

The L Words: Lesbians and Language
Investigating Linguistic Performance of Sexuality on *The L Word*

by

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Abstract

Lesbian language has been largely understudied. Although there are a few select studies, there is no consensus in the field about what lesbian language actually is. One of the few representations of lesbians on television is *The L Word*, a Showtime television show about a group of lesbian friends. The show depicts something no other show did before; it attempts to capture what the lesbian community looked like. Though there is a plethora of research done on *The L Word*, none of the research investigated the language portrayed on the show. The two of the main critiques about the show is that it is hyper-feminine and heteronormative. Heteronormativity can be represented through performance of an over-simplified butch/femme binary and of a masculine/feminine binary in relationships. Language can provide insight into the validity of these criticisms. Because language is a key part of the performance of identity, it can provide a more nuanced view than research using only contextual and visual evidence. Speakers rely on stereotypes of what constitutes a certain identity in order to perform that identity. Because the media, particularly television shows, help shape and reinforce stereotypes and societal norms, it is important to understand the type of language that the show insists is felicitous lesbian language.

To study what *The L Word* has used to index lesbian identity through language and whether or not the criticisms of *The L Word* are correct, I have done both quantitative and qualitative research. In Chapter 1, I situate my project within the current relevant research in both language and gender and language and sexuality. Chapter 2 provides methodological details including information about the show and how my project was conducted. Chapter 3 investigates the claim that the show is hyper-feminine by analyzing the quantitative results of specific stereotypical men and women language features for all of the characters through the entirety of Season 1. Generally, the language of all the characters except the sole butch character, Shane, tends to have some stereotypically feminine language. This provides some validation of the hyper-feminine critique and also creates a butch/femme binary on the show. Chapter 4 explores the butch/femme binary more explicitly through looking exclusively at Shane. Although her speech does generally create a butch/femme binary between her and other characters, this binary is not prevalent in her relationship talk. Chapter 5 investigates other couples' relationship talk to see if the heteronormative critique holds true for them. Though the central couple, Bette and Tina, has heteronormative speech patterns, the show also provides a variety of other examples that is not linguistically heteronormative. Thus, linguistic analysis demonstrates that the show is not exclusively hyper-feminine, nor is it exclusively heteronormative.

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Introduction

Is there such a thing as lesbian language? Recent linguistic scholarship has demonstrated the difficulties of answering this question (Moonwomon-Baird 1997; Moorish and Sauntson 2007; Queen 1997; Wood 1997). It has also raised another question: Do people believe there is such a thing as lesbian language? What sorts of linguistic features perform a lesbian identity? Although there are stereotypes about what specific linguistic features characterize gay men's speech, stereotypes about specific linguistic features indexing a lesbian identity are not as prevalent (Cameron and Kulick 2003, 74). There is the notion that lesbians talk like men, but no stereotype exists for *how* they talk like men, or in other words, what specific ways lesbians talk like men.¹ Because the ideas about lesbian language are created by the stereotype that lesbians speak like men—straight men—there is no ability to pinpoint specific linguistic features that perform lesbian identity, which leaves the idea of lesbian language flat, unimaginable, and simply unimagined.

In a survey of heterosexual speakers of American English that asked participants to describe lesbian and gay people's speech, all respondents affirmed that they had stereotypes about how gay men and lesbians talk: gay men talk like women and lesbians talk like men.² When asked to elaborate on what specific linguistic features they used to identify gay men and lesbians, however, only some participants could perform this task. Participants claimed they could identify specific linguistic features as indicators for gay men's sexuality—lispings, /s/ pronunciation, high pitch, emphasized articulation, “flamboyant language” (which they described

¹ Cameron and Kulick claim that there is a cultural assumption that lesbians talk like men (Cameron and Kulick 2007, 51).

² I conducted this survey in Spring 2010 with 10 participants (5 men, 5 female, all heterosexual) and repeated it in Fall 2010 for more data. These results are based on both surveys. Together the studies represent data from 20 participants (10 male, 10 female, all heterosexual, aged 20-45).

as strong adjectives and intensifiers), etc. Specific lesbian language features could not be identified. The participants most commonly responded saying they knew that lesbians talked like men, but were unable to name specific features. Arguably participants could not identify specific linguistic features because stereotypes rely heavily on prevalent representations and linguistic knowledge relies on exemplars (i.e. speech examples).³ Since lesbian representations both in media portrayals and of prominent women are not common (especially in comparison to straight men and women and even compared to gay men), there are limited stereotypes and speech exemplars.

Considering there are limited stereotypes about lesbians, how then does a television show—a medium greatly dependent on social stereotypes to shape its characters' performance—use speech to index its characters' lesbian sexuality? *The L Word*, the first mainstream television show to depict the lesbian community, confronted this dilemma because it depicts the lives of nine main characters (five lesbians, two bisexual women, one straight woman, and one straight man) living in West Hollywood.⁴ Because lesbians predominate the show, *The L Word* must index the characters' sexuality through actions, clothing, speech, etc. Looking at how this show portrays lesbian language gives insight into two things: 1) whether the show reifies or re-

³ Although phoneticians typically use exemplar theory, the premise is applicable here. The overall premise is that the more exemplars a speaker has, the more likely they have indexical meaning. For more on exemplar theory, see Foulkes (2010).

⁴ The show and these characters will be discussed at length in Chapter 2. The nine main characters listed here are only those from season one (Bette, Dana, Marina, Shane, and Tina are depicted as lesbians; Alice and Jenny are depicted as bisexual; Kit is depicted as a straight woman; Tim is depicted as a straight man). I recognize that these main characters are not constant throughout the seasons; like any television show main characters are taken off the show and added. Also, I know that Jenny later identifies as a lesbian in later seasons, Tina is later portrayed as bisexual as she dates both men and women in later seasons, and Kit later has a brief sexual interest in women in a later season. However, for this thesis, none of these exceptions should be considered because in the first season—my only object of inquiry—these are the main characters and the way their sexuality is portrayed.

examines the stereotype that lesbians talk like men, and 2) what features *The L Word* uses to indicate its characters' sexuality.

Because speech plays an integral part in performing identity, researchers study lesbian language to uncover realistic and stereotypical linguistic features that index lesbians' sexuality. Lesbian language research falls under the umbrella of language and sexuality studies. Within language and sexuality, the vast majority of the research focuses on gay men's language (Cameron and Kulick 2003). Recently, various researchers have attempted to fill the research gap about lesbian language (Munson 2007; Moonwomon 1995; Moorish and Sauntson 2007; Queen 1997). A variety of conclusions about what constitutes lesbian language have been made, but there is no universal consensus about lesbian language in the field.⁵ The inquiry about what constitutes lesbian language is a relatively new one and is still in need of being developed further. Since there is limited knowledge about how lesbian women use language to perform their sexuality, there is a lesbian language research gap, which my thesis addresses. My thesis provides insight into stereotypical lesbian language by analyzing the linguistic stereotypes that *The L Word* employs to index its characters' sexuality. *The L Word* is a place to look for linguistic stereotypes because the media is a powerful propagator of stereotypes. Many people have limited contact with the queer subculture so the media provides outsiders of the LGBT community with one of their primary representations of that group and formulates ideas they develop about the LGBT community (Kern 2005; Ringer 1994). The fact that *The L Word* is a television show makes it even more worthy of consideration because, as Chambers argues, a television show "produces and reproduces the norms of gender and sexuality that are our lived reality (both political and social)" (Chambers 2006, 84-85).

⁵ The details of what researchers say about lesbian language will be further discussed in Chapter 2.

Some may argue that it would be more useful to study actual lesbian speech than it is to focus only on a television show. Although this is a valid argument, I believe that the study of stereotypes is also useful. Stereotypes are not strictly realistic, but they are powerful. For example, a lesbian may play into the stereotype that lesbians have masculine speech and choose to “talk like a man” to index her sexuality. At the same time, a listener may perceive a woman speaker that “talks like a man” as a lesbian. Stereotypes, then, do influence the way that speakers talk and listeners perceive. Consequently, investigating stereotypes provides insight about lesbian language.

This particular television show is especially worthy of investigation because the show is heralded as revolutionary, which has inspired a body of research about *The L Word* (Akass and McCabe 2006; Tasker 2010; Reeder 2004; etc.). Critics see *The L Word* as important because *The L Word* attempts something new; it provides a representation of the lesbian community. Previous television shows only contained token lesbian characters.⁶ At the culmination of season one of *The L Word*, there was a general aura of excitement about the show, with resounding accolades and criticisms (Akass and McCabe 2006). The book length critical response to *The L Word*, entitled *Reading The L Word: Outing Contemporary Television* (Akass and McCabe 2006), provides a variety of analyses about the show, discussing visual representations, audiences’ reactions, representations of diversity, etc. Yet, of all the articles included in this book and to my knowledge, no one has yet addressed language use in the show.

Among the criticisms, the two main ones are that the show is hyper-feminine and heteronormative (Akass and McCabe 2006). Because the show has the lofty goal of representing a community that had not been represented before to a large, diverse group of viewers, it is

⁶ A brief history of lesbian representation in the media is provided in Chapter 2.1, “About *The L Word*.”

understandable that the show is scrutinized. Proponents of the hyper-feminine critique cite *The L Word*'s visual depiction of its characters as overtly feminine, or appearing like “normal” straight women, who just happen to be gay. There is a reason for this argument; the majority of the characters appear feminine. They wear makeup, skirts, dresses, low cut tops, tight clothing, etc. Most of the women have long hair. Only one main character, Shane, visually appears relatively masculine. She has short hair, never wears dresses, and does not wear high-heeled shoes. This is problematic because the actual lesbian community consists of a variety of different individuals, not all of whom are overtly feminine or markedly masculine. Critics generally fail to recognize that the show also gives some of its characters more masculine qualities that are not visual (e.g. Bette is a business professional, Dana is a sports star). None of the critics examine whether the characters' language use is overtly feminine.⁷ Language plays a role in performing identity so investigating whether the characters use stereotypically women's language provides another way to examine this critique.

The other main criticism of *The L Word* is that it is heteronormative. Heteronormativity is the system that mandates men and women are compatible opposites and heterosexuality is the understood norm (Baker 2008). At the most basic level, the heteronormative expectation does not apply to *The L Word* because the majority of the sexual relationships on *The L Word* are same-sex. *The L Word* is “the L word,” precisely because it deals with liberal ideas, lesbian relationships, and love. Despite the same-sex relationships, however, the show still can be heteronormative. This can be done in two ways: by perpetuating an over-simplified butch/femme binary or by portraying the masculine/feminine dynamic in its lesbian relationships. Both of these binaries can be investigated linguistically. In this case, linguistic

⁷ There is one article that mentions (one sentence of the entire article) Shane's deeper voice as part of her butch portrayal (Moore and Schilt 2006).

analysis can be used to ask the questions: 1) Is there an over-simplified butch/femme binary in the characters' language that could be read as heteronormative? and 2) Is there a masculine/feminine binary enacted within conversations of those in relationships? Both of these binaries (butch/femme and masculine/feminine) abide by the principals of heteronormativity—that masculine/feminine are compatible opposites.

Language on *The L Word* is worth being evaluated because the show provides the most developed representation of the lesbian community in mainstream media to date, it can provide insight into stereotypical lesbian language features, and none of the research done on *The L Word* exclusively focuses on language. The show provides audiences with a stereotype, a representation—regardless of its truthfulness or accuracy—that has the potential to create and challenge norms. These features should be documented because *The L Word* reflects how lesbians speak, provides the audience with representations of how lesbians speak, and shapes how lesbians speak and people think they speak. My thesis works to answer the questions posed throughout this discussion and reiterated here. Most importantly, how does *The L Word* portray how lesbians speak? Does the show reinstate, reshape, or create stereotypes? Is *The L Word* linguistically hyper-feminine and heteronormative? Does the show use speech to create a butch/femme binary between the characters and to create a masculine/feminine binary in the show's relationships? These questions are important because *The L Word* has the potential to change the cultural notion found in my survey from a vague notion that lesbians speak in a more masculine way than straight women to the ability to identify what specific linguistic features lesbians use—that could perhaps break the stereotypes that they use masculine language—to indicate their sexuality.

To answer my research questions, I look at linguistic features that have been identified as gendered; they are known to be both stereotypically and realistically index femininity and masculinity. I employ both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the following linguistic features: /n/ versus /ŋ/ endings in progressive participles; /n/ versus /ŋ/ ending in the words *something, anything, nothing, morning, and evening*; taboo language; *oh my god; like; guys; man; gonna*; intensifiers; and hedges.⁸ The /n/ versus /ŋ/ endings, *gonna, man, guys*, and taboo language use are analyzed to understand if the characters employ features that typically denote masculinity: /n/ endings, informal speech, words creating a brotherhood, and taboo language.⁹ Intensifiers, hedges, *like*, and *oh my god* are seen as features of women's language so the use of these features typically index the speaker as feminine.¹⁰ Thus, this combination of features provides me with a way to evaluate whether the speaker is using feminine language features, masculine language features, or a hybrid of both to index their sexuality. Analysis of these features, then, investigates whether the language on *The L Word* is hyper-feminine. Focusing on them also allows me to determine if the show is heteronormative because 1) looking at these features can indicate if there is an oversimplified butch/femme binary created by men's language

⁸ By quantitative research I mean that I counted all instances of these features, and by qualitative research I mean that I analyze how these features are used in conversation. Details about methodology are provided in Chapter 2 and results are provided in Chapters 3-5. Chapters 1 and 2 provide more details about all of these linguistic features. /n/ is the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbol for the sound represented by *n* and /ŋ/ is the IPA symbol for the sound *ng* make when put together. Intensifiers are words that increase meaning and hedges decrease meaning. See appendix for full list of words counted.

⁹ Researchers have documented these features as denoting masculinity. See Trudgill (1997) for evidence of /n/ endings, De Klerk (1997) for evidence of taboo language, Kiesling (2004) for evidence of how words like *guys* and *man* can create masculine solidarity (note: in Kiesling's argument, he only discusses *dude*, but the premise still applies here).

¹⁰ Researchers have documented these features as denoting femininity. See Lakoff (1975) for evidence about hedges and intensifiers, Daily-O'Cain (2000) for *like* usage (note: this argument that certain lexical items are stereotypically feminine extend to *oh my god* usage).

and women's language features between Shane and the other main lesbian characters and 2) if there is a feminine/masculine binary created through relationship talk.

The following chapter provides key background information to understand what it means to do a study of lesbian language. I offer definitions for the key terms that are important to my analysis of lesbian language throughout my thesis. The chapter also presents a survey of scholarship and how my project fits into this conversation. Chapter 2 explains the study's methodology and provides more details about *The L Word*. Chapter 3 documents overall quantitative results of the linguistic features I analyzed and addresses the critique about the show being hyper-feminine. The heteronormative critique is investigated in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 focuses exclusively on the only butch character, Shane. Primarily qualitative and some quantitative analysis is given to investigate whether Shane's language creates an over-simplified butch/femme binary between her and other characters and in her relationship. Chapter 5 focuses on qualitative analysis of conversations between women in same-sex relationships to see the extent to which is a masculine/feminine binary created through language. Chapter 6 concludes my findings and calls for further research.

