. It also provides answers to questions about, for example, whether two words or grammatical structures ever occur together, how frequently (relative to other combinations, or in particular genres), and with what range of uses and meanings. Longitudinally, it can provide information about early uses of new words, and increases and decreases of certain phrasings over time. And, because it can be tagged for speaker sex, a corpus is an excellent source of data for quantitative 'gender differences' studies (e.g. of whether women or men tend to use a particular term more, or differently).

Due to the lack of *context* (other than the few words of co-text), corpus data cannot straightforwardly show the workings of the construction of gender. Similarly, corpora could never be used in conversation analysis (CA). Corpora can and have however been used in CDA studies (e.g. Stubbs, 2001), addressing complaints of critics that CDA findings are based on very small amounts of specially-selected texts. These large quantities of data also allow statistical significance to be established, i.e. to show the likelihood of any 'differences' having occurred by chance. The most well known gender and language scholars to use corpus linguistics are Janet Holmes and Robert Sigley (e.g. 2002 a,b; see also Introduction Unit 5), for example in their work on use of *girl* and *woman* in workplace talk.

Other approaches to gender and language study

Other 'approaches' characteristically used in gender and language study include:

- variationist sociolinguistics (i.e. linguistic variation within a community which correlates with some aspect of social structure) (see Unit 1)
- ethnography (see Unit 6)
- feminist theory and Queer theory (see Unit 6)
- (critical) discourse analysis (see Unit 7)
- feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis (FPDA) (see Unit 7)
- conversation analysis (see Unit 8)
- discursive psychology (see Unit 9)
- pragmatics (tag questions, compliments, apologies)
- psychoanalytical theory

Relationships between theoretical approach and methodology are not clear cut. Some approaches – perhaps ethnography, variationist sociolinguistics and, particularly, conversation analysis (CA) - can be said to have broadly agreed-on associated methodologies. Critical discourse analysis (CDA), in

contrast, can be seen as a broad theoretical approach, potentially 'served' by a range of methodologies - analysis of particular written texts, but also corpus analysis and even ethnography. Feminist post-structural discourse analysis (FPDA) is, at the time of writing, very new, but Baxter has suggested a set of principles and procedures (one chapter in her book is entitled 'Getting to grips with FPDA'), as well as two concrete illustrative case studies. FPDA ideally uses a combination of observation (and audio- or videorecording) of naturally-occurring data, interviews with participants, *and* discourse analysis of the associated transcripts (see Extension Unit B7.2).

Investigations in gender and language study can be qualitative, quantitative, or both. (It is worth making the point that both data *and* analysis can be qualitative or quantitative.) Much early work (e.g. Zimmerman and West, 1975; Fishman, 1975, 1983) included a significant quantitative component. And although this work is sometimes decried for its concentration on numbers (and correlations of frequencies with the 'variable' of speaker sex) rather than on possible interpretations of what was said, this quantitative work allowed later studies to develop in fruitful qualitative directions, empirical bases (albeit using rather limited data) having already been established.

Different approaches and methodologies characteristically use certain *types of data*, and perhaps *genres*. Critical discourse analysis may work best with written texts designed for public consumption, and often texts are chosen for their possible ideological intent. Conversation analysis (obviously) requires spoken data. Conventionally, this data has been naturally-occurring, although some 'applied CA' uses elicited data (e.g. ten Have, 1999). Elicited spoken data, for example from focus groups or one-to-one interviews, is however

more closely associated with discursive psychology, for which participants' 'accounts' are crucial for the 'interpretive repertoires' and 'ideological dilemmas' they suggest. (We look more closely at questions of data in Unit 9.)

Language, gender and feminism

Slicing the gender and language cake another way, to these 'approaches' we can add (though by no means unproblematically) the categories 'feminist' and 'non-feminist'. Language and gender study does not *entail* a feminist approach. Neither Haas nor Labov nor Trudgill, or even Milroy or Gal, would have claimed to have been doing feminist research (some might have actively distanced themselves from it). And early research into sex differences in child language acquisition (e.g. Gleason, 1973) was not informed by a feminist perspective. The field was however given a major impetus by the 'second wave' of the Women's Movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and much gender and language research since then can be characterised as 'broadly feminist'.

Different *feminisms* have often been translated into different forms of feminist research. To see gender differences in language use as an effect or perpetuation of masculine power, for example, may be an epistemological manifestation of radical or perhaps socialist feminism; to see any such differences as 'linguistic sub-cultural differences', with women and men showing different strengths, and power playing a minimal role (if any), a manifestation of liberal feminism (Cameron, 1992).

It is some time since Deborah Cameron had the experience at a job interview of hearing writing a book called *Feminism and Linguistic Theory* compared to

writing one about linguistics and organic gardening (1992: 2). The question now for gender studies has moved from 'whether linguistics?' to 'which linguistics?' This range of approaches, methodologies and data types raises an important question for feminist-oriented gender and language study: is a particular approach or methodology particularly *appropriate* (or indeed inappropriate) for feminist gender and language study? In this respect, we find books such as *Doing Feminist Research* (ed. Helen Roberts, 1981), *Nonsexist Research Methods* (Margrit Eichler, 1991), and *Breaking Out: Feminist Consciousness and Feminist Research* (Liz Stanley and Sue Wise (1983), and articles such as 'Can there be a feminist ethnography?' (Stacey, 1988). More recently, Ros Gill wrote: "It seems to me that discourse analysis has an enormous amount to offer feminists" but adds "I want to argue that there is no *necessary* connection between discourse analysis and a progressive or critical politics" (1995: 167, 168; Gill's italics). On the other side of the coin, Stokoe and Smithson (Extension Unit B8.2) claim that "no method is *prima facie* incompatible with feminism (Brannen, 1992; Maynard and Purvis, 1994; Stanley and Wise, 1983)". Certainly it is not difficult to imagine how different approaches might each contribute to feminist ends.

Discourse analysis has both constituted and been the main 'beneficiary' of the 'linguistic turn' in the social sciences, including feminist theory (see Cameron, 1998). Cameron herself compares 'running commentary' types of analysis with 'formal analysis'. She suggests that there can be 'good' examples of each in feminist research, and against this backdrop of methodological diversity identifies a different question: "how do we persuade one another that

a given *interpretation* is more or less valid, insightful, useful?" (1998: 970; my italics).

Post-structuralism is hotly debated (in Gill's chapter and elsewhere), in terms of whether it really means that 'anything goes' - for example, whether the account of the rapist who pleads not guilty is as good as that of the woman he raped (in which case it cannot be seen as an appropriate feminist epistemology or theoretical approach). Judith Baxter's 'Feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis' (Extension Unit B7.2) addresses and redresses precisely this question. Conversation analysis has also witnessed a lengthy and heated debate in *Discourse and Society* about its suitability for feminist study. Initiated by Schegloff and Wetherell in 1998, subsequent contributions include work from feminist conversation analyst Celia Kitzinger, and from Elizabeth Stokoe and Janet Smithson, who argue not only that CA can be used for feminist purposes, but also that it has something unique to contribute (see Extension Units B8.2 and B8.3). Indeed, CA appears to be undergoing something of a revival in (feminist) gender and language study.

The same is less true, however, of Critical discourse analysis (see also Introduction Unit A7). With its critiques of the workings of power and dominance, CDA might appear initially to be the most 'obvious' approach to feminist gender and language study. As Wodak points out, "Many proposals and basic assumptions of feminist linguistics relate to and overlap with principles of critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis" (1997: 3). These include notions of researcher *commitment*, broad shared understandings of oppressive gender relations, and a recognition of the associations between masculinity, power and dominance, and between femininity and

powerlessness. There is, nevertheless, a surprising lacuna here. Several articles and chapters report studies which have used CDA (e.g. Caldas-Coulthard (1995, 1996), Bergvall and Remlinger (1996)), and several contributions in Wodak's collection *Gender and Discourse* (1997) and Litosseliti and Sunderland's (2002) collection *Gender Identity and Discourse Analysis* are explicitly or can be seen as forms of CDA. There is, however, to date, no monograph on CDA, gender and language (as Cameron noted in her 1998 'Review essay' on 'Gender, language and discourse'), and the first edited collection on the topic has only recently been published (Lazar, 2005).

One reason for this lacuna may be mistrust. Cameron characterises CDA as

an area of work in linguistics ... to which feminists have made significant contributions, although its precise relationship to feminism is difficult to pin down: it is one of those broadly progressive projects whose founders and dominant figures are nevertheless all straight white men, and Wilkinson and Kitzinger (1995) specifically remark on these men's failure to give credit to feminists by citing their work (1998: 970).

Another reason may be CDA's concern with the material, and a rejection of the (post-structuralist) notion that discourse is radically constitutive. And a third may be that CDA is not seen as theoretically able to deal with possibilities of power and dominance as fluctuating. Comparing CDA with Feminist post-structuralist Discourse Analysis (FPDA), Baxter refers to FPDA's

more complex perceptions of the ambiguities and unevenness of power. While CDA is more likely to polarise the argument casting males as villains and females as victims, FPDA is more likely to argue

that females are multiply located and cannot be so dichotomously cast as powerless, disadvantaged or victims (2003: 55).

Whether this is a fair characterisation of CDA is a matter for debate. However, in Baxter's development of FPDA, power is multiple, potentially enabling and – temporarily – associated with 'traditionally oppressed' groups as well as the 'traditional' oppressors (see Baxter, 2003, for a fuller discussion of the similarities and differences between CDA and FPDA).

Relationships with research participants

Reflection Task

In any empirical work you have done in relation to a particular group of people (excluding colleagues), how would you characterise the relationship between them and you? How do you refer to them in your work? What was their role in the different aspects and phases of your research?

Yet another way of 'slicing the cake' in terms of approach is to look politically at the relations between researchers and those they are researching. In a 1992 collection, *Researching Language: Issues of Power and Method*, five applied linguists, Deborah Cameron, Elizabeth Frazer, Penelope Harvey, Ben Rampton and Kay Richardson, identify three positions: 'ethics', 'advocacy' and 'empowerment'. 'Ethics' is the weakest of the three, entailing such practices as minimising damage, offsetting inconvenience to research participants, and documenting the contribution of the 'researched'. This is a 'research *on*' model, in which the researchers do not feel accountable to their 'subjects'.

If researchers do decide to make themselves accountable, they may locate themselves in the 'Advocacy' position, when the researcher researches *for* as well as on his or her 'subjects'. (Labov's role in the Ann Arbor 'Black English' trial of 1979 is cited here: Labov acted as an 'expert witness' in court by showing that African Vernacular Black English was an actual language variety, divergent from standard English, spoken by many African American children at the school, but not their teachers. The parents eventually won their case that the specific educational needs of their children were not being met.)

In the third approach, 'Empowerment', the researcher does research 'on, for and with' research participants, addressing the participants' *own* agendas and sharing knowledge gained, in recognition that this may also enhance the research.

Without claiming that their own studies are 'models for empowering research', the authors of *Researching Language* provide case studies, in which they include consideration of the extent to which their work can be said to be characterised by the three approaches.

In Extension Unit B8, we look at extracts from work representing two different approaches to gender and language study. (Feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis (FPDA) was a topic of Extension Unit B7.) Extension Unit B8.1 includes an extract from an article by Paul Rayson, Geoffrey Leech and Mary Hodges (1997) on corpus linguistics as a methodology to look at words most frequently used by women, and by men. B8 continues with an argued account of how the theoretical approach of conversation analysis (CA) is

relevant to gender study, by Elizabeth Stokoe and Janet Smithson (2001) (B8.2), and the Conversation analysis of some data relation to gender and sexuality by Celia Kitzinger (2000) (B8.3).

Extension Unit B8: Approaches and Methodologies (7,857)

In Extension Unit B8 we look at examples of what might be seen as one methodology (or ‘tool’), and one approach. The extracts come from three articles: one on corpus linguistics, the methodology (B8.1), and two on conversation analysis (CA), the approach (B8.2, B8.3).

B8.1 Corpus linguistics

Rayson, Paul, Leech, Geoff and Hodges, Mary (1997) ‘Social differentiation in the use of English vocabulary: some analyses of the conversational component of the British National Corpus’. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*: 2/1: 133-152.

In B8.1, Rayson, Leech and Hodges investigate ‘social differentiation’ in the use of English vocabulary through the spoken English sub-corpus of the British National Corpus. This differentiation includes ‘gender’ as a binary category, and it is the section of the article on gender which is reproduced here. Rayson *et al.* looked at words most characteristic of male and of female speech, use of family terms, particular parts of speech (common nouns, proper nouns, pronouns and verbs).

Before you read

If you were asked to suggest which words women tend to use more than men, and *vice versa*, could you do this? If so, note these down. Are you thinking of certain *groups* of women/men here?

If you cannot do this, does this mean that you are not aware of any such tendencies? Or is there a different reason?

1.INTRODUCTION

.... The British National Corpus (BNC) is a c. 100-million-word corpus of present-day British English, containing a c. 10-million-word subcorpus of spoken language recorded in the period 1991–1993. The spoken subcorpus, in its turn, is subdivided into a part sampled by demographic methods (the “Conversational Corpus”) and a part sampled by context-governed methods.

The Conversational Corpus, consisting of 4 552 555 words, was collected by the following method. A market-research firm, the British Market Research Bureau, sampled the population of the UK (over the age of 15) using well-tried methods of social survey research. Individuals taking part in the project were equipped with a high-quality Walkman sound recorder, and recorded any linguistic transactions in which they engaged during a period of two days. These individuals, whom we will henceforth call “respondents”, numbered 153 and were sampled in order to obtain a good representation of the population of the UK, given the unavoidable practical limitation in the number of respondents, according to:

- Region: south, midland, north
- Gender: male, female
- Age: 15–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45–59, 60 and over
- Social Group: A, B, C1, C2, D, E

In addition, respondents undertook to obtain the permission of other speakers with whom they engaged in conversation and to note for each speaker details of gender, age, social group, etc. Thus the Conversational Corpus provides an unparalleled resource for investigating, on a large scale, the conversational behavior of the British population in the 1990s

2. Gender variation

Using the whole of the Conversational Corpus material for which gender of speaker is indicated, we find that female speakers have a larger share of the corpus than male speakers according to a number of different measures. Firstly, there is a small built-in bias in the corpus, in that 75 female respondents but only 73 male respondents were enlisted as volunteers to participate in the collection of data. In addition, female speakers overall took a larger share of the language collected, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Distribution of the Conversational Corpus between female and male speakers*

	Female speakers	Male speakers
Number of speakers	561	536
Number of turns	250 955	179 844
Number of words spoken	2 593 452	1 714 443

Number of turns per speaker	447.33	335.53
Number of words per turn	10.33	9.53

Not only were there more female respondents, but also more female speakers, who on the whole took more turns and longer turns than the male speakers. All this led to a greater female than male representation in the Conversational Corpus. It should be borne in mind, therefore, in the following tables, that for every 100 word tokens spoken by men in the demographic corpus, 151 were spoken by women. Because of this disparity, the normalized frequency of each word is presented in the following tables in the form of a percentage of all word tokens (M% = percentage of the number of word tokens spoken by males; F% = percentage of the number of word tokens spoken by females). The χ^2 value is based on comparison of such normalized frequencies. The 25 most significant words showing overrepresentation in male and female speech are shown in Tables 2 and 3, in order of significance.

Table 2. *Words most characteristic of male speech*⁹

Word	Males	M%	Females	F%	χ^2
fucking	1401	0.08	325	0.01	1233.1
er	9589	0.56	9307	0.36	945.4
the	44617	2.60	57128	2.20	698.0
yeah	22050	1.29	28485	1.10	310.3
aye	1214	0.07	876	0.03	291.8
right	6163	0.36	6945	0.27	276.0
hundred	1488	0.09	1234	0.05	251.1
fuck	335	0.02	107	0.00	239.0
is	13608	0.79	17283	0.67	233.3
of	13907	0.81	17907	0.69	203.6
two	4347	0.25	5022	0.19	170.3
three	2753	0.16	2959	0.11	168.2
a	28818	1.68	39631	1.53	151.6
four	2160	0.13	2279	0.09	145.5
ah	2395	0.14	2583	0.10	143.6
no	14942	0.87	19880	0.77	140.8
number	615	0.04	463	0.02	133.9
quid	484	0.03	339	0.01	124.2
one	9915	0.58	12932	0.50	123.6
mate	262	0.02	129	0.00	120.8
which	1477	0.09	1498	0.06	120.5
okay	1313	0.08	1298	0.05	119.9

that	31014	1.81	43331	1.67	114.2
guy	211	0.01	95	0.00	108.6
da	459	0.03	338	0.01	105.3
yes	7102	0.41	9167	0.35	101.0

Reflection Task

What overall 'profile' of masculine and feminine speech does Table 2 suggest? What do you think about the fact that family terms tended to be used more by female speakers?