Chapter 1: A Survey of Scholarship

As the Introduction discusses, *The L Word* provides a rich source for understanding how the media portrays lesbian language. This chapter functions as an overview of what it means to do a study of lesbian language. It also begins to answer the questions posed in the introduction, giving insight into if there is such a thing as lesbian language. To ensure clarity, there is a brief description of terms that are essential to this study. Discussion of these definitions illuminates the interconnectedness of gender and sexuality, which foreshadow how language and gender and language and sexuality are also interrelated. Because lesbian language research is influenced by language and gender and language and sexuality, the chapter moves next to a brief overview of the work that relates to my area of inquiry. Generally then, this chapter situates my research in context to previous work.

1.1 Important Definitions

Some of the central terms in language and gender and language and sexuality studies are often misunderstood, perhaps especially outside academia, due to competing definitions. *Performance*, *sex*, *gender*, and *sexuality* are common words used in both colloquial and academic diction. All four of these terms are central to my argument. Language is a major part of identity performance. Because my thesis is essentially about how lesbian identity can be performed through language, what I mean when I say performance must be entirely clear. Sex, gender, and sexuality are often conflated as the same term or interchangeable. Each word is key to my argument and so clarity about what I mean when I use each of these words is essential to understanding my argument. The next two subsections provide definitions of these words as they are used in the context of my thesis.

1.1.1 Performance

The idea of performance in language stems from the speech theory introduced by J.L. Austin.¹ He was the first philosopher to acknowledge the linguistic phenomenon of performatives, speech acts that do an action through their iteration (i.e. *I promise, I pronounce you husband and wife*, etc.). Austin claimed that performatives could be either felicitous or infelicitous, or in other words effective or ineffective. This effectiveness was determined based on if the illocutionary force (what the speaker intended the speech act to mean) and the perlocutionary force (what the listener understands the speech act to mean) agreed with each other (Austin 1962).

Jacques Derrida found fault in Austin's reasoning claiming that the intention of the speaker (what Austin calls the illocutionary force) had no bearing on whether the speech act succeeded in being a performative speech act (Cameron and Kulick 2003, 126). Instead, Derrida argued that performativity was only successful if the speech act had iterability, or was both repeatable and changeable (Cameron and Kulick 2003, 127). His example of iterability was a signature. Signatures work because they are a set symbol that is repeated (i.e. individuals do not sign random letters each time) and changeable (i.e. no signature is exactly the same). This translates to felicitous performativity in language. Linguistic utterances can be performative (i.e. they can do actions) because the speaker employs speech acts that are accepted ways of saying the action the speaker wishes to employ. In other words, a speaker can make a bet with someone by saying, "I bet you..." because it is the accepted way of betting someone something.

Austin's speech theory was extended from speech acts to all acts that indicated one's identity, an idea that Judith Butler capitalizes on in her work. Butler claims identity performance

¹ Butler extended Austin's speech theory to all speech acts, which will be discussed shortly.

is similar to performance in theatrical context (Butler 2008, 901). Through socialization, individuals learn how to portray different aspects of their identity. Individuals perform identities by using stereotypes and social norms to indicate a certain personae. In Austin's terms, individuals learn to make the performance felicitous. Using Derrida's terms, individuals learn the actions that make the performance have its iterability. After this knowledge is acquired, individuals use "*stylized repetition of acts*," or ritualized actions, to create identity (Butler 2008, 900).² This is both a subconscious and conscious endeavor (Butler 2008). Most of the time then, people do acts, or perform their identity, without even knowing it. Other times, people choose to perform an identity or not to perform an identity as a power-ploy.

Currently, the majority of researchers in linguistics, women studies, and queer studies use *performance* in Butler's sense of the term to encompass the actions that one does in order to indicate a certain identity, and this is how I will employ the term. Performance refers to the outward, physical expression of an identity that one mentally holds. Language and sexuality studies drew heavily on Austin, Derrida, and Butler's discussion of performance to explain the linguistic features that gay men use to index their sexuality. Now, all speech is thought to be performative.³ A person's linguistic choices indicate different identities of that person. These linguistic choices are culturally mandated; one cannot say anything to perform a feminine identity, a lesbian identity, etc. Like Austin's idea of a speech act's performativity, performance is only felicitous, or effective, when an individual employs the correct actions to index a certain identity.⁴ An extreme example of how speech is a performance, but one that is useful to

² Italics are Butler's.

³ Note that I said all *speech* is considered a performance. I did not say all *speech acts* are performative. What I am saying is that the way people talk considered a performance.

⁴ When I use *index* here, I am using it to refer to what the individual does in order to indicate their identity.

illustrate how readily people can use norms to perform identity, is the case of phone sex workers. In a study done by Kira Hall, phone sex workers played the role of a desiring female, putting on a character for their clients that does not match up to their actual identity (Hall 1995). For example, a man played the role of an aroused woman by making the pitch of his voice higher and using breathy language. In the case of a sex worker then, the choice to perform a certain identity is more conscious than other instances.

Moving from this extreme example to a more common one, the following is also an example of speech performance: a woman may say, “Oh my god! Can you like believe that she like said that to me?”, which utilizes linguistic features stereotypical of valley girls (i.e. the use of *oh my god* and *like*), to index that she is overtly feminine and perhaps to downplay her intelligence. The speaker may do this consciously for a number of reasons. For example, a woman might do this if it is a woman who wants to fit in with other women that she is with who talk that way. She also may do this unconsciously.

1.1.2 Sex, Gender, and Sexuality

Gender and sex, though often used interchangeably both inside and outside academia, are two different things. Being able to distinguish these terms is essential to my thesis because 1) gender is a performance and it influences the characters’ identity performance on the show, and 2) performance of gender creates the masculine/feminine binary (which is not the same thing as the male/female binary sex creates) and this binary proves instrumental to discussing whether the show is heteronormative.

Sex is the assignment *female* or *male* that is given to a baby at birth. This assignment is based on biological features, typically the genitalia. The categories, as static and inherent as they may seem, are cultural constructions. For example, although sex tends to be seen as the clear

dichotomy of male/female, 1 in 100 babies that are born fall outside these two categories (Blackless *et al.* 2000). The babies that fall outside the male-female dichotomy are then often surgically altered to have the genitalia necessary to place them into the culturally constructed two categories: male and female. Thus, sex is not something innate; male/female are not the only two options. Instead, the two categories male and female are constructed and individuals are constructed to fit into those categories.

Sex relies on the binary female/male. By creating only two categories, the two are seen as two separate identities. Often, differences between the categories are emphasized and similarities are largely glossed over. Gender is the performance of this binary, which creates the binary feminine/masculine. What is considered masculine and feminine is taken from the realm of biological differences, exaggerated, and then expanded into realms outside of biological difference (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, 10). Every aspect of an individual's life can be in some way performing their gender identity. Elements of this performance can include dress (e.g. men do not perform their masculinity by wearing dresses), speech (e.g. men do not perform their masculinity by saying *oh my god*), outward appearance (e.g. men do not perform their masculinity by wearing nail polish or makeup), occupation (e.g. men that are secretaries sometimes are ridiculed for being feminine), the colors of one's possessions (e.g. men do not perform their masculinity with a pink binder), etc.⁵ One of the most prevalent ways to perform gender is through speech. For example, if a speaker said, "Oh my god! Like did you hear what like happened yesterday," a listener would most likely guess the speaker was a woman because

⁵ Note that I am not claiming men do not wear dresses, say *oh my god*, etc. Some men do these things. However, these performances do not index masculinity, which is what I am arguing.

of the focuser *like* and *oh my god* usage.⁶ Conversely, if a speaker said, “Shit bro! Why you always runnin into me?”, a listener would most likely guess the speaker was a man because of the taboo language, *bro*, copular absence, and the /n/ ending in the participle *running*.⁷

Gender, like sex, is a social construction (Butler 1988; Cameron and Kulick 2003; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003; Livia and Hall 1995). As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet write in *Language and Gender*, “gender is not something we are born with, and not something we have, but something we do (West and Zimmerman 1987)—something we perform (Butler 1990)” (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, 10). Further, as Butler explains, “gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo” (Butler 2008, 901). Essentially, what Butler claims is that gender is a performance, whether conscious or unconscious, that is governed by social norms. To make the performance felicitous, the individual must employ socially recognized qualities (or as Derrida would say, do what gives the action its iterability) that index the desired identity. In the context of gender, heterosexual females are typically thought to perform in a feminine manner and heterosexual males in a masculine manner. This performance governed by a set of culturally accepted expectations for what constitutes masculinity and femininity.

For instance, pre-adolescent children perform gender through their speech. Men’s vocal tracts are longer than women’s vocal tracts. Consequently, women typically speak with a higher pitch than men. Children’s voices, however, reflect this pitch differentiation even before

⁶ Focuser *like* introduces new information. See Daily-O’Cain (2000) for more information on focuser *like* and how it indexes femininity.

⁷ /n/ is the IPA symbol for the sound commonly associated with *n*. For information about taboo language see De Klerk (1997). Cheshire (1998) argues that men speak more informally, suggesting that they would more prone to copula deletion. Kiesling (2004) argues that *dude*, which functions similarly to *bro*, creates a cool solidarity for men. For information about /n/ endings, see Trudgill (1997).

undergoing adolescence, when the difference of length of the vocal tract is realized (Eckert and McConnel-Ginet 2003, 13). Whether children consciously or subconsciously alter their voices is irrelevant. The fact that children perform a natural biological difference before the biological difference exists shows children perform gender. This demonstrates that although there may be some biological basis for gender difference (i.e. men and women's voices are different pitches because their vocal tracts are different sizes), gender is still a performance (i.e. children alter their pitch even though their vocal tracts are the same). In other words, gender is related to biology, but does not result or directly correlate from it. Gender is the result of culturalization.

This performance is not arbitrary; it is learned. Individuals are not naturally gendered. Instead, adults indoctrinate their children to become boys and girls, or as Butler writes, "gender is not passively scripted on the body" (Butler 2008, 910). Adults often treat male and female children differently; adults teach children how to be a girl or boy. Girls do not come out of the womb liking the color pink. They are taught to like pink and dislike trucks. Boys do not come out of the womb wanting to play with trucks. They are taught to like trucks and dislike pink.

In order to gender children, adults behave towards male and female children differently. For example, when babies are thought to be boys, adults use more prohibitives, treat the infant more playfully, and view the infant as larger.⁸ In contrast, when babies are thought to be girls, adults use more inner state words, treat the infant more gently, and view the infant as "fine-featured" (Eckert and McConnel-Ginet 2003, 17).

Gender is intrinsically tied to sexuality. To perform femininity and masculinity felicitously, individuals are expected to be heterosexual. Men and women are required to manipulate their bodies to be attractive to the opposite sex. This is because of the heterosexual

⁸ According to Eckert and McConnel-Ginet (2003).

market, or in other words the idea that men and women are seen as complimentary factions that should be joined (Thorne 1993). This idea emerges at the end of elementary school (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003).

The heterosexual market reshapes the societal order. As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet explain,

In this way, the social order is—fundamentally—heterosexual, dramatically changing the terms of the cohort's gender arrangements. What was appropriate for boys and girls simply as male and female individuals now defines them with respect to a social order. Their value as human beings and their relations to others are based in their adherence to gender norms. (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, 23)

Although it may seem like a bit of a stretch to claim that individuals' inaccurate performance of gender norms puts their "value as human beings" at stake, it is true. Butler also claims this, writing, "as a strategy of survival, gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences...indeed, those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished" (Butler 2008, 903). All of these writers draw attention to the fact that gender performance is not just a choice, it is so institutionalized that failure to follow its norms results in social suicide.

If an individual does not meet the expectation of being heterosexual, this idea of the heterosexual market, or the fact that masculinity and femininity belong paired together, still applies. The heterosexual market even extends itself into expectations for the LGBT community. Individuals behaving in a feminine manner are expected to like masculine individuals. For instance, lesbians who act feminine are expected to like masculine women. The reverse is also true: women behaving in a masculine manner are expected to like feminine women. Gay men are held to these same expectations.

The heterosexual market applying to both straight and gay individuals, or the idea that both gay and straight people perform their sexuality by being attracted to someone of the opposite gender, demonstrates how gender and sexuality performance are intertwined. As Campbell-Kibler points out, an individual relies heavily on gender performance to perform sexuality because “sexuality often mirrors gender” (Campbell-Kibler 2002, 11). However, sexuality does not only draw upon gender; gender also uses sexuality. In other words, gender performance relies on sexuality just as much as sexuality performance relies on gender. Stereotypically and somewhat realistically, a gay individual may draw on the atypical gender to index their sexuality. For instance, lesbians may use masculinity to index their sexuality and gay men may use femininity to index theirs.⁹ A straight individual would, stereotypically and somewhat realistically, index their sexuality by performing gender norms associated with their sex.

Sexuality has been thought of as the capacity of having sex or being sexual (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Colloquially sexuality has been used to indicate one’s sexual preference, sometimes referred to as *sexual orientation*. There is a movement in language and sexuality studies to define sexuality more broadly to include not just sexual orientation, but also desire, fantasy, and the erotica (Cameron and Kulick 2003). For instance, in Cameron and Kulick’s book length discussion on sexuality entitled *Language and Sexuality*, they define sexuality in this more broad sense. In doing so, Cameron and Kulick can explore what linguistic features a gay man uses to index his gayness, how “no” is used in sexual encounters, the way dirty jokes can be told, and anything else involving sex. For Cameron and Kulick, this broadening of the word

⁹ I am not arguing that this is universally the case, nor I am trying to say that some lesbians act like straight men and some gay men act like straight women to index their sexuality. However, gender performance is one of the repertoires accessible for lesbians and gay men to use when performing their sexuality.

sexuality is useful. It creates a name for a subgenre of language study that can encompass all things related to sex.

My definition of sexuality, however, is closer to Cameron and Kulick's definition of *sexual identity*. They define sexual identity as the "focus many researchers have adopted, since the linguistic construction of self and others as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc., can be studied without direct reference to sex as such" (Cameron and Kulick 2003, xi). I will use sexuality to mean the performance of one's sexual desire, i.e. how one performs being a gay man, lesbian, straight man, straight woman, or other sexual identities. Why then do I not choose to use sexual identity rather than sexuality when some in the field are calling for a shift in sexuality's definition? I find that sexual identity is a problematic term for this project. The characters of *The L Word* are multi-faceted: they have many different identities. Using the term *sexual identity* seems to indicate either 1) that each character has only one identity, their sexual identity, because it is the only description with the word *identity* attached to it; or 2) that each character's sexual identity is somehow more important than the other identities because the other identities each character has do not have the word *identity* attached to them. For example, it is uncommon to say that someone is performing a woman identity. Instead, one might say someone is performing femininity. Further, sexuality is colloquially accepted as meaning whether a person is queer or straight.¹⁰ Thus, I will broaden this definition of *sexuality* slightly to create my definition of *sexuality*: the *performance* of whether a person is gay or straight.