Table 3. Words most characteristic of female speech

Word	Males	M%	Females	F%	χ^2
she	7134	0.42	22623	0.87	3109.7
her	2333	0.14	7275	0.28	965.4
said	4965	0.29	12280	0.47	872.0
n't	24653	1.44	44087	1.70	443.9
I	55516	3.24	92945	3.58	357.9
and	29677	1.73	50342	1.94	245.3
to	23467	1.37	39861	1.54	198.6
cos	3369	0.20	6829	0.26	194.6
oh	13378	0.78	23310	0.90	170.2
Christmas	288	0.02	1001	0.04	163.9
thought	1573	0.09	3485	0.13	159.7
lovely	414	0.02	1214	0.05	140.3
nice	1279	0.07	2851	0.11	134.4
mm	7189	0.42	12891	0.50	133.8
had	4040	0.24	7600	0.29	125.9
did	6415	0.37	11424	0.44	109.6
going	3139	0.18	5974	0.23	109.0
because	1919	0.11	3861	0.15	105.0
him	2710	0.16	5188	0.20	99.2
really	2646	0.15	5070	0.20	97.6
school	501	0.03	1265	0.05	96.3
he	15993	0.93	26607	1.03	90.4
think	4980	0.29	8899	0.34	88.8
home	734	0.04	1662	0.06	84.0
me	5182	0.30	9186	0.35	83.5

Perhaps the most notable (though predictable) finding illustrated in Table 2 is the tendency for taboo words ("swear words") to be more characteristic of male speech than female speech.

(This tendency is found not only with *fucking* but also with other “four-letter words” lower down the list: *shit* $\chi^2 = 37.4$, *hell* $\chi^2 = 22.8$, *crap* $\chi^2 = 44.3$.)

Reflection Task

Do the (quite striking) gender tendencies in use of ‘taboo’ words correspond to your own experience?

Another tendency is for males to use number words: not only *hundred* ($\chi^2 = 251.1$), and *one* ($\chi^2 = 123.6$) but also, for example, *three* $\chi^2 = 168.2$, *two* $\chi^2 = 170.3$, *four* $\chi^2 = 145.5$. Females, on the other hand, make strikingly greater use of the feminine pronoun *she/her/hers* and also of the first-person pronoun *I/me/my/mine* (see Table 4).¹³

Table 4. Use of some pronouns in female speech

Word	Males	M%	Females	F%	χ^2
she	7134	0.42	22626	0.87	3109.7
her	2333	0.14	7275	0.28	965.4
hers	26	0.00	110	0.00	24.3
I	55516	3.24	92945	3.58	357.9
me	51882	0.30	9186	0.35	8305
mine	505	0.03	818	0.03	1.5

As Table 2 shows, men are more likely to use the filled-pause marker *er* and certain informal interjections or word-isolates such as *yeah*, *aye*, *okay*, *ah* ($\chi^2 = 143.6$), *eh* ($\chi^2 = 77.5$), and *hmm* ($\chi^2 = 28.5$). Women, on the other hand, make more use of *yes* ($\chi^2 = 101.0$), *mm* ($\chi^2 = 133.8$), and *really* ($\chi^2 = 97.6$).

Reflection Task

Do any of these apparent gender tendencies in use of filled-pause markers, interjections and word isolates correspond to your own experience? What might be some possible interpretations here?

The preference for *the* and *of* in male speech in Table 2 may appear more puzzling, but accords with the stronger male preference for nouns (in particular common nouns) over verbs

and pronouns (see Table 7). One would hypothesise, on the basis of figures presented in Table 7 below, that male speech shows a stronger propensity to build noun phrases (including articles and common nouns) where female speech has a tendency to rely more on pronouns and proper nouns.

Many fascinating lexical patterns of gender preference could be followed up here, and their reasons explored, but we will content ourselves with mentioning one other area – that of family relationships – where the sexes are strongly differentiated in lexical preference. On the whole, women are more strongly oriented towards family terms, although there are some interesting exceptions (see Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5. *Some family terms used more by females*

Word	Males	M%	Females	F%	χ^2
mother	272	0.02	627	0.02	34.2
father	115	0.01	307	0.01	27.7
sister	105	0.01	257	0.01	17.6
brother	136	0.01	229	0.01	1.0
daughter	70	0.00	171	0.01	11.6
daddy	353	0.02	624	0.02	5.5
grandma	58	0.00	207	0.01	35.5
aunty/auntie	74	0.00	179	0.01	11.8

Table 6. *Some family terms used more by males*

Word	Males	M%	Females	F%	χ^2
mummy	742	0.04	755	0.03	59.6
mum	1647	0.10	1856	0.07	76.2
son	171	0.01	149	0.01	24.8
dad	941	0.05	1275	0.05	6.6

....

The provisional conclusion of this section is that the differences between male speech and female speech in the Conversational Corpus are pronounced (to judge from χ^2 values, they are greater than differences based on age or social group), but are matters of frequency, rather than of absolute choice. For example, although taboo words are much more frequent in male speech, they are by no means absent from female speech. A further investigation, which we have not been able to carry out, would be to find out how speech in the corpus varies according to the gender of the addressee as well as the gender of the speaker.

After you've read

- to what extent does this article acknowledge that the findings reflect tendencies rather than differences? Identify the words and phrases which make this clear, as well as any which do not. Is corpus linguistics simply a conservative return to the 'gender differences' paradigm?
- how representative are the findings reported here, in terms of gender? (Or, rather, what are they representative of?)

B8.2 Conversation analysis and gender

Stokoe, Elizabeth and Smithson, Janet (2001) 'Making gender relevant: conversation analysis and gender categories in discourse'. *Discourse and Society* 12/2: 217 – 244.

In B8.2, Elizabeth Stokoe and Janet Smithson engage theoretically with the on-running debate in *Discourse and Society* about whether there can be a productive relationship between Conversation analysis and feminism, without compromising either. B8.3 is an extract from an article by Celia Kitzinger, which focuses on 'coming out talk'. This is, Kitzinger claims, "an empirical demonstration of the value of conversation analysis (CA) for feminist research" (2000: 163).

Noting a "culture of exaggeration in [past] sex difference research", Stokoe and Smithson point to the more recent focus on gender being located in interactions, its 'performative nature', and the importance of 'gender's discursive articulation'.

However, they also critique research which focuses on the 'doing' of gender, since

this still entails there being ‘two genders’: “Contrasting how speakers ‘do’ one of masculinity or femininity involves the production of theories based on gender dualism”. They suggest CA as an alternative (this is where the extract starts), but also highlight the problematic nature of CA for feminist research. The final section of the extract looks at how the CA notion of ‘participants’ orientations’ might be understood in relation to gender.

While you read

Carefully note down some differences between a CA approach, and a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and/or Feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis (FPDA) approach.

... One solution is to interrogate the category of gender *as it appears in people’s talk*, using ethnomethodological principles and the related methodology of conversation analysis (CA). CA constitutes an ‘analytic mentality’ that requires researchers to consider their data without pre-selecting concepts and theories to test or explore (Hester and Eglin, 1997). This means that rather than seeking to impose categories on to the analysis of discursive data (such as ‘gender’, ‘power’), the focus is upon what participants, or *members*, orient to in their discussions. If one wants to make claims about sociological variables such as gender or class, such variables must be shown to be *relevant to the participants*. Conversation analysts argue this approach sets up a less interpretational basis for the analytic claims made because the basis is in ‘people’s own orientation to what’s going on: what they take to be relevant and to be pertinent to the interaction as it proceeds’ (Antaki, 1995: 23). Summarizing the fundamental assumption of this position, Schegloff (1992: 192; emphasis in original) writes:

...showing that some orientation to context is demonstrably relevant to the participants is important ... in order to ensure that what informs the analysis is what is relevant to *the participants in its target event*, and not what is relevant in the first instance to its academic analysts by virtue of the set of analytic and theoretical commitments which they bring to their work.

In his 1997 article, Schegloff challenges a critical discourse analytic (CDA) theorization of gender and interaction and sets out the CA alternative. Consistent with the ideas described above, Schegloff argues that in order to warrant a claim that gender is relevant in interaction, analysts must be able to demonstrate its *relevance for speakers*. There is a small body of work outside the rather inward-looking field of language and gender that adopts such a framework

for explicating members' practices of gender categorization, providing a radically different approach to the study of gender and discourse (Edwards, 1998; Hopper and LeBaron, 1998; Philipsen, 1990/1; Stokoe, 1998; Stringer and Hopper, 1998). From this perspective, no commentary is produced about wider discourses or repertoires that may be drawn upon by the speakers, or the gendered styles of the speakers themselves. The analysis sticks closely to the local context in which the speaker makes gender pertinent.

... we argue that CA is a useful tool for making claims about the relevance of gender in talk-in-interaction because such claims are grounded in speakers' orientations This is in sharp contrast to other work in the field, which imposes analysts' assumptions and categories on to the analysis. However, the application of CA to the study of gender and other social categories has recently generated heated debate, as evidenced in the pages of *Discourse & Society* (Bergvall and Remlinger, 1996; Billig, 1999; Hutebby, 1996; Schegloff, 1997, 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Speer and Potter, 2000; Stokoe, 1998; Van Dijk, 1999; Weatherall, 2000; Wetherell, 1998). We extend this debate by problematizing some of CA's claims and reflect on a number of related points. First, we consider the extent to which the 'analytic stances' of feminism and conversation analysis are compatible. Second, we question whether, as Schegloff (1997) suggests, it is fruitful (or even possible) to rely on descriptions of and orientations to gender solely in participants' terms. Linked to this, we ask what, precisely, counts as an orientation to gender? We suggest that the actual discursive practices of 'attending to', 'making relevant' or 'orienting to' gender remain unspecified in CA. This leads to our final point. While we propose CA is a useful tool for making claims about gender, and that such claims are grounded in speakers' orientations, we suggest that culture and common-sense knowledge, of both members and analysts, are largely unacknowledged and unexplicated resources in CA....

Feminist conversation analysis: an oxymoron?

Davis (1988) starts her feminist conversation analysis of doctor-patient interaction from the position that any interaction between women and men will involve power asymmetry and that this is a 'social fact'. In contrast, a central argument of CA is that analysts should adopt a stance of 'unmotivated looking' when analysing data and thus bring no assumptions, theories or categories to it (Psathas, 1995; Sacks, 1984). Categories should only be understood within the context that is built up by interactants as they display their understandings of emergent social actions. This position has stimulated responses from other analysts of discourse and conversational interaction. For example, Wetherell (1998) has argued that a complete scholarly analysis of data, as opposed to a solely technical analysis, must include a focus both on the argumentative trajectory of talk as displayed in participants' orientations and the broader interpretative resources that members draw upon.

For us, what is problematic about CA's stance is its potential incompatibility with a *feminist* approach to data analysis. We take the position that a key feature of feminist research is the investigation of sexism in society and the political location of the researcher as feminist within the research; as such, no method is *prima facie* incompatible with feminism (Brannen, 1992; Maynard and Purvis, 1994; Stanley and Wise, 1983). However, many feminists have generally eschewed CA as a possible method because of its perceived inability to advance political arguments (discussed by Wetherell, 1998) or for its perceived 'positivism' (Hollway, 1989). As Speer (1999) has shown, recent CA textbooks (for example, Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998; Ten Have, 1999) typically ignore feminist concerns and critiques, although she concludes that there is nothing intrinsic in the type of CA advanced in these texts that would prevent feminists with a critical agenda from using it to ask politically motivated questions. Indeed, feminists such as Davis (1988; see also Ainsworth-Vaughn, 1992; West, 1995) feel entitled to take a broadly critical perspective and combine this with authentic CA-based analyses, something that 'fundamentalist' commentators such as Schegloff might dispute.

A major problem for feminists with using CA is that making claims about approaching data with a 'clean gaze' is a stance within itself, rather than a 'neutral' stance, and imports its own theoretical assumptions (Billig, 1999; Buttny, 1993; Cameron, 1994). Feminist philosophy informs us that it is impossible to maintain an impartial position in any research because analysts inevitably bring their own experiences, cultural background and values to bear on the data (Hollway, 1989; Weatherall, 2000). Feminists also stress the importance of reflexivity and subjectivity in the research process and a political commitment to social change and transformation (Wilkinson, 1997). So whereas CA would argue that if gender is embedded in society then it should be observable in talk, feminists would maintain that it is not only impossible to come to the data 'without bringing any problems to it' (Sacks, 1992) but not even desirable or valid to try. Much feminist work necessarily starts from a certain political perspective and with certain things as axiomatic. Most importantly, we suggest that despite claims to the contrary researchers do not come 'neutrally' to analysis, but bring their cultural (gendered) 'baggage'. At this point in our argument, it seems that CA and feminism are incompatible due to these opposing analytic positions.

GENDER AS A PARTICIPANTS' CATEGORY

We have established that, for conversation analysts, claims that gender is relevant to an interaction can only be made if speakers themselves attend to it. A second issue in the debate, therefore, and one which is largely ignored in the literature, is *what precisely counts* as an orientation to gender? Whereas many authors have written about 'participants' orientations', 'member's categories' and so on, the actual discursive practices involved in 'attending to', 'making relevant', 'indexing' or 'orienting to' gender remain unspecified. Conversation

analysts describe both explicit and implicit ways that speakers might demonstrate their orientation to gender. But what mechanisms are involved in this process, for both speakers and analysts?

Schegloff sets out his position on this matter in the recent series of exchanges in *Discourse & Society*. For instance, in his analysis of 'Marsha and Tony' (1997: 173), he suggests how CDAs might describe the interaction 'along gender lines, in which the asymmetries of status and power along gender lines in this society are played out in the interactional arena of interruption and overlapping talk'. In other words, Schegloff objects to the assumption that gender can be read off interactional patterns, a criticism made of much language and gender research (for example, Cameron, 1992). Consequently, he argues that CDA does not allow for 'the overtly displayed concerns of the participants themselves. ... Such analyses insist instead on characterisations of the parties, the relevancies, and the context, to which the *analyst* is oriented' (1997: 174). This position is echoed in the comments of other conversation analysts. For example, LeBaron (participating in transcribed discussion in Tracy, 1998: 15) argues:

...we should not ... say 'oh, look, here's man and a woman talking; let's look at how they talk; oh, we can make these conclusions about gendered communication'. But rather we should say, 'gender only becomes an issue when the participants themselves make it one and we can point to different things about that'.

Buttny (participating in the same discussion, Tracy, 1998) also argues against the omnirelevance of gender, claiming that a 'gender always matters' position is illogical. Finally, Hopper and LeBaron (1998: 61) claim that 'researchers may specify the relevance of a feature of context (for example, gender) mainly in moments of social interaction in which actors observably orient to that feature'.

The argument, then, is that speakers must show that gender is relevant to them. But *what counts* as an orientation to gender? For Schegloff, 'what counts' is demonstrated in his analysis of 'Chicken Dinner' in which explicit mention of the term 'ladies' during the course of interaction shows how 'gender is relevant here after all' (1997: 182). Other analysts have also described the content of and processes involved in attending to gender in interaction. For example, Stringer and Hopper (1998: 213) explore instances in which speakers use the pseudo-generic *he* when referring to 'sex-unspecified incumbents of traditionally male social categories'. When another speaker problematizes the generic *he*, gender becomes the axis around which the conversation proceeds. Similarly, Hopper and LeBaron (1998) note that in their data, self- or other-repairs of gender references are oriented to the need for gender-inclusive language, promoting the salience of gender as part of the context. In an analysis of couples therapy, Edwards (1998) discusses how participants use different gender references, 'woman' and 'girl', at strategic points in their discussion of the husband's affair. Finally,

Philipsen (1990/1) analyses the gender references in a film script in which a teacher is referred to as such, then as 'Mrs Ganin', 'she' and 'a lady'. The latter three references all index (female) gender as the salient thing about the teacher.

In all of these studies, attending to gender can be defined as *the explicit mention of a gender reference*, such as 'he', 'she', 'ladies', 'girl', or 'woman'. However, this definition seems rather restrictive for, as Ochs (1992) points out, very few words in the English language exclusively index gender. Kitzinger (2000: 171) complains that it would be 'unbearably limiting' if conversation analysts had to rely on such explicit orientations. Schegloff himself acknowledges the potential limitations of such a narrow definition. He writes: 'explicit mention of a category term ... is by no means necessary to establish the relevant orientation by the participants ... orientation to gender can be manifested without being explicitly named or mentioned' (1997: 182). This concession is problematic for, if something is implicit in conversation it is up to the analyst to reveal something that, logically, is not available directly....