1.2 Language and Gender Scholarship

Both language and gender and language and sexuality studies overlooked the study of lesbian language until recently. Robin Lakoff, the scholar often cited as the founder of language

¹⁰ I am using *queer* as an umbrella term for all non-heterosexual identities.

and gender, did the important work of establishing the idea of women's language. In her groundbreaking work entitled *Language and A Woman's Place* (1975), Lakoff explained stereotypical women's language features, which she called WL. The features she listed as WL were features associated with white, heterosexual women's performance of femininity. Her work was instrumental in the development of the language and gender field; it was the catalyst for a plethora of language and gender research—research that generally excluded lesbians. Though it typically focused on heterosexual women, language and gender research has heavily influenced language and sexuality studies. Because both language and gender and language and sexuality are instrumental in addressing the question of lesbian language, a brief overview of relevant work is presented, which contextualizes my work.

1.2.1 Lakoff and Women's Language

Robin Lakoff's *Language and a Woman's Place* (1975) established the idea of women's language (WL), a term coined by Lakoff to describe a set of stereotypically feminine linguistic features, and that caused other researchers to respond to her work with further research. Her work is seen as the groundbreaking text for modern language and gender studies, the features she defined as WL are still considered valid, and the vast majority use her claims as a jumping off point, I too use Lakoff's work as a starting point. It is imperative to understand what features Lakoff identified as women's language because my thesis investigates whether characters use WL features to create binaries and eradicate stereotypes about lesbian language.

Lakoff uses an introspective approach to outline qualities of women's language that distinguish women's speech from the way men speak. This contrasts with the method of documenting actual speech and using quantitative and qualitative analysis to make a linguistic claim, which is the method readily accepted by sociolinguists today. Although this introspective

method is not ideal because Lakoff presents linguistic features without numerical evidence to support her findings, the features outlined in Lakoff's foundational text are widely considered elements of WL today. Lakoff's work made the focus of language and gender on women's language; men's language was largely ignored because men's language was seen as the norm.¹¹

According to Lakoff, women tend to use detailed color terms, superfluous adjectives, hedges, super polite forms, and tag questions; they do not use taboo language. Detailed color terms refer to the way that women tend to use a color term like *fuchsia* while a man will most likely just call the same color *pink*. Hedges and super polite forms are very similar. When a speaker uses a hedge, they do so to soften their response, or make it more polite.¹² An example of this might be, "Well, I might have said something to him that perhaps was not the best idea." In this utterance, the *well* signals the listener that some sort of bad news is likely to follow. The modal *might* is a hedge, or a word that functions to soften a sentence. In other words, this statement is a less direct, less abrasive way of saying that the speaker actually did do something. Superfluous adjectives are words like *divine* that are seen as hyper-feminine. Lakoff also claims women use tag questions.¹³ A regular question does not assume an answer. A tag question, however, does assume an answer and may illustrate the speaker's unwillingness to commit to their knowledge. Instead of asking, "What time will you be home?" a tag question is, "You will be home at 6, right?" In the second example, the speaker thinks that the listener will be home at 6 but allows the listener to renegotiate this fact because the speaker is not confident with this

¹¹ Men's language has become an object of inquiry more recently. See Johnson and Meinhof (1997) and Coates (2003).

¹² Use of singular *they* in this sentence and in all sentences of my thesis are consciously made. I do realize that singular *they* use does not follow prescriptive grammar rules. However, I believe that singular *they* is the only truly gender neutral way to express the third person singular. See Chapter 3 in Curzan and Adams (2003).

¹³ Tag questions are the only linguistic feature that has not been found as more common among women.

knowledge. Lakoff argues tag questions demonstrate a lack of confidence on the part of the speaker. Others argue that tag questions can be a powerful utterance. If the speaker emphasized the word *will* and *right* in the above example, then the speaker would be implying it is in the best interest of the listener to be home at six. In this sense, a tag question can be used as a threat or a command. Lakoff argues that women do not use taboo language. Taboo language is any lexical item that is not socially acceptable. These include any swear words or word that are deemed inappropriate by societal norms. Instead, Lakoff argues that women use euphemisms for taboo language like *golly* or *oh my*. All of these features combine together to create women's language, which Lakoff calls WL.

Lakoff also identifies that there is a thing called men's language (ML). Consequently, Lakoff creates a binary: women's speech v. men's speech. She quite explicitly does so when she writes, "I want to talk first about the ways in which women's speech differs from men's speech" (Lakoff 2004 [1975], 42). By introducing women's speech in direct contrast with men's speech, Lakoff presents women's and men's speech as dichotomous. She also generalizes across all women and men, not accounting for race and ethnicity, sexuality, class, etc. This is problematic because she does not allow for any sort of variation or combination of the two languages that she identifies. Lakoff does admit that some women do not employ WL all the time and some men do not employ ML all the time, but does not acknowledge how the terms WL and ML may not be the two best titles to describe these linguistic features. This will be discussed at more length in 1.4 The Power of Stereotypes.

According to Lakoff, children learn WL and ML as part of their indoctrination of gender.¹⁴ Girls learn how to make their speech index their femininity and men to learn how

¹⁴ As discussed in 1.1.2 during the definition of gender.

make their speech index their masculinity. This is learned through emulation of adult speech and adult correction to their speech.

To Lakoff, WL is a deficient form of language that is seen as less direct, less powerful, and less respected. Consequently, Lakoff argues that “women experience linguistic discrimination in two ways: in the way they are taught to use language, and in the way general language use treats them” (Lakoff 2004 [1975], 39). Although Lakoff presents two ways language discriminates against women, for the purposes of this paper, it is only necessary to discuss the first way, or the way WL features result in discrimination.¹⁵ Lakoff finds WL a form of discrimination because she believes women are looked down upon for using WL, but are forced to continue speaking WL because of gender norms. She acknowledges this problem when she writes, “a girl is damned if she does, damned if she doesn’t” (Lakoff 2004 [1975], 41). If a girl does not employ WL, she is criticized for being unfeminine, but if she does employ WL, she is often “ridiculed” (Lakoff 2004 [1975], 41) and not taken seriously.

1.2.2 Response to Lakoff

After Lakoff’s work was published in 1975, Lakoff’s generalizations about the way women speak have been tested, contested, and built upon by many different researchers.¹⁶

¹⁵ This is what I will focus on here because it is the only issue relevant to my topic. As mentioned, Lakoff also discusses how language itself is sexist. Many words that are neutral or positive for men have a more negative connotation for the female counterpart. For instance, bachelor and spinster have two entirely different connotations. Bachelor is seen as a good thing. He is a man that is free from the ties women put on him. A spinster, on the other hand, is an insult for women. It implies the woman is old, unattractive, and alone because she is undesirable.

¹⁶ There are generally three different models that language and gender research fall in to: deficit, different, and dominant. The deficit model is that males are essentially different than females and male behavior is the norm from which female behavior dictates. See Lakoff (1975) and O’Barr and Atkins (1998). The difference model is that the way girls and boys are socialized explains difference in behavior found among men and women. See Brown (1998), Holmes (1998), and Maltz and Borker (1998). The dominance model is that the relative social positions

Because Lakoff is so widely used as a starting point for how to target research questions, a number of things can be inferred. First, it is evident that people have the notion that men and women talk differently. Second, the majority of researchers in the language and gender field use Lakoff as a jumping off point, or in other words, their research tests something about her claim. Third, it is contested whether or not men and women do talk differently.

For example, Deborah Tannen argues that women talk differently than men (Tannen 1998).¹⁷ Maltz andorker build off Lakoff's claim that children learn WL and ML as part of their indoctrination of gender. They claim that men and women are socialized differently, which results in this difference between male and female speech. Miscommunication between men and women stems from the two different cultures women and men live in and their resulting language difference.

Other researchers, however, do not agree with these findings. Deborah Cameron, for instance, dedicates a whole book, *The Myth of Mars and Venus*, to eradicating the notion that men and women are inherently prone to miscommunication because they talk differently. O'Barr and Atkins take a different approach; they claim there are two ways of speaking: powerful and powerless (O'Barr and Atkins 1998). Thus, to O'Barr and Atkins, there is still a distinctive binary; it is just between powerful and powerless language rather than men and women language. The powerful/powerless binary feeds into the feminine/masculine binary because there are power dynamics within the feminine/masculine binary. O'Barr and Atkins, then, essentially claim that powerful and powerless language map onto men's language and women's language respectively. This brief snapshot of other researchers' findings calls into

typically inhabited by men and women explain differences in behavior. See De Francisco (1998) and Fishman (1983).

¹⁷ Note that Tannen's work is similar to Lakoff, but not identical to Lakoff's argument. Tannen relies on the difference model while Lakoff relies on the deficit model.

question the validity of believing there is a collection of linguistics features that all women use and another set of inherently opposite features that men use. It investigates whether Lakoff's and others' assumptions that WL and ML exist, or are at the very least, it allows the validity WL and ML to be questioned.

I too will be using Lakoff as a jumping off point. Lakoff outlines a number of characteristics for what I will deem stereotypical women's speech. I say stereotypical women's speech rather than women's language largely because although the Lakoff's WL features do exist and can be prevalent in women's speech (i.e. researchers have accounted for Lakoff's WL features in women's speech), not all women employ WL (especially not all the time). In other words, as Kulick argues, just because a gay person does X that does not make X gay. The same is true for gender: just because some women do X that does not mean X is feminine.¹⁸ At the same time, WL should not be discounted entirely—and indeed is not discounted but rather is studied—because features that Lakoff discusses are not arbitrary. Cultural stereotypes surrounding Lakoff's linguistic features index femininity. Although it is unclear whether women actually speak that way, as outlined above, it is important to remember that it is at least culturally accepted that women do speak a certain way. It is important that people believe women gossip, use frivolous adjectives, intensifiers, hedges, questions intonation, etc. People believe that men swear often and are more likely to end a present participle with an /n/. If a speaker says, “That lavender sweater looks divine on you,” the listener will most likely assume the speaker is a woman or a gay man. Consequently, it is debatable whether or not WL and ML are existent in actuality (i.e. there is a real WL that all women speak and a ML that all men speak), but it still

¹⁸ See Cameron and Kulick (2003) for this argument, which was presented during an overview of Kulick's previous work.

matters that people think there is a way that women speak and a different (arguably opposite) way that men speak. This affects speech production and perception.

1.3 Language and Sexuality Scholarship

The fields of language and gender and language and sexuality are inextricably interconnected. The idea of performativity, which was so central to language and sexuality research, greatly influenced language and gender research. Language and gender research about WL played a role in looking for linguistic features of gay men's language and ML played a role in finding lesbian language linguistic features. This is mainly because gender and sexuality themselves are so intertwined.¹⁹ This section provides an overview of language and sexuality.

1.3.1 Research Overview

Because my project is directly in conversation with research done on lesbian language, which is studied in language and sexuality, an overview of language and sexuality contextualizes how my project fits in the field. Language and sexuality has undergone a series of different phases, which are clearly outlined in Deborah Cameron and Don Kulick's *Language and Sexuality*. According to Cameron and Kulick, the first phase of the language and sexuality field centered upon how homosexuality could be physically recognized. Although this sometimes had to do with physical appearance, some linguistic features, like lisping, were said to be indicators of sexuality.

The second phase was a continuation of this lexical focus with the added idea that gay people talked in a particular way; they had their own language. The focus of this phase was primarily lexical: researchers documented different lexical items that gay males used. This was a

¹⁹ As discussed in 1.1.2 Sex, Gender, and Sexuality.

primarily political move. Gay activists thought that if gay people had their own language, then perhaps they would be considered a legitimate homogeneous group like other minorities.

The next distinct phase centered upon the words used by the queer community to describe both the community itself and members of the community (McConnell-Ginet 2002). More recently, one of the main focuses of researchers has been about intonational differences of gay men's speech compared to straight men's speech (Munson 2007).²⁰

Regardless of the phase in language and sexuality research, researchers constantly struggled with defining the exact parameters of the queer community they were studying. Rusty Barrett discusses this issue at length (Barrett 1997). To Barrett, the main issue with research done on the LGBT community is how hard it is for the queer community to be defined. Barrett argues that it may be easier to define the way the queer community is imagined. Further, he claims that any "homo-genius" speech, or speech from any subset of the queer community, cannot be examined like a homogenous community's speech is examined. Homogeneous communities can be researched by having one or a few ideal speakers represent an entire community. This is not the case for homo-genius speech communities. Instead, homo-genius speech communities must be part of a "linguistics of contact" model, or in other words, gay men's language and lesbian language do not have their own unique registers, but rather draw on a variety of other identities' registers to create gay men's language and lesbian language. This is because queer language, unlike WL and ML, is not taught by parents. As Barrett humorously points out, "generally, people do not raise their children to talk like homosexuals. Quite to the contrary, language associated with gayness is probably discouraged by parents" (Barrett 1997, 191). Using the linguistics of contact model, a linguist can argue some linguistic features can

²⁰ Munson (2007) provides an overview of phonetic studies done about gay men and contains Munson's own study.

index gay or lesbian identity in some contexts and another identity in a different context.²¹ As I will demonstrate, this concept usefully illuminates how a combination of WL and ML features can be used to index sexuality. Rather than a new set of linguistic features to index the characters are lesbians, the characters can draw upon the registers of WL and ML.

1.3.2 Gap in Scholarship About Lesbian Language

As *Language and Sexuality* points out, almost all of the preliminary language and sexuality research focused primarily on gay men in urban areas (Cameron and Kulick 2003). This is problematic because many gay men outside the urban setting were excluded from the research done on gay men. Further, and perhaps more problematically, lesbian language is almost completely ignored.²² Thus, the field of language and sexuality, albeit claiming to be the study of queer language, was in fact merely the study of a small percent of the queer population. Recently, this large gap in research about lesbian language has been taken up by a variety of linguists. For example, Anna Livia and Kira Hall's *Queerly Phrased* (1997), a compilation of linguistic research done about queer linguistics, has a significant number of articles addressing lesbian language.²³

Some linguists study lesbian language by determining how listeners identify lesbian language. Birch Moonwomon-Baird attempts to uncover the stereotypes about lesbian language by asking listeners to identify a speaker's sexuality based on listening to their speech (Moonwomon-Baird 1997). She finds that listeners can only identify sexuality correctly half of the time. Moonwomon-Baird argues that her study exemplifies the invisibility of lesbians to the

²¹ As is the case in Barrett's case study of African American drag queens (Barrett 1995).