Schegloff is not alone in suggesting that gender may be indexed implicitly although, so far, we are no closer to defining what this might mean practically. Weatherall (2000: 287 8) suggests that 'linguistic indexes of gender may occur at every level of language. So, even if gender is not explicitly privileged by participants as relevant to the conversation, it is an omnipresent feature of all interactions'. According to Hopper and LeBaron (1998), these features might include gender-marked names and terms of address and reference. They also argue that 'gender can be indexed as a relevant part of the context by ambiguous words with possible references to sexuality; reference to female appearance or male appearance; or references to female demeanor or male demeanor' (1998: 171). Hopper and LeBaron further suggest that gender-indexing resources might include references to gendered activities (they give the example of 'car mechanics') and conclude that, 'in fact, speakers would experience some difficulty not indexing gender in many utterances' (1998: 171). Finally, a number of authors claim that gender is indexed in English through high or low pitch of voice, intonational qualities, or by using particular vocabulary (Hopper and LeBaron, 1998; Kessler and McKenna, 1978).

What counts as orienting to or indexing gender has therefore shifted, from a restrictive definition comprising explicit gender references to much broader but contestable indexes such as the use of sexist language particles, pitch of voice and intonation, references to sexuality and gendered activities. Implicit indexes are potentially ambiguous, open to disagreement between analysts, and generally more difficult to make claims about. For example, Hopper and LeBaron argue that the activity 'car mechanic' indexes male gender. But there is nothing intrinsic in this term that indexes gender; this example can only be given (and any subsequent

analysis performed on it) if the analyst imports something of their own background knowledge about gendered references and activities....

What can we conclude about this issue of indexing gender? First, we argue that the most straightforward answer to the question ‘what counts?’ is to restrict any claims about the relevance of gender to instances where speakers use explicit gender references: ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘man’, ‘woman’, and so on. Pitch and intonational cues might be omnipresent, but they have to be evidenced as relevant by speakers. To further complicate matters, perhaps there are two types of index or ‘relevancies’ – one where we can simply spot speakers using explicit gender references, but these do not appear relevant to speakers in the ensuing turns at talk, and a second where it is ‘noticed’ in the subsequent interaction. The first of these, as well as pointing to terms such as ‘car mechanic’, references to sexuality and demeanour, requires the import of cultural knowledge on behalf of the analyst. This is problematic for conversation analysts who argue that explanations must be grounded in what participants do and say. CA has a restricted notion of ‘context’ as we have seen

Stokoe and Smithson continue by looking at examples of how this might work, using data from seminar discussions, and, interestingly (since CA conventionally uses naturally-occurring data) focus groups. They also address the question of interpretation – noting that analysts always draw on their own ‘interpretive resources’. They suggest that the analyst can *also* be seen as a ‘member’, sharing cultural understandings.

After you’ve read....

- how many different ways can you think of in which people might be seen as ‘orienting to gender’ in their talk?
- what do you see as the problems with (a) considering gender only as what is ‘oriented to’ in some ways by speakers?, (b) basing ‘findings’ on the analyst’s ‘imposed’ interpretation?
- re-read and carefully consider the last paragraph of the extract, and think of examples of the ‘two types of index’

- do you feel that some theoretical and methodological approaches are more appropriate than others for research into gender and language? If so, which, and why?

B8.3 'Coming out'

Kitzinger, Celia (2000) 'Doing feminist conversation analysis'. *Feminism and Psychology* 10/2: 163 – 193.

Celia Kitzinger has written widely on gender, sexuality (particularly lesbian sexuality) and conversation analysis (CA). Currently she is a Reader in Lesbian and Feminist Psychology. In the first part of her article, like Stokoe and Smithson, she argues in favour of the use of CA for feminist research, challenging the fundamental criticism that CA's social theory is incompatible with feminism. She notes how in CA people are understood as "agents actively engaged in methodological and sanctioned procedures for producing or resisting, colluding with or transgressing, the taken-for-granted social world" (2000: 168) that that CA does not straightforwardly and naively attribute more agency to women than is possible under heteropatriarchy. Kitzinger notes that CA is concerned with people's *own* interpretations, which is also a tenet of much feminist research (women as research 'subjects' rather than 'objects'), and, though it may be unsuitable for 'sex differences' research, can nevertheless serve feminist purposes.

Like Stokoe and Smithson, who proposed that the analyst can be seen as a 'member', sharing cultural understandings, Kitzinger cites the value of the *analyst's* orientations. Her perspective is that

... it would be unbearably limiting to use CA if it meant that I could only describe as ‘sexist’ or ‘heterosexist’ or ‘racist’ those forms of talk to which actors orient as such. Indeed, it is *precisely the fact that sexist, heterosexist and racist assumptions are routinely incorporated into everyday conversations* without anyone noticing or responding to them that way which is of interest to me (2000: 171; Kitzinger’s italics).

A feminist CA “would use this focus on talk to uncover the practical reasoning through which the taken-for-granted world is accomplished (and resisted)” (2000: 173). This constitutes an imaginative bridging of a central concern of CA (the routine incorporation of assumptions into conversation) and the feminist concern that the analyst’s interpretations *are* valuable – indeed, are necessary, to identify such assumptions.

Kitzinger also addresses the feminist concern that CA is ‘too micro’ with a claim that the ‘appropriate question’ is “what, if anything, CA’s ‘micro’ perspective has to offer us in that regard” [i.e. issues of power and oppression] (2000: 173), and then illustrates what it offers with examples of how CA can be used to develop a feminist approach to date rape and to ‘coming out’ talk (shown below). The extract below includes just one case of ‘coming out’ talk, that of ‘Linda’. It follows the identification of a research niche in the lesbian and gay psychology literature for ‘the act of disclosure itself’ – rather than questionnaires or ‘coming out stories’.

While you read

Is it possible for the analyst to consider participants’ orientations *without* drawing on her own orientations?

Doing feminist conversation analysis’

By accident, I happen to have (so far) 12 instances of ‘coming out’ on audiotape. They come from a variety of sources including focus groups and training sessions, but

most ... are taken from small group seminar sessions with undergraduate students, run as part of the 'Human Sexualities' module at Loughborough University, recorded, with students' signed permission and informed consent, for ongoing research by several members of the department on how sexuality is produced through talk. My interest, as a feminist, in this coming out data was initially promoted by what seemed to be a bewildering absence of response to the 'comings out' on the part of the audience (including, in four cases, me). In what I've come to think of as the mundane form of everyday coming out for people in relatively safe environments, nobody expresses disgust, talks about hell fire and damnation, or accuses anyone of being a disgusting pervert – but equally, nobody says 'congratulations!' or 'that's wonderful', or even gives any indication that they've registered the information. And yet I know from other discussions with the students who were coming out in these settings, or who had been the audiences for the comings out of others, that these were intensely important experiences. Coming out was extensively discussed beforehand, experienced as important and significant at the time, and considered newsworthy enough to report to other people afterwards – and yet, at the time the coming out was being done, nobody (me included) reacted to it in this way. There is virtually nothing in the lesbian and gay research literature which addresses the issue of lack of response, nor is there any consideration by feminist or critical psychologists about the political implications of these 'non-responses' to coming out. These, then, are the data extracts to which I am currently applying CA techniques in an attempt to gain a better understanding of how coming out is achieved and reacted to.

In this ... example, I am leading a seminar discussion on intersexuality and the students are discussing how they would feel if they learned that someone they were attracted to was intersex, and the implications of that for their sexual identities. In this context, an undergraduate ('Linda') comes out as having found herself attracted to a woman a few years before. Other than a few 'mms' in response to this information, neither I nor any student in the group gives any re-action at all....