²² Transsexual and bisexual language are also ignored. Even less research has been done on these two topics.

²³ For lesbian language studies included in *Queerly Phrased*, but not discussed here, see Wood 1997; Neumann 1997; Morrish 1997; and Pastre 1997.

general public. This is also demonstrated with the results of my survey, namely that people are not sure what lesbian's talk like, which is discussed in the introduction. Benjamin Munson, on the other hand, also tests whether lesbians can be identified through speech and finds they can. He recounts that participants can accurately label the sexuality of the speaker and rate lesbians as relatively less feminine than the heterosexual women the listeners identified (Munson 2007).

In *New Perspective on Language and Sexual Identity*, Morrish and Saunston also try to find lesbian language features. They do not find specific linguistic features used among lesbians that indicate sexuality among lesbian speakers. Instead, Moorish and Saunston find that it is the content of their conversation that indexes their sexuality. Thus, essentially their research suggests that there are not particular ways that lesbians use language to index their sexuality. Although this is likely true in most lesbian conversations, language is a performance; arguably lesbian language is more than just topical.

Instead of studying actual lesbian speech, Robin Queen investigates stereotypical lesbian speech by studying the language used in a lesbian comic. Queen's research most closely relates to my project because, like Queen, I investigate stereotypes. She finds that there is a lesbian language. However, this language is not a new set of linguistic features indicative of lesbianism per se, but rather, it is a combination of many different speech registers combined that indicate a lesbian identity. Queen suggests that this could be a result of the fact that the lesbian community is an "imagined community," an idea originally coined by Anderson. In other words, there is no cohesive lesbian community. Queen applies Barrett's argument, who claims that the queer community should adopt a linguistics of contact model, to the lesbian community because like the queer community, lesbians' sexuality functions as a unifying commonality, but the lesbian community is in no way homogeneous (Barrett 1997). The lesbian community is heterogeneous

because lesbians have a multi-faceted identity. To indicate their sexuality then, lesbians use a variety of registers. This is related to my study because I too find that lesbians draw on a variety of registers to index their sexuality.

This brief overview of lesbian language research demonstrates that there is variety in the field about how to do a study on lesbian language. Some researchers focus on listener perception to find lesbian speech qualities, others focus on lesbians' conversations, and others focus on stereotypes. Queen's article is most related to my own. Like Queen, I analyze stereotypical language to investigate the types of linguistic features used in caricatured representation.

1.3.3 Implications of the Scholarship

Because there have been a number of studies done with a variety of results, exactly what lesbian language entails is not entirely clear. More research must be done to come up with a better idea of what kinds of linguistic features are used to index lesbian sexuality. Language and sexuality overlooked lesbian language for many of its early years. Now that it is being studied, however, there is not a consensus in the field. To find out more about lesbian language, I have followed Robin Queen's example of looking at a medium riddled with stereotypes aiming to unearth the stereotypes surrounding lesbian speech. Queen chose to look at a text that was primarily read by lesbians. I analyzed a show that was watched by and targeted to all audiences. In doing so, this study uncovers a set of stereotypes that surround lesbian speech and provides insight into stereotypes about lesbian language.

1.4 The Power of Stereotypes

As mentioned in the discussion of Lakoff's work and as some researchers gesture to with their findings, the very notion of a women's language or a men's language is problematic—yet remains central to work in language and gender and language and sexuality. Are all men and all

women considered to be the group that speaks this language? Or is it all heterosexual men and women? Or all white men and women? The list of specific qualifications could go on. The same applies to gay men's language and lesbian language. Do men and women that engage in same-sex sexual activity only speak the language? Or do men and women that consider themselves gay or lesbian? Another issue is: what happens when a woman is gay? Does that mean she will use lesbian language or women's language? Or will she speak a hybrid of both? It becomes clear then that these notions of women's, men's, gay men's, and lesbian language do not describe the linguistic features always employed by women, men, gay men, or lesbians respectively. In fact some straight men, straight women, gay men, and lesbians may hardly ever employ the linguistic features attached to their identity.

However, again this does not mean that these notions of men's, women's, gay men's, and lesbian language should be thrown out as completely fictitious or useless. Different types of "languages" do exist—not in the sense that they are always employed by the categories that they are associated with, but rather, that they can be employed to perform an identity. People abide by the norm that there is a feminine and masculine way of talking; these binaries have power. Thus, one should not look at the research done on these linguistic features as irrelevant and unimportant. Researchers have found these linguistic characteristics in women, men, gay men, and lesbians respectively because they in fact do exist. They do not exist in the sense that men and women naturally talk differently, but rather that people believe these binaries exist and thus often choose to abide by them to perform their identity. All of these languages are learned. Then, they are performed, subconsciously or not, to index an identity.

Further, speakers have stereotypes about how all of these groups talk. These stereotypes have merit. For instance, even though researchers have found women use *like* less often than

men, *like* is still thought of as feminine.²⁴ Thus, women tend to employ *like* as a way to assert their femininity. Perhaps it is easier to understand when thinking about gay men and lesbian language. Linguistic features that identify a speaker as gay or lesbian tend to be thought of as a performance. For instance, a male that is using elaborate color terms and superfluous adjectives is usually understood as someone who is not adhering to gender norms and is therefore probably gay. Thus, listeners would consider him to be performing this identity through speech.

All of this goes to show that women's language and men's language, gay men's language and men's language, and lesbian language and women's language are not the static binaries that they are sometimes portrayed as, i.e. men talk this way and women talk that way; gay men talk this way and lesbians talk that way; straight men talk this way and gay men talk that way; straight women talk this way and lesbians talk that way. On the other hand, these languages both represent and recreate a stereotype about how women, men, gay men, and lesbians talk. In doing so, these languages can be employed to perform an identity. For instance, a lesbian woman may use lesbian language features to index her sexuality while talking with another woman she is interested in romantically, use women's language features when she is talking with a friend of hers, and use men language features when she goes to her job as a CEO. Identities are fluid. They are performed through a number of ways, one of which is speech. These languages, then, are merely tools in the performances of identity. Thus, despite the somewhat problematic nature of using an all encompassing term like women's language, men's language, etc., I will be using them because it is the commonly accepted title to in the field to call these linguistic features.

²⁴ See Daily-O'Cain (2000).

Chapter 2: Methodology

The previous chapter discussed why lesbian language is worthy of investigation, what research this thesis is in conversation with, and what it means to do a study of lesbian language. This chapter provides an overview of the methodology for this study's quantitative and qualitative analysis of *The L Word*'s language use.¹ To find whether *The L Word* is using mostly WL features, ML features, or a hybrid of both, I have studied a combination of WL and ML features both quantitatively and qualitatively.² Because knowledge about *The L Word* and its characters are also important background information to understand the results of my research, a brief overview containing this information is also presented.

2.1 About *The L Word*

Illene Chaiken is the creator and producer of *The L Word* (Bolonik 2005).³ Chaiken is the original creative genius for this show: she came up with the idea, the characters, and the storyline. As Bolonik summarizes based on quotes from Chaiken, Chaiken created this show because she is a lesbian identified woman who wanted to create a show that represented the world in which she lived.

Chaiken's idea was revolutionary because before *The L Word*, there had never been a mainstream television show that attempted to represent the lesbian community as a whole. All of the shows only had token lesbian characters that were limited in their display of their sexuality. In 1983, there was the first regularly featured lesbian on ABC's television show called *All My Children*. The first lesbian couple on television occurred five years later on *Heartbeat*. It was

¹ Details of what I mean by quantitative and qualitative analysis is provided in 2.2.

² These specific features are discussed at length in this chapter and were presented in the Introduction.

³ This information and the following information in the next two paragraphs is all summarized in *The L Word: Welcome to Our Planet* (Bolonik 2005).

not until 1991 that there was the first woman/woman kiss. A few years later, *Ellen* finally provided a show where the main character was a lesbian. Even though all of these events were groundbreaking, *The L Word* was revolutionary.

The idea for *The L Word* was envisioned before *Queer as Folk*, *Will and Grace*, and *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* were on television. Chaiken first presented her proposal for the show to some colleagues at Showtime, to which they responded that they thought it had potential, but would never be accepted by their superiors at Showtime. After more gay-centric television shows were prevalent, Chaiken decided to pitch her idea more formally. At the Golden Globes in 2000, Showtime accepted Chaiken's pitch for *The L Word* right before Chaiken won Best Television Movie for her movie, "Dirty Pictures." Chaiken immediately began planning and eventually successfully created a show she called *The L Word*: a television series about the friendships and romances of a group of lesbian friends living in West Hollywood. The show premiered on January 18, 2004 when "nearly a million viewers tuned in to the pilot, making it one of Showtime's most successful programs ever" (Bolonik 1). The first season had 13 episodes. *The L Word* continued for six more seasons, ending in 2009 with 70 episodes in total.

When the show was created, Showtime marketed it as "Same Sex: Different City" (Akass and McCabe 2006). This connection was not just a marketing device; *The L Word* resembles the show *Sex and the City*. *The L Word* is about a group of nine friends that live in a city. Like *Sex and the City* all of the women on *The L Word* are beautiful and intelligent. The show documents their lives, containing complex storylines about friendships, sexual encounters, and relationships—all themes that are relatable to most audiences. As Graham explains, "Whilst *The L Word* is overt about its lesbian content and clearly foregrounds specifically lesbian issues as

well as more general feminist ones, the drama revolves primarily around emotional dilemmas which most ‘pomo’ [postmodern] folk of any orientation can easily identify with” (Graham 2006, 29). In other words, most (regardless of their sexuality) can empathize and connect with the storylines on the show. Perhaps because of the marketing strategy and *The L Word*’s attempt to make the show accessible to straight audiences, the show is popular with both gay and straight audiences.

There are nine main characters in Season 1 of *The L Word*. Their names are Alice, Bette, Dana, Jenny, Kit, Marina, Shane, Tim, and Tina. Even though all of the characters vary greatly in talking time, all nine of them are considered the main characters of the show.⁴ These nine characters carry the weight of telling the stories of all kinds of lesbians. All of the characters are lesbians except Alice and Jenny who are bisexual women, Kit who is a heterosexual woman, and Tim who is a heterosexual man. Alice is a writer for LA magazine. She also creates “The Chart,” which resembles a brainstorming chart (i.e. it has names with branches that connect to other names) and contains all the information about who has had sex with whom.⁵ Her bisexuality, gossipy nature (as evidenced by her speech and “The Chart”), tattoo, and smoking habit make her a complex character with both overtly feminine and somewhat masculine characteristics. She has one same-sex relationship with a woman named Gabby.⁶ Bette is half African American and self-identifies as black. Her half-sister, Kit, is black, a recovering alcoholic, and a musician. Bette is the Director of the California Arts Center. This professional position puts Bette in a more stereotypically masculine role, especially in comparison to her

⁴ See Appendix 4 for total number of words each character speaks total and per episode.

⁵ See Appendix 15 for an example of “The Chart.” It is a reproduction from Bolonik (2005, cover insert).

⁶ Alice also has relationships with men, but that is not relevant to my analysis so that information is not provided.

partner, Tina, who quit her job so she could have Bette's and her baby. Dana is a famous tennis player, who comes out publicly and has her first serious girlfriend, Lara, in Season 1.⁷ Jenny and Tim are in a relationship during the majority of Season 1. Jenny is a writer and Tim is a swim coach. Jenny has a secret relationship with Marina while she is still with Tim. Marina is portrayed as an irresistible seductress. She is Italian, which is made clear by her accented American English speech and her use of Italian throughout the show. She owns "The Planet," which is a café, restaurant, and nightclub in *The L Word* and is a central meeting point for all the characters. Shane is the resident butch character, which is made obvious with her typically male name and masculine appearance. She is portrayed as highly promiscuous, only having a brief monogamous relationship with a married woman named Cherie.

In general then, the show provides a variety of characters. Note that the majority of the characters are white, feminine, and lesbians; Bette and Kit represent the racial diversity (because they identify as black), Shane is the only butch character, Alice and Jenny are the bisexual characters, and Tim and Kit are the heterosexual characters. Also, there are several notable relationships on the show: Bette and Tina, Jenny and Tim, Jenny and Marina, Alice and Gabby, Dana and Lara, and Shane and Cherie.

Chaiken hoped that these characters and their relationships would create an accurate representation of the lesbian community because, as Bolonik accounts, the "thesis of the show...is that there's not just one point of view, there is not just one lesbian" (Bolonik 2005, 76). Although the show's main goal was to create an accurate representation of the diverse lesbian community, which meant that the show attempted to have characters with different race, class,

⁷ Dana also becomes engaged to character named Tonya in this season, but this information is not relevant to my analysis of her relationship talk in Chapter 5 because only Lara and Dana's conversations are analyzed.

and professions along with a representation of butch and femme characters, Chaiken also recognizes that she did not create an ideally diverse group of characters. In her mind the show would not be believable if she provided the audience with a group of friends that represented every aspect of the lesbian community because that kind of all-encompassing diversity within a friend group is rare.⁸ Chaiken claims,

At the same time as I wanted there to be some diversity within the ensemble, I wanted it to be real. I just said I'm going to start with this core group and tell some truth about it and not create some complete fantasy of rainbow-style diversity that doesn't exist anywhere. (Bolonik 2005, 76)

Some critics accept and others contest the claim that the show provides an accurate portrayal of the lesbian community. The main body of criticism on *The L Word* is compiled in *Reading The L Word: Outing Contemporary Television* (Akass and McCabe 2006), which has 20 different scholarly works. This compilation of literature investigates a number of different things: reactions of the public about the show, visual representations on the show, if the show functions within the realm of heteronormativity, etc.⁹ None of the researchers use linguistic analysis to investigate their claims. In general, the editors and authors both iterate that *The L Word* has been both praised—for a favorable portrayal of lesbians on mainstream media—and

⁸ Chambers supports Chaiken's view that *The L Word* would not be realistic if it truly represented all diversity in the lesbian community. See Chambers (2006).

⁹ See Anderson-Minshall (2006) for critique of cast's public (or lack thereof) discussion of their actual sexuality and possible negative effects on the American public's acceptance of queer sexuality. See Graham (2006) for information about the show's success in the UK. See Heller (2006) and Bundy (2006) for discussion of the visual representation on *The L Word*. See Chambers (2006) for how the show is heteronormative. See Akass and McCabe (2006) for other articles written in response to *The L Word*.

criticized—for being hyper-feminine and heteronormative.¹⁰ These claims have been made only on a visual and contextual basis; no linguistic analysis has been done about *The L Word*.

Visually, the claim that the show is hyper-feminine is valid. All of the characters except Shane appear feminine. The heteronormative critique is more complicated. Visually, it appears that relationships are generally between two femme characters except for Shane’s relationship with Cherie, which is visually butch/femme. Relationships mainly being between two feminine characters suggest that the show is not always heteronormative; it does not only supply relationships where butch women are only attracted to feminine women and vice versa.