Linda Comes Out

- 01 *Kate:* I think it would change y- your concept of (0.2)
02 of (.) w- what it is that attracts you to somebody
03 (0.2) and i- their sex would n-not not be that feature,
04 perhaps ζ

05 (1.0)
06 *Kate:* Have I explained what I mean? I'm not sure whether I've
07 said what I me(hh)an.
08 *CK:* So y- (0.4) inst- (.) I mean, >I think a lot of lesbians
09 and gay people use that argument anyway which is that
10 it's not< (.)
11 *Kate:* [mmm]
12 *CK:* [the] sex, it's the person [I think]
13 *Kate:* [Yeah, I]
14 think my brain w'ld, it'd do it that way.=
15 *Linda:* = It does, it does have an effect on you because (0.2)
16 if you've thought of yourself as heterosexual (1.0)
17 and you (.) >suddenly find yourself attracted to a woman
18 °it happened to me, < (0.2) a few years ago°
19 it's very (0.8) disturbing, [in a] way it's=
20 *CK:* [mm]
21 *Linda:* =it's (0.2) makes you very anxious (.).
22 because you then don't know how you're supposed to respond=
23 *CK:* —m[mm=
24 *Linda:* = [and (.) if you e- found out that your partner was an
25 intersex you would wonder (.) >how do I respond to this
26 person sexually< I don't know (.) how to approach, how
27 to be romantic how to (.) what this person expects
28 from me, whereas if you (.) think of- you know of
29 yourself as heterosexual, then you know (0.2) the
30 responses you know how to interact.
31 [So it's those kind of]
32 *CK:* [There's a sort of set of] guidelines, aren't there,
33 ?:
34 *CK:* for how to (.) how to do sexual interaction

In this extract, then, Linda tells us that she was sexually attracted to a woman a few years ago, and it creates barely a ripple on the surface of the conversation about intersex....

Many of Harvey Sacks's *Lectures on Conversation* are devoted to explorations of how people methodically achieve recognizable conversational actions without paying some negative price associated with them: how to avoid giving your name without refusing to give it; how to avoid giving help without refusing it; how to get help without requesting it; how to talk in a therapy session without revealing yourself. Part of what my analysis suggests is that many of us have developed a technique which could be called 'How to come out without anybody noticing'.

CA asks that we understand these 'coming out' utterances not only as a matter of information transfer from the person coming out to their co-conversationalists but also as actions in interactional sequence. Conveying new information is not the same thing as announcing news: not all new information conveyed is set up by speakers to be treated as news by the person to whom it is told. There is, for example, a substantial CA literature on breaking 'bad news' (for example, of serious diagnoses and deaths), which shows a range of devices used to avoid one person being heard to tell another bad news, while also ensuring that the information is imparted. In ordinary conversation, news telling can be organized so that the recipient, rather than the bearer of the news, ends up pronouncing it (Schegloff, 1988) and clinicians presenting parents with a diagnosis of mental retardation in their child use particular strategies to present the diagnosis as a simple 'confirmation' of something the parent already knows (Maynard, 1992). So, although the comings out I have collected do, as it happens, convey new information to the listeners about the speakers' sexuality, the first thing to observe, from a CA perspective, is that speakers are not doing 'news announcement'. Undoubtedly, there are some comings out which do news announcement, and which we can recognize as such: they begin with classic phrases (pre-announcements) like 'Mum, I've got something to tell you', or 'Guess what? I'm gay.' News announcement normatively makes relevant from the recipient an acknowledgement of news receipt and assessment of the information so conveyed. When 'comings out' are done as news announcement, then, they would make relevant assessments which can be anything from 'Oh no! it'll kill your father' to 'Oh, that's wonderful, I'm so pleased for you'. But Linda [and CK's other 'comings out'] are not doing news announcements. Instead, information about the speaker's sexuality is

conveyed as an aside, as a list item or as a passing instance or illustration of some other point altogether. *Not* presenting information about one's sexuality as news has decisive consequences for shaping the course of the talk's development. If it is not announced as news, recipients have to work hard to receive it as such.

There's something else, though, about the construction of this coming out talk which makes audience response to it as news unlikely, and that's the location of the information in the turn-taking organization. Turn-taking organization is one of those classic areas of CA with which feminists and other radicals are often most impatient – but it offers a powerful tool for understanding why it is that these recipients of comings out do not react. Information about the speaker's sexuality is often deeply embedded within turn constructional units in ways that would render as interruptive any acknowledgement or assessment of this information from a co-conversationalist.

In Sacks et al.'s (1974) classic paper on turn-taking, they propose a model for conversation which seeks to explain the practices people use for ensuring – with systematic and orderly exceptions explainable by the theory itself – how it is that people in conversation overwhelmingly speak one at a time. The model proposes the existence of turn constructional units (TCUs), which can be whole sentences, phrases or sometimes just words, but which are recognizable (in context) as potentially constituting a complete turn. Each speaker is initially entitled to just *one* of these: after that, another speaker has the right (sometimes the obligation) to speak next. The model is complex and sophisticated and I have oversimplified it radically, but the key point of relevance here is that the turn-taking organization is not indifferent to the size of the turns parties take: rather, its 'underlying (though supercessable) organization is designed to minimize turn size' (Schegloff, 1982: 73) and consequently we need to understand long turns, with lengthy and/or multiple TCUs, as 'achievements and accomplishments' (Schegloff, 1982: 73) which have overcome the inherent bias of the system.

In the coming out episodes, the speaker, the one who is coming out, uses *long* TCUs, and *many* TCUs – and as CA shows us, that is something which has to be worked at: it does not just happen. Conversation analysts have documented some of the techniques people use when they want to keep speaking for a long time. Long TCUs can be accomplished by using particular sentence structures (such as 'if/then') which are hearably not complete until a second part of the sentence (such as the 'then' part) has been produced. People can project a long TCU simply by taking a big in-

breath: studies show that in-breaths put hearers on the alert for a long (possibly multi-unit) turn. Multi-unit turns can be secured at the beginning of a speaker's turn by making a bid to tell a story ('did you hear about the time when ...'); by using a list launcher ('four things ...'); and by using 'markedly first verbs' (such as 'I thought ...' or 'I tried ...', which are regularly used to mark things incorrectly thought, or unsuccessfully tried, and therefore project accounts of what is now known, or an account of failure). Speakers may also employ methodical devices for achieving multi-unit turns during the course of their talk. They may 'rush through' a possible transition point – talking right through the intersection between one TCU and the next, not pausing to take a breath until a point of maximum grammatical control (that is, where it is obvious that the speaker is not complete). Even more radically, speakers sometimes prevent the end of a TCU (and hence possible speaker transition) from occurring simply by not uttering the last word or syllable of the TCU. (For all this, and more, see Schegloff, 1982.) Although critics have poured scorn on the turn-taking organization research as a tedious political irrelevance which ... could only obscure the operation of power, Schegloff (1999: 563) has said that 'those committed to analyzing forms of inequality and oppression in interaction might do better to harness this account of turn-taking organization as a *resource* for their undertaking than to complain of it as an ideological distraction' (emphasis in original). And that is exactly what we can do here.

If we look back at Linda's coming out, we see that she embeds her coming out in the middle of an 'if/then' structure ('if you've thought of yourself as hetero-sexual ...' [line 16]/'then] it's very disturbing' [line 19] – although the 'then' isn't actually spoken) which projects the first possible transition place to well *after* her coming out. In addition, at line 19, at exactly the point where the TCU is reaching possible completion, and speaker transition becomes relevant, she augments it with another unit which acts as a 'pivot' to get her across the transition place from the end of one TCU to the beginning of the next. The pivot ('in a way', line 19) is both the last part of the TCU and the beginning of the next TCU: 'it's very disturbing in a way'/'In a way it's it's makes you very anxious'. By using the pivot to get her across the possible transition space, Linda again postpones her co-conversationalists' opportunity to offer any acknowledgement or appraisal of the information she has imparted. After using an 'and' (line 24) to indicate 'still not finished', she then launches another TCU which again uses an if/then structure (and a listing device) to

maximally extend the turn. By the time CK, who is leading the seminar group, comes in at the next possible transition place – and note that even here Linda keeps talking (lines 31 and 32 are in overlap) – it is far too late to respond to ‘it happened to me a few years ago’. In sum, Linda actively uses the turn-taking organization of conversation to extend her turn beyond her coming out moment to decrease the likelihood of anyone offering an assessment of, or any other response to, it. And in fact no one does....

So, what political relevance can be derived from this conversation analysis of the turn-taking structure of coming out talk? Linda and Pat (and others in data not presented here) are coming out, but they are using the turn-taking organization to avoid their sexuality becoming topicalized, and they are conveying the information about their sexuality in a ‘not news’ format (as an instance or example of something else). The design of these comings out is attentive to, and hence can be used to explore, the conditions of our oppression in (at least) two ways.