Contextually, the claim that the show is heteronormative appears relatively valid. The central relationship on the show, Bette and Tina, is between two femme characters, but they play the roles of a typical, heterosexual man/woman relationship. These critiques based on visual and contextual information are not sufficient. Language is a large part of identity performance.

Consequently, language must be taken into account to validate or refute these claims.

2.2 Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methodology

To investigate these claims that the show is hyper-feminine and heteronormative, I have done both quantitative and qualitative linguistic analysis of the entirety of Season 1 of *The L Word*. There are thirteen total episodes in Season 1.¹¹ The first episode is two hours long and the

¹⁰ Evidence for the hyper-feminine critique: “In short, consensus seems to have taken shape that while *The L Word* has much to offer audiences in terms of narrative pleasure and responsible cultural diversity, the series is otherwise entirely consistent with the television industry’s emphasis on conventional femininity and its portrayal of women as non-threatening (read: non-butch) objects to be visually enjoyed by some imagined mainstream (read: non queer).” (Heller 2006, 56). Evidence for the heteronormative critique: “*The L Word* is a heteronormative show about heterosexuals” (Chambers 2006, 82).

¹¹ On the DVD collection of the first season, there are 14 episodes listed because it counts the first episode as two episodes, which is likely a result of it being the premiere and two hours long rather than the typical one hour long show. There were only 13 distinct episodes and the written

rest are one hour long. I studied the first season because it is the season where *The L Word* establishes the identity of its characters and the lesbian community the show represents. Because the audience is unfamiliar with the characters, the show emphasizes their identity, almost caricaturing its characters. Arguably this clear, more exaggerated display of identities provides the best season to analyze linguistic features for insight on stereotypical lesbian language.

The quantitative analysis involved counting WL and ML features. The features were hedges; intensifiers; *oh my god*; focuser/quotative *like*; taboo language; /n/ endings versus /ŋ/ endings for present progressive verbs and specific lexical items like *anything*, *evening*, *everything*, *morning*, etc.; *gonna*; *guys*; and *man*.¹² Hedges, intensifiers, *oh my god*, and focuser/quotative *like* were all counted because they are stereotypically feminine linguistic features. *Gonna*, /n/ endings for “ing” words, *guys*, and *man* are all elements of ML.

Hedges and intensifiers do opposite work in a conversation, but both are considered WL. Hedges are any linguistic device that softens an utterance, i.e. *I guess*, *I mean*, *just*, *kind of*, *well*, *um*, *you know*.¹³ For example, if a speaker is asking for help, they could say (hedges bolded for emphasis), “**Well I mean** it’s **just I kind of** need your help,” which would be a softer statement than the version without hedges, “I need your help.” An intensifier does the opposite; it boosts

transcripts of the show were numbered 1.1-1.13 so I have chosen to count the first show as one episode, making 13 episodes overall.

¹² *Gonna* is the spelling I am using to indicate the sound of when *going to* is contracted, creating a sound that is commonly spelled *gonna*. Focuser/quotative *like* is the use of *like* to introduce new ideas (focuser *like*) or to introduce speech, thought, or action (quotative *like*). See Daily-O’Cain (2000). /n/ is the IPA symbol for the sound *n* and /ŋ/ is the IPA symbol for the sound *ng* make together. The “special lexical items” counted in the /n/ and /ŋ/ category are only words that could be abbreviated to /n/. See Appendix 2 for entire list of the /n/ and /ŋ/ words, intensifiers, hedges, and taboo language.

¹³ See Appendix 2 for entire list of hedges counted. Also, although the words *uh*, *um*, *well*, and *you know* can be used as a filler (a word to maintain the conversational floor while thinking of what to say), they are also used to hedge statements. In the vast majority of cases, these words were used as a hedge rather than a filler so I decided to universally count them as hedges.

the meaning of an utterance, i.e. *really, so, very*.¹⁴ For instance, a speaker that says (intensifiers bolded for emphasis), “I am **really, really** happy,” is emphasizing how happy they are and implying they have more happiness than if they were just happy. Lakoff lists both hedges and intensifiers as linguistic devices that are central to WL features (Lakoff 1975). Other linguists have tested Lakoff’s assertion that hedges and intensifiers are WL features and found it is generally the case that women both actually use and are thought to use these features more than men. Although it is generally accepted that these two features are indicators of feminine language, there are no studies to my knowledge where the researcher provides a list of the intensifiers and hedges that they have counted in their research; all studies only provide definitions for hedges and intensifiers. Because of this, I was unable to count an already established list of hedges or intensifiers. I created a list of my own, which is included in the appendix.

Oh my god and focuser/quotative *like* are two utterances that have a very strong feminine indexicality. Focuser *like* signals new information (i.e. “Like I went to the store”). Quotative *like* signals thought, speech, or action (i.e. “She was like, ‘I’m going to the store’”).¹⁵ For instance, if a speaker says (*Oh my god* and *like* bolded for emphasis), “**Oh my god** did you **like** hear what happened?” they are thought of as feminine (and relatively uneducated).¹⁶ They are both elements of “valley girl” speech and are used when doing overtly feminine caricatures.

¹⁴ See Appendix 2 for entire list of intensifiers counted.

¹⁵ For more information on quotative or focuser *like*, see Daily-O’Cain (2000) or Curzan and Adams (2009).

¹⁶ Daily O’Cain (2000) finds focuser and quotative *like* use is less prevalent among women speakers than men. When she tested social attitudes about *like* users, Daily-O’Cain found there is a strong stereotype that women use it more often than men and that *like* users are thought of as uneducated, using bad grammar, and having a poor use of English, which she argues is more powerful than the positive attitudes (cheerful, friendly, attractive, and successful) associated with

Taboo language, *gonna*, /n/ ending versus /ŋ/ endings for present participles and specific lexical items (e.g. *anything*, *evening*, *everything*, *morning*), *guys*, and *man* were all counted because they index masculinity.¹⁷ Taboo language, or expletives, includes any words that are not considered socially acceptable.¹⁸ Research demonstrates that taboo language is more prevalent among men and is generally thought to be masculine (De Klerk 1997). Women do use taboo language, but as De Klerk explains, “because expletives contravene social taboos and are often used to shock people, or indicate contempt, they have become associated with power and masculinity in Western cultures” (De Klerk 1997, 147). In which case, taboo language denotes masculinity regardless of the fact that women do use it. Note that words like *gosh*, *golly*, *dang*, *shucks*, etc. were not counted because they are euphemisms for expletives; they are not themselves expletives.¹⁹

Guys and *man* also denote masculinity. The use of both words creates a sort of solidarity between groups of people and has masculine, brotherly overtones. Kiesling analyzes the use of the word *dude* and argues it creates a “cool solidarity” between men (Kiesling 2004). Because *guys* and *man* are used similarly to *dude*, this argument extends to them.

Masculinity is also indexed by /n/ endings (Trudgill 1998).²⁰ Of course /n/ endings can also denote other identities because they are an element of a number of varieties of American English. However, one of the ways that it can be used is to index masculinity and it is generally accepted as an element of ML. This is because /n/ endings are not as formal and men are more

like usage. Although *oh my god* is not discussed in this study, it has the same connotations as *like* and most likely would have the same social attitudes corresponding to its use.

¹⁷ Note that all words ending in *ing* are not counted. Only words that could be pronounced with an /n/ ending were counted. For a complete list of *ing* words counted, see Appendix 2.

¹⁸ See Appendix 2 for entire list of taboo language.

¹⁹ Arguably these euphemisms actually are an element of WL. See Lakoff (1975).

²⁰ Not /ŋ/ endings indicate femininity because they are more formal endings and women tend to speak more formally (Cheshire 1998).

likely to be colloquial than women (Cheshire 1998). *Gonna* is associated with masculinity for this same reason; speakers consider *gonna* informal, and informality indexes masculinity.

To conduct this research, I counted all the instances of all these features for every character on the show.²¹ I worked from the prewritten transcripts for each of the 13 episodes of the show, noting all features being counted for this study; watched the episodes to verify the accuracy of each written transcript, making notes of any changes (particularly noting /n/, /ŋ/, and *gonna*, which were typically not specified in the written transcripts); and recorded each feature-specific word counted per character.²² After all of the instances of each of the categories were counted, the numbers were then normalized to represent how many times each linguistic feature happened per 1000 words for every main character.²³ The results and analysis of these results are detailed in Chapter 3.

After completing my quantitative analysis of these features, I then looked at the same features qualitatively. To do qualitative analysis, I looked at particular excerpts of the show and

²¹ Note that although I recorded the results for every character, only the main characters' results are reproduced in the body of Chapter 3. See Appendix 5 for total (non-normalized) results of all characters. I kept a record of each word within each feature group that I counted so I could provide lists of what words I counted. See Appendix 6-14 for lists of all words counted for each feature of the main characters.

²² The transcripts were online at <http://www.1-word.com/transcripts/transcripts.html>. Each transcript was about 30-35 pages (except the first episode, which was longer because it recorded the two hour premiere). Volunteers created these transcripts and posted them online for the public use. I am indebted to the work of these volunteers. Without their work, this research project's scope would have to have been significantly narrowed. I made the /n/, /ŋ/, and *gonna* distinction to listening to the word in question multiple times until I was sure what the variation was. Note that I only counted *ing* words that could be either /n/ or /ŋ/ (i.e. a word like *thing* was not counted, but *doing* was).

²³ To do this, I counted the total number of words that each character spoke in the entirety of Season 1. I worked from the prewritten transcripts, separating each character's speech into separate documents. I used the word count feature on Microsoft Word to calculate the total words. Then I solved the ratio of $x/1000 = (\text{total \# of feature}) / (\text{total \# of words})$. For instance, Jenny's hedges were solved by $x/1000 = 23/5553$. See Appendix 3 for non-normalized numbers of each feature and total number of words spoken per character.

analyzed those portions in depth, paying close attention to how the features I counted in my quantitative research were being used. To represent the passages I analyzed, I used an adaptation of Jeffersonian discourse analysis. Conventions used are presented and explained in Appendix 1. Chapters 4 and 5 provide all of my qualitative research results. The themes for Chapter 4 and 5 emerge from the data itself.

Taken together, quantitative and qualitative data provide the best overall picture of how *The L Word* uses language to index its characters' lesbian identities. Quantitative research can provide general, global themes. Qualitative research does different work; it can give a more detailed analysis. For example, quantitative analysis provides the information that a speaker has a very high total hedge use, and qualitative analysis could show that this hedge use is high when talking to most people, but there is no hedge use when talking to an assistant. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative research, then, is essential to understanding language use. The two research strategies complement one another, providing a very thorough overview of the general trends, examples of these general trends in action, and situational exceptions to these general trends that occur.

Chapter 3: Investigation of Hyper-Feminine Language

As discussed in Chapter 2, quantitative research provides an overview of the language trends for each character. It can map out how characters on *The L Word* tend to talk, giving insight into whether the characters generally speak in stereotypically masculine ways, feminine ways, or a combination of both. This chapter analyzes the quantitative results of all the features studied. Looking at the general trends for each character's language use investigates the validity of the critique that *The L Word* is hyper-feminine because it provides evidence of whether all the lesbian/bisexual characters use primarily WL features and limited ML features (thus validating the hyper-feminine critique), primarily ML features and limited WL features (thus complicating the hyper-feminine critique), or a mixture of ML and WL features (thus also complicating the hyper-feminine critique).

3.1 General Trends of Characters' Language

In looking at this quantitative data, note the difference between the frequency of features in each category (i.e. Alice has 20.71 hedges and Jenny has 30.07 hedges), if the character has a high number of a feature in comparison to the average (i.e. Tim has a relatively high amount of taboo language), and how the characters' WL features relate to their ML features (i.e. Jenny generally has high WL features and low ML features). If the show were strictly hyper-feminine, there would be high WL features and low ML features across all of the lesbians, particularly among the femme lesbians (Alice, Bette Dana, Jenny, Marina, and Tina). This is not to say that actual speech would fall neatly into this binary of high WL and low ML and vice versa. However, since this is a television show, speech is planned and characterization relies heavily on stereotypes. Because of this, if all of the characters are supposed to be hyper-feminine, then arguably there should generally be high WL features and low ML features. As the results

demonstrate below, this is not exclusively the case. Jenny does have high WL features and low ML features; Alice, Bette, Dana, Marina, and Tina have more complex results; and Shane has high numbers of almost all ML features and low number of all WL features.

| Amount of Each Linguistic Feature Per 1000 Words | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Like | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Language | /n/ | /ŋ/ | Percent of /n/ in total /n/ and /ŋ/ environments ¹ | Gonna | Guys | Man |
| Alice | 3.90 | 20.71 | 7.23 | 2.96 | 8.87 | 7.72 | 15.40 | 0.30 | 4.76 | 1.97 | 0.00 |
| Bette | 0.25 | 22.83 | 9.87 | 0.49 | 4.69 | 1.60 | 24.44 | 0.06 | 2.59 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Dana | 2.40 | 30.97 | 10.41 | 3.20 | 10.10 | 1.33 | 17.35 | 0.07 | 2.13 | 2.60 | 0.00 |
| Jenny | 1.60 | 30.07 | 12.24 | 2.80 | 7.92 | 0.72 | 21.97 | 0.03 | 4.14 | 0.72 | 0.54 |
| Kit | 0.34 | 22.82 | 11.24 | 0.00 | 4.09 | 14.65 | 8.86 | 0.62 | 6.13 | 1.02 | 0.34 |
| Marina | 0.00 | 15.40 | 6.08 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.55 | 24.86 | 0.02 | 1.10 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Shane | 0.00 | 20.40 | 5.18 | 0.00 | 15.80 | 3.00 | 22.06 | 0.18 | 6.26 | 2.18 | 1.63 |
| Tim | 0.00 | 23.20 | 5.80 | 0.00 | 12.60 | 10.27 | 19.38 | 0.35 | 4.99 | 0.00 | 0.80 |
| Tina | 0.18 | 23.24 | 11.40 | 2.77 | 5.54 | 4.60 | 18.26 | 0.20 | 7.74 | 0.55 | 0.00 |
| Average | 0.96 | 23.29 | 8.83 | 1.36 | 7.73 | 4.94 | 19.18 | 0.20 | 4.43 | 1.00 | 0.37 |

In looking at each characters' results, there are two clear trends: Tim and Shane have the most ML features because they have the most taboo language, /n/ endings, and *gonna*; Dana and Jenny have the most WL features because they have the highest hedges, intensifiers, *oh my god*, and focuser/quotative *like*. Yet, the rest of the results are more complicated; characters use a combination of ML and WL features. Although Dana has high WL features, she also has relatively high taboo language and has the highest use of *guys*. Alice and Tina have a mixture of results. Alice uses overtly stereotypical feminine language (high focuser/quotative *like* and *oh my god*), but also uses a high number of /n/ endings. Tina has high hedges and intensifiers, but also has high /n/ and *gonna* use. Bette and Marina both have low masculine language features, but do not have the expected corresponding high feminine language features that would make them use hyper-feminine speech. The complicated results indicate the show does not provide

¹ This is calculated by taking the total the (normalized /n/) / (normalized /n/ + normalized /ŋ/)

just stereotypically hyper-feminine language for its characters. It only does so with Jenny, who does have a highly feminized language. The rest of the characters' results do not fall into this stereotype so easily; they have a mixture of linguistic characteristics.

3.2 General Trends of Linguistic Features

Looking at particular features also does not provide a clear-cut picture. The average number of hedges for all of the character is 23.29. Jenny and Dana have the highest number of hedges. Marina has the lowest number of hedges and Shane has the second lowest number. Shane and Alice almost have the same number of hedges, both of whom have fewer hedges than Tim, the heterosexual man. Only looking at the hedges then, it is clear that the femme characters do not exclusively use hyper-feminine language. Jenny and Dana's high hedge use is typical because they are both femme and Shane's low hedge use is typical because she is butch. However, Marina being the lowest hedge user and Alice's result of having the same amount as Shane indicates that hedge use does not indicate that the show is hyper-feminine. It instead reveals *The L Word* does not have all of its visually femme speakers use feminine language. In Alice's case, this is most likely because she is bisexual. She may be performing her atypical sexuality by performing atypical gender. The rest of the characters are lesbians, so perhaps they do not have to use gender variance to index their sexuality; their sexuality may be made clear in other ways.

Oh my god and *like* results are similar, which is most likely because *oh my god* and *like* both tend to index extreme femininity. Alice, Dana, and Jenny use these features the most. Jenny and Dana's use correlates to the other WL features, but Alice's use does not keep with her other WL results because she does not have universally high WL features. This demonstrates that not all of the women who use other WL features use *oh my god* and *like*, nor do *oh my god* and *like*

speakers use all WL features. Alice most likely uses *oh my god* and *like* because she is portrayed as gossipy, which is evident with her creation of “The Chart.” Dana and Jenny are both in the process of coming out in Season 1, so their usage of extremely feminine language may stem from the producers signaling that they do not yet know how or are choosing not to perform a lesbian identity. Overall, neither lexical item is a frequently used. Arguably if *The L Word* were exclusively hyper-feminine then all of the femme characters would use these two lexical items because these linguistic features characterize its users as overtly feminine.

In order to demonstrate how many times a character used an /n/ ending instead of an /ŋ/ more clearly, one of the columns on the chart represents the percentage of /n/ endings per total /n/ and /ŋ/. Generally, these results are expected. Most characters have a low number of /n/ endings. This goes along with the notion that *The L Word* is hyper-feminine because the characters generally use the more feminine /ŋ/ ending. The characters that do use a notable amount /n/ endings are Alice, Kit, Shane, Tim, and Tina. /n/ endings index a number of different things: working class, masculinity, and ethnicity.² Kit has the highest number of /n/ endings. This is most likely done to index African American Vernacular English (AAVE), which is a dialect of American English that systematically differs from Standard American English. Kit’s /n/ endings and lexical items like *ain’t* work to perform her black identity. Bette, Kit’s sister, does not have the same amount of /n/ endings. This correlates to the commentary about how Bette’s blackness is questioned. Bette probably lacks the /n/ endings because she also lacks the lexical elements of AAVE. Tim has the second highest number of /n/ endings. Unlike Kit whose /n/ use indexes her ethnicity, Tim’s /n/ use indexes masculinity. Interestingly, Alice and Tina also have high frequency of /n/ endings. This is a bit unexpected. In general, Alice is

² See Trudgill (1997) for information about /n/ endings indexing working class and masculinity. See Curzan and Adams (2009) for information about /n/ endings in AAVE.

relatively feminine; she tends to gossip and uses *oh my god* and *like*. At the same time, she is also shown as kind of masculine because she has shorter hair, a tattoo, and smokes.

Consequently, her high /n/ endings might be because of Alice's slight undertones of masculinity. It also could be because Alice is bisexual. This may make Alice a television character that is stylized to perform her sexuality by performing atypical gender. Tina has 25% /n/ endings, but it is unclear why this happens. This could be because an actress from North Carolina plays Tina's character and /n/ endings are prevalent in Southern American English. Because Shane is the only butch character, it makes sense that she has a relatively high number of /n/ endings. The complex results of /n/ endings complicate the idea that the show is only hyper-feminine.

Generally, it appears that *The L Word* does not exclusively have hyper-feminine language. Consequently, although the show presents visually feminine characters, it is not a show that simply presents only lesbians with all feminine performance. If all of the characters were indeed hyper-feminine, their language would universally have high women's language features and low men's language features. The quantitative analysis above demonstrates that language choice for the characters does not support the broad claim of only hyper-feminine presentation. *The L Word's* language choice does not simply reify the stereotype that lesbian language is strictly masculine. It instead complicates this stereotype and suggests lesbian language draws on a combination of registers (namely ML and WL) to perform their sexuality.

Now that the groundwork has been laid about what the quantitative results are overall, it is imperative to look at these numbers more carefully and provide qualitative analysis.

Quantitative results are useful. They illustrate general trends. However, they are not the only things that should be looked at when determining how *The L Word* portrays lesbian language.

Identity performance is not static; a person is not always performing the same type of identity all

the time regardless of the circumstance. For instance, a woman performs her femininity at work differently than she does with her wife. This is also true in *The L Word*. The following chapters will demonstrate how these quantitative results are only part of the story.

Chapter 4: Investigation of Heteronormativity Through the Linguistic Butch/Femme Binary

The previous chapter analyzed the quantitative results and investigated whether *The L Word* is indeed hyper-feminine. This chapter moves from the hyper-feminine critique to the heteronormative critique using primarily qualitative analysis. It investigates both the source of this claim that *The L Word* is heteronormative and if there is linguistic evidence to support it. Linguistic analysis, which has never been done to investigate this claim, provides a more nuanced analysis of this critique because it can offer data that is not as obvious as the storyline of the show (the data used to support the critique currently). The critique that *The L Word* is heteronormative relies heavily on the concept of heteronormativity; heteronormativity is essentially the assumption that everyone falls into two categories (male and female), that males and females are opposite (but compatible) counterparts, and that all normal people are heterosexual (Baker 2008,109).¹ Chambers articulates the main argument behind the heteronormative critique of *The L Word* when he explains,

The narrative structure of *The L Word*—despite (and perhaps because of) its central cast of characters—often serves to perpetuate, preserve and sustain the normativity of heterosexuality. In short, one might best describe the show aporetically: *The L Word* is a heteronormative show about heterosexuals. (Chambers 2006, 83)

Because *The L Word* is one of the few shows applauded for displaying lesbian relationships on television it may seem surprising that *The L Word* is criticized for being heteronormative, a system that mandates compulsory heterosexuality. The show is *not* said to be heteronormative because it shows heterosexual men and women in relationships. In fact, *The L Word* does not

¹ As Paul Baker discusses in *Sexed Texts*, heteronormativity is a term that was “coined by Warner (1993) and developed by Chambers (2003)” (Baker 2008, 109).

only show heterosexual relationships; it shows primarily lesbian and some heterosexual relationships.²

If the show is not criticized as heteronormative because of representing only heterosexual couples, why then do critics claim it is heteronormative? Critics evaluate the show as heteronormative because they claim, “in the case of *The L Word*, we find narrative structures that actually mimic and help to reify the structures of heteronormativity” (Chambers 2006, 85). Thus, *The L Word* is not criticized because all of the relationships are between men and women (that criticism would be invalid), but rather that heteronormativity still functions within the same-sex relationships on the show. A heteronormative same-sex relationship means that the relationship still maintains the binary instated by heteronormativity. Because it is a same-sex relationship, the existent binary is not a male/female binary but instead is a masculine/feminine binary (an extension and performance of male/female binary).

One of the ways—and perhaps the easiest way—that the show can be heteronormative is to have an over-simplified butch/femme binary. The butch/femme binary is heteronormative because it functions under the same assumption: there are masculine and feminine people (albeit in this case they are all women) and they are opposite, compatible counterparts. This is not to say that butch lesbians perform identically like heterosexual men, nor femme lesbians perform exactly like heterosexual women. Butch and femme performance is much more complex than that. At the same time, butch women do rely on masculinity and femme women rely on femininity as part of their identity performance. Arguably then, butch/femme is the lesbian

² Jenny and Tim are the only one central relationship on the show that is heterosexual. There are two other heterosexual relationships that Alice partakes in because she is bisexual. However, these relationships are not central and one of them is still not normative because she has a relationship with a man that identifies himself as a lesbian. Consequently, the show almost exclusively portrays same-sex relationships.

version of the feminine/masculine binary because it is an extension of that binary. Consequently, to understand if the show is heteronormative (because clearly it does not portray heteronormativity based on its depiction of sexuality), it is important to look at the characters to see if a butch/femme binary exists.

To investigate this butch/femme binary, it is necessary to analyze Shane because she is considered “the resident butch character on *The L Word*” (Bolonik 2005, 28). Her butchness stems from a variety of factors. Perhaps the most obvious, overt clue that she is meant to be the butch character is her name: Shane. Shane is typically a male name and so her name feeds into this image of her as a masculine lesbian, which the *The L Word* is translating to being a butch lesbian. Shane is definitely not the most butch individual on the butch/femme spectrum; she still wears make up, has short hair that is cut in a feminine way, and wears relatively tight clothes. Despite the fact that Shane is not the buzz-cut, overweight, flannel wearing, overtly butch lesbian, Shane is the most butch character on the butch/femme spectrum on *The L Word*. The show emphasizes this difference by contrasting her characters with other lesbians on the show.³ This chapter, then, uses Shane as a focal point in investigating whether *The L Word* is heteronormative. It begins by discussing how *The L Word* positions Shane as masculine and thus different than the other lesbian characters, then moves to explain how Shane’s use of men’s language further positions her as masculine, and finally demonstrates how her relationships both reify and complicate whether Shane’s character always creates a butch/femme binary. In general, *the L Word*’s portrayal of Shane is heteronormative in the sense that the producers use her visual appearance and language to juxtapose her character against the other lesbian

³ “She does not register explicitly butch signifiers but rather is *implied as contextually butch when positioned alongside the other characters’ femme gender displays*” (Moore and Schilt 2006, 161).

characters to create a butch/femme binary. Yet, at the same time, her relationships do not only support the conclusion that the show is heteronormative; they also complicate this notion.

4.1 Positioning of Shane as Masculine

Shane is seen as butch because her character is visually marked as being masculine—or at least more masculine than the other characters. She appears differently from the other characters with her short hair, androgynous clothing, “husky voice,” “boyish physical gestures,” and “Bowie-esque glam-rock stylings” (Moore and Schilt 2006, 160). For instance, Shane is sometimes mistaken for a male, which is interesting because, as critics claim and I agree with, Shane “ultimately reads visually and contextually—as one of a circle of *lesbian* friends—as undeniably female” (Moore and Schilt 2006, 161). Being mistaken for a man makes Shane appear even more masculine than she already does—especially because she is the only character that has this issue. One of the times that Shane is mistaken for a man is when Alice and Shane are sitting in The Planet. Alice notices that Shane is being stared at and Shane immediately assumes that she is being mistaken for a man.

- 1 Alice: Okay, there's two guys staring at you (.) and I think one of them is Harry
 - 2 Samchuck
 - (7)
 - 3 Shane: Fuck (.) He thinks I'm a guy (.) all of those fucking gay Hollywood mafia
 - 4 fags think I'm some twink they can pick up on (2) Alright (.) I'm outta here
- (LW 1.5, 8)⁴

What is interesting about this excerpt is that Shane does not even hesitate in coming up with a reason about why the men are staring at her. People could be staring at her for plenty of reasons. For example, people could be staring at her because Shane’s picture was all over the LA area with the words “Heartbreaker” written above her face because one of Shane’s lovers was upset

⁴ LW stands for *The L Word*. The episode and page number corresponds to the written transcripts online. The transcript was created by watching the actual episode. Thus, each citation credits both the page number that the excerpt corresponds to and the episode itself.

with Shane. Shane's immediate reaction that it must be because she has been mistaken for a guy makes it appear like this mistake is a common one. Further, her vehement reaction to it makes it appear like this has happened many times, she has experience with the type of men who mistake her for a man, and she is upset by the prospect of it happening again. Her reaction also has elements of men's language. Shane's taboo language (line 3) and the use of the word *fags* (line 4) perform her masculinity. Using *fags* distances her from effeminate males (i.e. males that do not perform masculinity well).

People mistaking Shane for a man continues throughout the show. The man that was staring at Shane in the previous example turns out to be Harry Samchuck, a wealthy gay man that is friends with Shane's friend Clive. Clive invites Shane to go out with him and Shane finds herself with Harry, who still thinks that she is a man.

- 1 Harry: You are::: delicious
(2)
 - 2 Shane: Why didn't you tell him
 - 3 Clive: I didn't have a chance I was going to=
 - 4 Harry: =O::h! tell me! tell me what
(1)
 - 5 Clive: Well Harry Shane's a=
 - 6 Harry: =Shane's a what Shane is an ex-con a murderer perhaps (.)
 - 7 oh god please tell me you're not heterosexual
 - 8 Shane: I'm a girl (1) female (1) Harry
(3)
 - 9 Harry: ((laughter)) my, my, my androgyny confounds doesn't it (.) well I suppose it's
 - 10 revolutionary but I must admit I am disappointed because it's always the skinny
 - 11 boys that have (.) ooh the biggest cocks
 - 12 Shane: You're a real fucking charmer you know that
- (LW 1.6, 4)

In this excerpt, Shane is mad at Clive for not telling Harry that she is a woman. It appears that this news is shocking to Harry. He guesses all sorts of things that Shane might need to tell him, but does not think of Shane being a woman. Shane then uses two different words *girl* and *female* to reinforce that she is in fact a woman. Interestingly, she indicates both that she 1) performs

The suggestion of Shane being the sperm donor for Tina's child, although done jokingly, is an outward expression of how Shane's friends think that she is masculine. Dana makes this joke about how Shane is a man and then goes on to criticize how Shane is dressed. Note that in line 11 Dana does not say Shane looks like a man. Instead, she comments that Shane looks like a "dyke" (line 11), which is not the same as saying that Shane looks like a lesbian, a gay woman, etc. Dana's use of *dyke* taps into the stereotype that lesbian women look masculine; thus she is equating Shane with the ultimate stereotype of lesbians being masculine. Dana also distances herself from this masculinity by using features of women's language. She uses multiple hedges (line 7, 9, and 11) and focuser *like* (line 11). Shane, on the other hand, sounds masculine when she says, "I totally dig you got to make a living" (line 16).