First, they are attentive to the accusation of ‘flaunting it’ – to the complaint ‘I don’t mind gays but why must they be so blatant?’. Their construction as ‘not news’, as conversational asides, and their embeddedness in long turns, is designed precisely *not* to flaunt, not to draw attention to, not to make an issue of it – to slip it into the conversation so as to make it public, but in a way that is demonstrably relevant to the conversation, displayed as being an instance or piece of evidence in support of some other point. Another reason why coming out might be done in this way is to mark some kind of resistance to the whole idea of coming out, to the notion that it should be necessary; that unless we announce as newsworthy our difference from a presumed heterosexual norm, then we can legitimately be assumed to be heterosexual. As recent theorists have suggested, there is a sense in which coming out colludes with the notion that before we came out, we were hiding, and that in letting other people know our sexuality, we are revealing the past deception of the closet. By making lesbianism an aside, an instance, a deliberately casual exemplar of something else, these young women may be invoking and constructing the notion that that’s indeed all it is (or all it should be), that – in fact – there is nothing of note *to* ‘flaunt’. Coming out in a way that clearly avoids ‘flaunting’ sexuality as a newsworthy, commentable-on piece of information can be seen, then, both as collusion with the heterosexual imperative *not* to be public about our sexuality, and equally as a resistance to the whole notion that our sexuality can be assumed to be heterosexual unless we announce to the contrary.

Second, there's a protective element in these comings out: they are both protective of others and self-protective. By embedding information about the speaker's sexuality in the middle of turn construction units, or in following them with multiple TCUs, speakers protect the recipients from having to produce a response. Both the location of the information, and its structure as 'not news' (as an aside, or instance), provides for recipients to hear it and yet not to have to deal with it there and then. Hearers are insulated by subsequent talk against the potential shock value of the information they are receiving. It is a way in which speakers protect others from being potentially crass recipients of the delicate information conveyed – and, of course, protect themselves from having to deal with such potentially crass responses.

After you've read

- re-read the last sentence: would you 'read' what was said in one of these ways rather than the other? If you were Linda, do you think you might have had one (or both) of these ideas in mind?
- read Kitzinger's article in its entirety. How does her discussion of feminist approaches to date rape address the question of the role of analysts' own interpretations of conversational data?

Unit C8: Approaches

Task C8.1: 'Gender similarities' in corpus data

Step 1

Rewrite the 'Gender variation' text (section 2 from Extension Unit B8.1) in a way which emphasises 'gender similarities' rather than differences. You can add, delete and otherwise change words, sentences and paragraphs. (Leave the tables untouched, of course.)

Step 2

If possible, compare your version with those of other students or colleagues.

Task C8.2: Using an existing corpus

Step 1

Access a corpus of spoken English (see box).

MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English)

<http://www.hti.umich.edu/m/micase/>

British National Corpus

<http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>

Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English

<http://www ldc.upenn.edu/Projects/SBCSAE/>

Step 2

Design and carry out a study to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1: What can we say about use of the word *partner*?

- RQ2: Compare usages of the words *girl* and *boy* when the referents are in fact women and men
- RQ3: Do women and men talk about (a) cars, (b) democracy, differently from each other?

Step 3

Read the work of Janet Holmes and Robert Sigley (2002a, 2002b) and Michael Stubbs (1996) on gender and corpora.

Holmes, Janet and Sigley, Robert (2002a) 'What's a word like *girl* doing in a place like this? Occupational labels, sexist usages and corpus research'. In Pam Peters, Peter Collins, Adam Smith (eds.) *New Frontiers of Corpus Linguistics. Papers from the 21st International Conference on English Language Research on Computerized Corpora. Sydney 2000*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. pp. 247-263.

Holmes, Janet and Sigley, Robert (2002b) 'Girl-watching in corpora of English'. *Journal of English Linguistics* 30/2: 138-157.

Stubbs, Michael (1996) *Text and Corpus Analysis: Computer-assisted studies of language and culture*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Task C8.3: Developing your own small corpus

Step 1

Compile your own simple small corpus of 'private talk' (around 15,000 words) as follows:

- audiorecord as many 'mealtime conversations' (between different groups of people) as you can
- ask friends to walk around with a Walkman for a day, and to record their conversations (make sure they carefully note down who they speak to, so that permission to use this data can be requested later)
- transcribe the talk (you may be able to use a speech synthesiser such as ViaVoice to help you with this; see also Task C1.3). Make sure you indicate the sex of the speakers.
- put all your transcripts into one electronic file

Step 2

Ask the C8.2 research questions again, but this time using your own small corpus as data. If this provides relevant data, and your findings do not reflect those in C8.2, why might this be?

Step 3

Think of some new research questions you can now 'ask' your corpus, as regards word frequencies of interest to gender and language study. Answer these RQs.

Step 4

Document your results and post them on your Gender and Language website, together with a description of your development of this small corpus.

If you are interested in small corpora, the following references may be of interest to you:

Cameron, Lynn and Deignan, Alice (2003) 'Combining large and small corpora to investigate tuning devices around metaphor in spoken discourse'. [*Metaphor and Symbol* 18/3: 149-160.](#)

Ghadessy, M., Henry, A. and Roseberry, R. (eds.). (2001). *Small Corpus Studies and ELT: Theory and Practice*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Task C8.4: Using Corpora in Conversation Analysis (CA)

Step 1

Complete Task C8.3

Step 2

Read or re-read Extension Units B8.2 and B8.3 on conversation analysis.

Step 3

Starting with some obvious 'gender markers' like *he, she, man, woman, lady, boy, girl*, search your small corpus of talk for some possible 'participant orientations' to gender.

Step 4

Based on this experience, consider and make notes on

- the CA notion of 'orientation'
- the notion of 'orientation to gender'
- the special contribution of corpora as useful methodological tools for conversation analysis.

Task C8.5: Researcher/Participant Relationships and Researcher Commitment

Step 1

Read the 'Introduction' to *Researching Language* (Cameron *et al.*, 1992), which looks at the questions of research in terms of relationships with participants: research 'on', research 'for' and research 'with'. These three positions are characterised as 'Ethics', 'Advocacy' and 'Empowerment', respectively.

Cameron, Deborah <i>et al.</i> (eds) (1992) <i>Researching Language: Issues of Power and Method</i> . London: Routledge.
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Step 2

Find examples of studies in the gender and language field (starting with those in this book) in which you can see evidence of one or more of these three approaches. Do not expect to find a study that is fully 'empowering'! You will

find the various edited collections on gender and language listed on at the start of the Bibliography useful resources here.

Step 3

Feminist researchers clearly approach their work with a particular sense of 'commitment'. For some, this clashes with 'objectivity'. There is, of course, a debate as to whether 'objectivity' can ever be achieved, or even if it is desirable anyway.

Read work on 'feminist research methods' and 'feminist epistemologies'.

Some suggestions to start you off:

Nielson, J.M. (1990) *Feminist Research Methods: Exemplary readings in the social sciences*. Boulder: Westview Press

Reinharz, Shulamit and Davidmann, L. (1992) *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Roberts, Helen (ed.) (1981) *Doing Feminist Research*. London: RKP.

Stacey, Judith (1988) 'Can there be a feminist ethnography?' *Women's Studies International Forum* 11/1.

Webb, C. 1993. 'Feminist research: definitions, methodology, methods and evaluation'. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 18(3): 416-23.

Step 4

Follow this up with readings around the topic of feminist approaches to gender and language study, for example, Gill (1995):

Gill, Ros (1995) 'Relativism, reflexivity and politics: interrogating discourse analysis from a feminist perspective'. In Wilkinson, Sue and Kitzinger, Celia (eds) *Feminism and Discourse: Psychological Perspectives*. London: Sage. pp. 165 – 186.

Step 5

Develop your own position on whether certain approaches are particularly appropriate for gender and language study and/or feminist research. Write an argument in favour of one particular approach. If you are working with other students, you should each try and argue in favour of different approaches.

Step 6

Post your argument or set of arguments on your Gender and Language website.

Task C8.6: Gender, Conversation Analysis and Feminist Research: the Debate

Step 1

Celia Kitzinger, and Elizabeth Stokoe and Janet Smithson (Extension Unit B8.2, B8.3), were contributing to a wider debate about Conversation Analysis (CA) and its value for feminist research. Follow this debate through the various *Discourse and Society* issues, starting with the contribution by Emanuel Schegloff (1998).