Even Shane somewhat buys into the stereotype that she is masculine because she gives advice on men. It seems like she understands men better than the other lesbians on the show. This sets her up as masculine—she is masculine because she understands men.

- 1 Bette: What an ego bruiser (3) three turndowns in one night
(1)
- 2 Tina: Is there something wrong with our pitch
- 3 Shane: It has nothing to do with you guys (.) you know, it's the it's the new male
- 4 Dana: What? What do you know about men I mean you've never even been with a
5 man
- 6 Shane: Well the new male is more spiritual than the old male (.) He sees his sperm
7 as an extension of his inner being whereas the old male shot into any female
8 without thinking about what would happen the new male totally cares what
9 becomes of his seed
- 10 Alice: Oh my god (.) It's Yoda
- 11 Dana: Yeah, they teach that at hairdresser school by the way
- 12 Bette: Well that's just great why do they have to go all sensitive on us just when we
13 need them to keep on being the same old assholes
- 14 Shane: I don't know(.) Alright (.) Yeah, we're gonna go
- 15 Tina: Oh::
- 16 Shane: Goodnight you guys
- 17 Dana: Bye
- 18 Bette: Bye
- 19 Alice: She's totally going home with that girl

(LW 1.1, 31)

Here, Shane is giving Tina and Bette advice on why they cannot find anyone to be a donor. Dana brings up the fact that Shane has never had sex with a man (line 4-5). This comment is left unanswered; Shane goes on giving advice (line 6). Thus, it is not expressly stated, but the general consensus is that Shane is masculine so she can give advice on men. At the very end of the excerpt, Shane brings a new girl home with her (line 19). This also taps into Shane's masculinity because she is bringing someone home with her that she does not know.

Another way that Shane is portrayed as masculine is that she is hyper-sexualized. Shane is marked as different than the other characters by her "predatory womanizing" (Moore and Schilt 2006, 160), which is commonly associated with masculinity. Shane is cast as someone that colloquially would be called a "player": a suave, smooth talker who has sex with multiple people. Evidence for Shane being promiscuous and allegedly irresistible is prevalent throughout the show. One of the most obvious cases of this occurs when Dana tries to figure out if Lara, a girl she has a crush on, is gay. Alice first checks the Chart (a record of who has had sex with who) to see if Lara has slept with Shane. This indicates Shane's excessive promiscuity. When Alice finds Lara has not slept with Shane, all of the main characters go to watch Lara at work to see if she is gay or straight. They do a number of things to check Lara's sexuality: what kind of earrings and nail polish she wears, if she has a reaction to Bette and Tina kissing, etc. After a number of tests, they determine that it is unclear whether Lara is a lesbian so they decide to do "the Shane test." Shane flirts with Lara to see if she will respond by flirting back. Lara does not take the bait so all of the characters announce that Lara is not gay. In other words, the show is promoting the idea if a girl is not attracted to Shane, then she cannot be gay because Shane is the ultimate sex symbol.

Not surprisingly then, the audience is first introduced to lesbian sex on *The L Word* with Shane and another woman. Shane goes skinny-dipping with another woman in Bette and Tina's pool and has sex with her. This occurs early in the first episode. Shane is portrayed as hypersexual because she appears fully confident in having sex outside, in daylight, and in someone else's pool. The woman she has sex with is never introduced to the audience, leaving the audience to assume she is just a random woman.

Shane's sexual prowess is continuously emphasized throughout the show. She is constantly being hit on and sleeping with different women. To emphasize this fact, Lacey, one of the women that Shane has sex with, starts an anti-Shane campaign. Lacey is first introduced to the audience at Bette and Tina's party.

- 1 Bette: Have you ever noticed that every time Shane walks into a room someone
- 2 leaves crying?
- ((Bette asks Alice this just as a blonde girl, Lacey taps Shane on the shoulder and the camera cuts their conversation))
- (1)
- 3 Lacey: Shane?
- 4 Shane: Yeah hey
- 5 Lacey: Hey how come you didn't call me the other night? I left like 5 messages
- 6 Shane: Oh well I you know I haven't had my cell phone so when I go get my cell
- 7 phone and I check my messages, I will call you (.) Alright it was good to see
- 8 you, though!
- 9 Lacey: Mm-hmm
- 10 Shane: Take care

(LW 1.1, 20-1)

In this excerpt, Bette introduces Shane as a heartbreaker (line 1-2). Bette is one of Shane's friends so the statement is more likely to be taken as an accurate portrayal of Shane. It is no coincidence that Shane and Lacey's conversation mirrors Bette's observation; Bette indicates Shane is a player and Lacey asks Shane why she has been ignoring her calls (i.e. acting like a player).

After this scene, Lacey starts a campaign against Shane. She confronts Shane at The Planet, a café that Shane and her friends frequent regularly.

- 1 Lacey: You can just kiss your little 4-F's goodbye!
 - 2 Shane: Lacey, stop.
 - 3 Marina: Whoa whoa whoa!
 - ((Marina forcefully separates Lacey from Shane. Shane moves away quickly.))
 - 4 Marina: What are you talking about?
 - 5 Lacey: The 4-F's (.) She finds 'em, feels 'em, fucks 'em and forgets 'em but I'm gonna
 - 6 tell the whole world who you are
- (LW 1.2, 9)

Lacey's "four F's" clearly paint Shane with a negative stigma. Shane is depicted as a heartless person who only uses women for sex. Because Lacey is so outspoken, the audience does not necessarily see Lacey's case sympathetically, but it is memorable.

Even if the audience was not shocked by Lacey's reaction and the multitude of women that Shane slept with, her sexual prowess is also emphasized through her past acts of prostitution, which is brought up twice during the show. The fact that it is brought up twice suggests that this information was supposed to be emphasized. In the following excerpt, Clive is telling Harry about Shane's history of prostitution.

- 1 Clive: You know Shane and I turned tricks in Santa Monica for six months
 - 2 Harry: Really? What did uh what did our friend do?
 - 3 Clive: She only gave hand jobs (1) No, no matter how much they offered her (.) She
 - 4 could've made a lot of money
- (LW 1.6, 5)

Clive almost seems to brag about the fact that they used to engage in prostitution (line 1) and criticizing Shane for not doing more than she did (line 3-4). Shane's prostitution and promiscuity is also mentioned later in the show when Shane is talking to Clea, Cherie's daughter.

- 1 Shane: Look when I say I've been with people I don't mean 20 or 30
- 2 Clea: Okay so what like hundreds thousands what?
- (2)
- 3 Shane: Somewhere between (.) 950 and 1200 since I was 14

- 4 Clea: Whoa (1) Well (.) whatever you know it doesn't matter I don't care
 5 Shane: I turned tricks in Santa Monica with my friend, Clive (.) And all these guys
 6 thought I was some little street fag and I could've been killed
 (LW 1.12, 1-2)

This excerpt illustrates a number of things. First, Shane has had sex with an absurd amount of people. Second, she used to engage in prostitution. Third, she was mistaken for a man.

4.2 Shane's Use of Men's Language

Contextually and visually, Shane is represented as masculine. Characters talk about Shane as being a man and Shane is mistaken for a man. She gives advice on understanding men. She is portrayed as a hyper-sexualized character that uses girls, which is also a masculine quality. Although it is clear that Shane is marked as butch physically and contextually, it is important to investigate Shane's language. Her butch performance would not be felicitous without masculine language elements. Critics argue that Shane's character is created in juxtaposition to the other very femme characters to make her appear butch, Shane's language should differ from the other characters on the show.⁵ This is generally the case, as shown per the data below.⁶

⁵ Moore and Schilt 2006 argue that Shane's masculinity stems from her character contrasting with the other characters.

⁶ This chart is the same chart presented in Chapter 3 when discussing general results, but has been reprinted here for the reader's convenience.

| Amount of Each Linguistic Feature Per 1000 Words | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Like | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Language | /n/ | /ŋ/ | Percent of /n/ in total /n/ and /ŋ/ environments ⁷ | Gonna | Guys | Man |
| Alice | 3.90 | 20.71 | 7.23 | 2.96 | 8.87 | 7.72 | 15.40 | 0.30 | 4.76 | 1.97 | 0.00 |
| Bette | 0.25 | 22.83 | 9.87 | 0.49 | 4.69 | 1.60 | 24.44 | 0.06 | 2.59 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Dana | 2.40 | 30.97 | 10.41 | 3.20 | 10.10 | 1.33 | 17.35 | 0.07 | 2.13 | 2.60 | 0.00 |
| Jenny | 1.60 | 30.07 | 12.24 | 2.80 | 7.92 | 0.72 | 21.97 | 0.03 | 4.14 | 0.72 | 0.54 |
| Kit | 0.34 | 22.82 | 11.24 | 0.00 | 4.09 | 14.65 | 8.86 | 0.62 | 6.13 | 1.02 | 0.34 |
| Marina | 0.00 | 15.40 | 6.08 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.55 | 24.86 | 0.02 | 1.10 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Shane | 0.00 | 20.40 | 5.18 | 0.00 | 15.80 | 3.00 | 22.06 | 0.18 | 6.26 | 2.18 | 1.63 |
| Tim | 0.00 | 23.20 | 5.80 | 0.00 | 12.60 | 10.27 | 19.38 | 0.35 | 4.99 | 0.00 | 0.80 |
| Tina | 0.18 | 23.24 | 11.40 | 2.77 | 5.54 | 4.60 | 18.26 | 0.20 | 7.74 | 0.55 | 0.00 |
| Average | 0.96 | 23.29 | 8.83 | 1.36 | 7.73 | 4.94 | 19.18 | 0.20 | 4.43 | 1.00 | 0.37 |

Linguistically, Shane also appears masculine. She generally leads in all ML features except the /n/ endings and has the lowest number in all WL features. Shane has the highest *gonna* use, the most amount of taboo language, and the most amount of *guys* and *man*. She also has the second lowest hedge count, lowest amount of intensifiers, and no *oh my god* or *like* usage. Shane actually has lower WL features and higher ML features than Tim. Shane's language choices, then, clearly indicate an exaggerated television performance of her butch identity through language. Shane having stronger masculine speech qualities means that Shane's masculinity is displayed through her speech. Further, the difference in her speech from other characters is also evident, indicating that Shane's butchness is evident through her juxtaposition to the other more femme characters on the show.

The only exception to this exaggerated masculine linguistic performance is Shane's /n/ endings, which do not follow her general trend of masculine speech. Her /n/ endings average a .18 use of /n/ endings. This makes her /n/ use fall short of the average and have only the fifth

⁷ This is calculated by taking the total the (normalized /n/) / (normalized /n/ + normalized /ŋ/)

highest /n/ use. Tim, the heterosexual man who she beat in all masculine language qualities besides this one, has .35. Shane's lack of /n/ endings could be explained by the fact that arguably she does not need to have the /n/ endings to be seen as masculine. Her appearance and characterization is so marked for masculinity through all her other speech qualities (in addition to the visual/contextual clues and the juxtaposition against the femme characters) that it is not necessary. If Shane did use the /n/ endings, she might appear more butch than *The L Word* wanted her to appear.

4.3 Butch/Femme Dynamics in Shane's Relationships

Shane's quantitative results of largely ML features present her as butch, but it is important to investigate whether or not her masculine language remains constant in the context of her relationships. Further, if the show is truly heteronormative, the butch/femme binary should extend to Shane's relationships on the show, i.e. she should have masculine language, her girlfriend should have feminine language, and the two should have conversations that resemble male/female talk. Because she is portrayed visually, contextually, and linguistically as more masculine, then it is likely that her relationships will be heteronormative; Shane is likely to be portrayed as the "man" in her relationship and her girlfriend is likely to be seen as the "woman." If this is not the case, then *The L Word* is not as heteronormative as it is made out to be. Her character is the most likely to have a heteronormative relationship because of her visual representation, the contextual clues, and her more masculine language. It is important then that Shane's relationships are looked at in depth.

Shane only has one serious relationship to investigate because although she has sex with a lot of women, she has just one brief relationship with a woman named Cherie. Cherie is a powerful woman in LA; she is the wife of a very prominent businessman. As Harry explains,

“She’s my business partner’s wife, and if there’s a corporation of Hollywood wives, Cherie Jaffe is the CEO” (LW 1.6, 5). Shane and Cherie’s relationship begins when Cherie goes to get a haircut from Shane, likes the haircut, and has her assistant ask Shane to come to her house to fix her hair for an event. Upon arrival, Cherie seduces Shane and then the two begin seeing each other. Cherie cheats on her husband to be with Shane. There is a contextual power binary in their relationship because Cherie makes it clear that she could ruin her career if Shane upsets her.⁸ Their relationship, similar to Shane’s character, is hyper-sexualized. In the other character’s relationships, sex is mentioned and shown, but not all the time. Shane and Cherie’s relationship has a large emphasis on sex, but surprisingly Shane is not the initiator. Rather, Cherie is the one constantly seducing Shane.

In their conversations, Shane continues to speak in the masculine ways that her quantitative results suggest. Her relationship with Cherie, however, is not heteronormative. Visually, they maintain the butch/femme binary. Shane is butch and Cherie is femme. However, they do not have a butch/femme binary linguistically. Their conversations are most like all men’s talk because it is competitive and has ML features in it (Coates 2003). Cherie and Shane compete for the power in their relationship. Cherie inherently has the power because she has pursued Shane and she also has monetary power over Shane. At the same time, Shane is powerful too; she is more masculine than Cherie. She typically plays the role of the man in her flings with girls; Shane is usually the seducer and the one that holds the power. Cherie tends to have more power than Shane, but Shane still competes with Cherie for the power because she is used to having it.

⁸ See LW 1.10, 29-30. Shane tries to break up with Cherie because Shane is entering a business partnership with Cherie’s husband and Cherie says, “You’re not trying to break up with me are you? Because that would be a very, very bad thing to do” (LW 1.10, 29).

In their first meeting, it is very clear that Cherie is used to having power, but Shane competes with her for that power. This is the first time that they have ever spoken to one another. Cherie is telling her assistant what to do for her while Shane cuts her hair.