Step 2

Write the 'story' of how this debate developed, including how previous arguments were addressed and new ones advanced.

Step 3

Document your own conclusion about the question. Post this, along with your 'story', on your Gender and Language website.

Task C8.7: Identifying Gender using Conversation Analysis

Step 1

Collect some naturally-occurring data by audio-recording an informal conversation of about 20 minutes.

Step 2

Transcribe the tape (see Task C1.3).

Step 3

Carefully re-read the Unit Extension B8 extracts by Stokoe and Smithson, and Kitzinger, as well as work on conversation analysis more widely (e.g. Psathas, 1995 – see also box below in Task C8.8).

Step 4

Can you identify any points in your transcribed conversation in which speakers 'orient' to gender *in some way*. List these, and, for each, note down your 'warrant' for deciding that the speaker was, indeed, orienting to gender.

Can you do this *without* researcher inference?

Task C8.8: Conversation analysis and transcription

You may have noted that conversation analysts use very detailed symbols or diacritics in their transcription systems. For example, from Charles Antaki's web-based tutorial on CA:

(.)	Just noticeable pause
(.3), (2.6)	Examples of timed pauses in seconds
↑word,↓word	Onset of noticeable pitch rise or fall (<i>can be difficult to use reliably</i>)
A: word [word B: [word	Square brackets aligned across adjacent lines denote the start of overlapping talk. Some transcribers also use "]" brackets to show where the overlap stops
.hh, hh	in-breath (note the preceding full stop) and

	out-breath respectively.
wo(h)rd	(h) is a try at showing that the word has "laughter" bubbling within it
wor-	A dash shows a sharp cut-off
wo:rd	Colons show that the speaker has stretched the preceding sound.
(words)	A guess at what might have been said if unclear
()	Unclear talk. Some transcribers like to represent each syllable of unclear talk with a dash or an "x"
A: word= B: =word	The equals sign shows that there is no discernible pause between two speakers' turns or, if put between two sounds within a single speaker's turn, shows that they run together
<u>word</u> , WORD	Underlined sounds are louder, capitals louder still
°word°	material between "degree signs" is quiet
>word word< <word word>	Inwards arrows show faster speech, outward slower
→	Analyst's signal of a significant line
((sobbing))	Transcriber's attempt to represent something hard, or impossible, to write phonetically

<http://www-staff.lboro.ac.uk/~ssca1/intro1.htm>

The person originally responsible for the development of these systems was Gail Jefferson.

Step 1

Read one or more of the articles below, looking carefully at the use of these various symbols and diacritics.

Atkinson, J. M. and Heritage, J. (eds.). (1984). *Structures of Social Action: studies in conversation analysis*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Ochs, Eleanor Schegloff, Emanuel A. and Thompson, S. A. (eds.) (1996). *Interaction and Grammar*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Psathas, George (1995). *Conversation Analysis: the study of talk in interaction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Also the more recent:

Jefferson, Gail (2004) 'Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction'. In Lerner, G. H. (ed.) [*Conversation Analysis: Studies from the First Generation*](#). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. pp. 13–31.

and the classic:

Sacks, Harvey, Emanuel A. Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson (1978) 'A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation.' *Studies in the Organization of Conversational Interaction*. (ed. J. N. Schenkein). New York: Academic Press. 7-55.

Step 2

Apply the symbols shown above to a very small stretch of your own conversational data (e.g. 2 minutes). You will need to play and reply the tape here. Does this more detailed transcription help at all in addressing the question of 'orientation to gender'?

Task C8.9: The Politics of Transcription

Step 1

Collect a few minutes of conversational data. (If you have done Task C8.8, you can use the same data.)

Step 2

With a friend or classmate, transcribe the conversation individually, without sharing your ideas. Do not use the symbols associated with Conversation Analysis (see above). Rather, keep the transcription simple – but do consider both pauses and overlaps. When you have finished, make a note of your key.

Step 3

Compare your transcripts. What does each suggest about the conversation that the other does not?

Step 4

Read and make notes on Mary Bucholtz's relatively new paper on 'The politics of transcription', and Eleanor Ochs' classic paper on transcription as theory.

Bucholtz, Mary (2000) 'The politics of transcription'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 32: 1439 – 1465.

Ochs, Eleanor (1979) 'Transcription as theory'. In Eleanor Ochs and Bambi Schieffelin (eds.) *Developmental Pragmatics*. New York: Academic Press.

Task C8.10: Gender and Language Study and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Step 1

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) has, perhaps surprisingly, been less used for gender and language study than it might have been. *Why* might this be?

Start by reading Michelle Lazar's introductory chapter to *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis* (2004).

Step 2

Identify examples of specific linkages between CDA and gender and language study by finding relevant articles/chapters which report how CDA has been explicitly drawn on. Begin by looking at the edited collections listed at the start of the Bibliography.

Step 3

Create an Annotated Bibliography on 'CDA, Gender and Language' and post it on your Gender and Language website.

Some references on language, gender and CDA (to start you off):

Cameron, Deborah (1998) 'Gender, language and discourse: A review essay'. *Signs* 1: 945-973.

Cameron, Deborah (1997) 'Theoretical debates in feminist linguistics: questions of sex and gender'. In Wodak, R. (ed.) *Gender and Discourse*. London: Sage.

Lazar, Michelle (2004) *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Task C8.11: Gender and Language Study and Discursive Psychology

Discursive psychology is discussed in Introduction Unit A9, in relation to the epistemological site of 'Masculinity' exemplified in Extension Unit B9. This Task is included in Exploration Unit C8 since discursive psychology is, of course, an approach to gender and language study. Readers may however wish to read the relevant sections of Unit 9 before doing this Task.

Step 1

Paul Mcllvenny in *Talking Gender and Sexuality* (2002) observes that

Discursive psychology divides into two strands – the CA strand and the post-structuralist strand. Follow up and make notes on work done here, including by Potter and Edwards (the CA strand), and Edley and Wetherell (the post-structuralist strand). See the box below for Edley's own list of references.

Step 2

Find out something about the status of discursive psychology for *psychology* as a discipline, in one or more of the following ways:

- consult *recent* introductory and advanced books on social psychology
- if you have access to a Psychology Department, consult their Course Handbooks for references to discursive psychology

- arrange to interview a member of academic staff of a Psychology Department

Step 3

Using comparable methods, find out something about the status of discursive psychology for *linguistics*.

Step 4

Write a short report on what discursive psychology has uniquely contributed to (a) linguistics, in general, and (b) to gender and language study in particular.

Post the report on your Gender and Language website.

References, with useful brief annotations (taken from Edley, 2001; see

Extension Unit B9)

Billig, M. (1996) *Arguing and Thinking: A Rhetorical Approach to Social Psychology*, (Second edition) Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: one of the truly foundational texts in the development of discursive psychology.

Billing, M., Condor, S., Edwards, D., Gane, M., Middleton, D. and Radley, A. (1988) *Ideological Dilemmas: A Social Psychology of Everyday Thinking*, London, Sage: for the original exposition of the concept of ideological dilemmas.

Davies, B. and Harré, R. (1990) 'Positioning: the discursive production of selves', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, vol.20, pp.43–65 reproduced in Wetherell *et al.*, 2001: offers a more detailed discussion of the concept of subject positions.

Edley, N. and Wetherell, M. (1997) 'Jockeying for position: the construction of masculine identities', *Discourse and Society*, vol.8, pp.203–17: for an analysis of how social relations are conducted in and through the construction of masculine identities.

Edwards, D., & Potter, J. (1992). *Discursive Psychology*. London: Sage.

Freeman, M. (1993) *Rewriting the Self: History, Memory, Narrative*, London, Routledge: offers a lucid account of how selves are both spoken and storied.

Potter, J. and Wetherell, M. (1987) *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*, London, Sage: another foundational text in the development of discursive psychology.

Potter, J. (1996) *Representing Reality: Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction*. London: Sage.

Sampson, E.E. (1993) *Celebrating the Other: A Dialogic Account of Human Nature*, Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf: an accessible US-based account of the social or discursive production of selfhood.

Wetherell, M. (1998) 'Positioning and interpretative repertoires: conversation analysis and post-structuralism in dialogue', *Discourse and Society*, vol.9, pp.387–412: for a discussion of how critical discursive psychology differs from more conversation analytic forms of discourse analysis.