- 1 Cherie: And also will you call Gwynnie and get three tickets to Cold Play for
 2 Clea? (.) But don't tell her alright? (.) Because I wanna see if she keeps
 3 this job (.) I'm not about to reward her if she quits
 4 Assistant: Okay.
 5 Cherie: I think that's it (1) Why don't you go to Neiman's and pick up my Manolos,
 6 I think Lonnie's holding them for me
 7 Assistant: Neiman's?
 8 Cherie: Yes Neiman's?
 9 Assistant: Okay
 10 Cherie: Bye
 11 Shane: Tell me what you want
 12 Cherie: I want so many things (.) But in terms of what you can do for me? I want a
 13 change (.) I want something new
 14 Shane: Excellent
 [Shane turns the chair back around to face the mirror. She messes with Cherie's hair a bit
 more, checking the length and running her fingers through the sides.]
 (7)
 15 Shane: Okay (1)Yeah (.) I know what to do (.) just take this off (1) and there's some
 16 smocks in the back

(LW 1.9, 11)

When talking with her assistant in lines 1 through 10, Cherie does not use bald directives, which is common among people with power (Holmes 1995). Instead, she uses the more polite question form (line 1-3 and 5) as in line 1 when Cherie uses the question, “Why don't you go to Neiman's and pick up my Manolos” (line 5). However, Cherie does follow the rules of the conversational floor because one of the ways to indicate for the listener to speak is to ask them a question.

When Cherie asks a question, she does not allow her assistant time to answer, making it clear that she does not intend for her assistant to answer her, but rather expects her assistant to take her questions as commands. Cherie also does this with Shane when she asks Shane for a clarification on what Shane said but goes on to answer as if her clarification was what Shane intended to ask (line 12).

Shane also exhibits some power through her language. This makes sense because Shane has the control in this situation because she is the person that is redoing Cherie's hair. Shane's power can be seen through her command "Tell me what you want" (line 11), which is a bald directive. This unmitigated directive is striking because it is associated with power (and thus masculinity) and they are also common in all men's speech (Goodwin 1998). She also decides what to do with Cherie's hair without asking for her opinion about it (line 15), which indicates her power and therefore performs a masculine identity.

The next time that Shane and Cherie see each other, Cherie seduces Shane. This is relatively atypical for Shane. Shane is usually depicted as being the ultimate seductress, so this case is marked. It also is a power move for Cherie. Because Cherie initiates sexual contact, she has power in the situation.

- 1 Shane: Okay (.) So should I um (.) should I do what I did last time
(2)
- 2 Cherie: I was hoping for a little more
(3)
- 3 Shane: Oh well:: (1) what kinda more?
(2)
- 4 Cherie: Lots more.
((Cherie turns around and starts to unbutton Shane's shirt at the waist.))
- 5 Shane: Oh
((Cherie kisses Shane's stomach.))
- 6 Shane: Oh I see

(LW 1.9, 24)

Cherie very clearly is the agent in this conversation and in this situation. Shane asks Cherie all of the questions (line 1 and 3). She does not just decide what to do with Cherie's hair like she did the last time they met. Shane also uses the hedges *um* and *well*. Cherie takes the role of unbuttoning Shane's shirt and kissing Shane first. Of course Shane is not entirely passive; she responds actively to Cherie's request. However, Shane does not initiate their sexual activity, nor

does she pursue doing it again. In this excerpt, Shane does not necessarily compete for the power, but she still acts like a man because she does not turn Cherie down even though Shane has given no indication that she finds Cherie remotely attractive.

In the middle of Cherie and Shane having sex for the first time, Steve, Cherie's husband comes home. Below is their conversation. In this situation, Shane and Cherie both act like stereotypical men—just different kinds of men. Shane acts like the kind of man that is overtly concerned with how his girlfriend feels. Cherie acts like the kind of man who is completely self-centered and does not care about what the other person is feeling.

- 1 Cherie: Oh my God! It's Steve
- 2 Steve: ((muffled, off-screen)) Cherie
- 3 Shane: Oh fuck
 ((Shane quickly starts grabbing various clothing items scattered all around. Cherie grabs a piece of clothing and shoves it at Shane.))
- 4 Cherie: Jesus fuck here take it shit
- 5 Shane: Fuck you have everything?
 ((Cherie pulls up her underwear. Shane gathers up her boots and shirt.))
- 6 Cherie: Yeah
- 7 Shane: You're good?
- 8 Cherie: I got it
 ((Shane gets up and stumbles into the bathroom so fast she falls over. Cherie throws a stray boot in the bathroom just as Shane shuts the door. Cherie stands up just as Steve enters the room. She jumps, trying to put her robe on.))
- 9 Steve: Hello?
 [...]
- 10 Cherie: So, um (.) if I if I need a touch-up I'll call you.
- 11 Shane: Yep yep!

(LW 1.9, 28-9)

In this excerpt, both Shane and Cherie act masculine. Shane is overly concerned on whether Cherie is okay (line 5 and 7). Cherie, on the other hand, is not at all concerned with Shane. She instead throws Shane's clothes at her, not at all worried about how Shane feels or if she has all her belongings. They both use a string of expletives (lines 3-5), loudly performing their

masculinity. At the end of the excerpt, Cherie gives herself the role of the agent; she is in control of when they will next meet again.

The next time that Cherie and Shane see each other, Cherie is also in control. Cherie arrives at Shane's work and takes her somewhere as a "surprise." Shane and Cherie then arrive at an empty warehouse, which Cherie has persuaded Steve to give to Shane so Shane can open her own hairstyling studio.

- 1 Cherie: ((laughter)) Well?
 (4)
 2 Shane: Well (.) I don't know why we're here
 3 Cherie: Steve and Harry own most of this block (.) They're developing it (.) And
 4 I've convinced Steve to invest in you (.) So you can open your own shop
 5 Shane: ((laughter)) no no way!
 6 Cherie: Way but you can't tell him that I brought you here, okay?
 7 Cherie/Shane: ((laughter))
 (3)
 8 Cherie: Isn't it just oozing with potential?
 9 Shane: It's beautiful (2) I mean it's un-fucking-believable (2) I mean I think I'd keep
 10 this like the old barbershop (1) No big reception desk or anything, just the
 11 cutting stations right here
 12 Cherie: And this could be the waiting area where they've sofas and tables (1) I see it
 13 (.) mid-century modern (1) kind of kitschy but chic
 14 Shane: Hm:: I'm thinking pool table (4) And up here it could be it could be the
 15 coloring or the shampoo stations
 (2)
 16 Cherie: Shane?
 17 Shane: Yeah?
 18 Cherie: Look at this
 ((Shane enters the back room and sees Cherie, stripped down to her high heels and
 stockings, perched on a barber's chair. Shane chuckles and takes off her jacket as she
 walks toward her.))
 19 Shane: Ah (.) fuck
 20 Cherie: Yes please

(LW 1.10, 9-10)

In this excerpt, Cherie begins as being the one with power. She has the power to instantly ruin or create Shane's career. Cherie's power is easily seen with her lack of hedges when Cherie tells Shane that she is giving Shane this space without hedging (line 4) and when she directs Shane

(line 18). After line 6, the conversational power shifts to a competitive atmosphere. The two begin to one-up each other on what they think the space will look like. Cherie ends the envisioning by seducing Shane. This puts Cherie back into the position of power. She shifts the conversation from Shane's shop to having sex. As with the last scene, Cherie is the one who seduces Shane and initiates sex.

In the next scene, the two once again compete for power and ultimately Cherie seduces Shane. Shane tries to end things with Cherie because she is worried that their relationship will get in the way of the business relationship Shane has with Cherie's husband. Cherie begins with the power in the situation: she has bought Shane a gift. Shane tries to reestablish her authority by attempting to break up with her. Then, Cherie displays her power and eventually seduces Shane.

1 Cherie: Oh God I am so PMS (1) It's good to get off my feet I have so many
 2 functions this month (.) Steve and I are the Co-Chairs of the "Have A
 3 Dream Gala"=
 4 Shane: =It's good to see you=
 5 Cherie: =I've been dying to get these chrome
 6 hearts motorcycle boots they would look amazing on you
 7 Shane: Look baby I need to talk to you
 (5)
 8 Cherie: °I got you a present
 ((Cherie opens the bag and pulls out a heavy silver chain bracelet. Shane looks at it.))
 9 Shane: No (4) no (.) I can't
 10 Cherie: Don't be ridiculous try it on
 11 Shane: I can't (.) Look Cherie, if I am going to do business with you and your
 12 husband (1) I'm not getting involved in your marriage I'm sorry
 13 Cherie: You're not trying to break up with me, are you?
 ((Shane shakes her head.))
 (1)
 14 Cherie: Because that would be (.) a very (.) very bad thing to do
 (4)
 15 Cherie: Do you like fucking me Shane?
 16 Shane: I love it
 17 Cherie: Steve will never find out
 (3)
 ((Cherie looks around, then takes Shane's hand and slips it under the table.))

18 Cherie: I'm not wearing any underwear (1) ((laughter))
 19 Shane: I know I can see that
 ((Shane kisses Cherie's cheek.))
 20 Shane: You're crazy
 21 Cherie: You have no idea

(LW 1.10, 29-30)

In this excerpt, Cherie asserts her femininity by announcing that she is PMSing (line 1). Talking about periods is not a prevalent theme on this show, which is actually surprising given all of the main characters except one are female. Cherie then goes on in lines 4 and 5 to exhibit her power by talking about how she bought Shane gifts—motorcycle boots and a bracelet. When Shane tries to talk to her about breaking up with her, Shane does not hedge. Instead, she emphasizes what she is doing by saying, “look” (line 7). Cherie ignores her, requesting that she pay attention to the fact that she got her a gift. Shane's attempt to break up with Cherie is squashed by Cherie. Cherie uses her financial power to threaten Shane into not breaking up with her. She does this with a tag question (line 13). As discussed earlier, Lakoff calls tag questions powerless, but other researchers have argued that they can be used as powerful because they indicate to the listener that the speaker expects a certain response, making the question more of a threat. Cherie asks if Shane likes fucking her (line 15), which is marked. It is much more feminine to say, “do you like making love to me” or “do you like having sex with me,” but *fucking* seems to be a much more masculine way of asking that question. Cherie then seduces Shane by literally making Shane be intimate with her. In doing so, she once again regains power. It also propagates the hyper-sexualized nature of their relationship.

It is not until their last conversation that Shane and Cherie do not compete for power in their conversation. This is perhaps because Cherie and Shane eventually do break up because Cherie's daughter, Clea, falls in love with Shane and tells her parents that they are dating even though Shane and Clea are not romantically involved at all. When Shane goes to tell Cherie that

Clea lied, Clea figures out that Cherie and Shane were actually intimate. Steve finds out about all of this and puts a restraining order against Shane. Cherie and Shane finally see each other alone at Bette's museum's art show. Their conversation is below. Shane actually talks about her feelings, which is a feminine thing to do and not common for Shane. It is clear that this is not a frequent practice for Shane because she pauses in her speech, indicating hesitation. Cherie, on the other hand, continues to be entirely masculine and display her power.

1 Shane: You know (2) my entire life people have said that (4) I would become a
 2 psychopath if I didn't learn how to feel (6) but I wanna know Cherie what the
 3 fuck is so great about feeling (3) because I finally let myself (2) and I feel like
 4 my heart's been completely ripped out
 (3)
 5 Cherie: I'm sorry
 (3)
 6 Shane: I had this insane idea that you and I could be together (2) Because it felt real
 (5)
 7 Cherie: It was a delusion
 (3)
 8 Shane: Then I'm delusional (2) Because, I swear you felt the same way about me
 (4)
 9 Cherie: What if I did (2) What difference would it make (2) what if in the time
 10 we spent together I felt more alive than I have in the last 20 years of my
 11 life (2) what if that were true (3) do you think that I would leave my
 12 husband (.) my child my houses in Bel Air and East Hampton (.) my trips
 13 to Paris (1) my black tie galas (3) to run to some (.5) rank little love
 14 nest (1) with a 25-year-old (1) assistant hairdresser (.) who barely has her
 15 foot in the door (3) in this fucking ugly world (1) that kind of love does
 16 not exist
 ((Shane stares at Cherie, wounded. After a moment, she walks away.))

(LW 1.13, 28)

In this excerpt, the audience finally sees an emotional side of Shane. Shane does not usually have emotional moments. She is caricatured as the girl who everyone falls in love with but she herself never falls in love. However, in this scene it is very clear that Shane does in fact love Cherie. Cherie's response does not make it clear that she loves Shane back. Instead, Cherie says very harmful things without hedging them (line 7 and 9-16). In lines 9-16, Cherie strings

together a series of reasons why she should never be with Shane while taking significant pauses in between each reason. This accentuates each point and makes her commentary even more hurtful.

In general, Cherie and Shane's relationship is not heteronormative. Their conversations are generally very competitive. The two fight over the power in the conversation and in their relationship, usually culminating with Cherie seducing Shane. Their power struggle (i.e. the competitiveness in their conversation) is reminiscent of all men's talk. This, in combination with their ML features, causes both characters to portray masculinity. Also, their relationship appears to be one that is mainly based off of sex. There is not a scene in the show besides the first one when they meet at Shane's work where the two meet and do not have sex. This is not the case with any of the other couples. Thus, their relationship is marked in the sense that it is hyper-sexualized, which is also masculine in some ways. In which case, Shane's relationship does not propagate the butch/femme binary.

Thus, Shane is a butch character (or at least is more butch than the other characters). Because she is more masculine visually, contextually, and linguistically than the other characters, Shane does create a butch/femme binary on the show. In this sense then, the show is relatively heteronormative. However, Shane's relationship does not mirror this fact. She does not have a butch/femme relationship that functions under heteronormativity. An over-simplified butch/femme binary is not the only way that the show can be heteronormative. The next chapter discusses another way that *The L Word* could be heteronormative: if the show represents relationships with a masculine/feminine binary. Relationship talk is analyzed in order to explore whether the two characters in a relationship take on stereotypically feminine and masculine roles.

Chapter 5: Investigation of Heteronormativity Through Linguistic Analysis of Relationship Talk

In the previous chapter, the heteronormative critique was investigated through the butch/femme binary. This chapter continues investigating the validity of the heteronormativity critique through looking at relationships among the femme characters. This is because when critics claim that *The L Word* is heteronormative, it can be proved in two ways: 1) the show only portrays the butch/femme binary in its representations of gender, which is considered heteronormative because the butch/femme binary is an extension of the masculine/feminine gender binary created by the system of heteronormativity, and/or 2) even though all the characters presented are biologically female and the majority are performing a femme identity, the show still extends the masculine/feminine binary in its representations of lesbian relationships by only allowing the show to have relationships where there is a character who takes the stereotypical man's role and another that takes a stereotypical woman's role. *The L Word* is showing non-heterosexuality as normal, and thus combating part of heteronormativity (compulsory heterosexuality), but is said to propagate the part of the heteronormativity system that dictates there are two genders (masculine/feminine or butch/femme) and that masculine/feminine go together. It is important to note that the masculine/feminine binary prevalent in relationships can be accomplished even with two femme characters, two butch characters, or a butch and femme character. I am not arguing that critics have claimed all lesbian relationships on *The L Word* are between butch/femme characters, but rather that they claim there is a masculine/feminine binary created by the roles that the characters take within the relationship; whether the characters are butch or femme is irrelevant.

One of the ways to evaluate whether the relationships are heteronormative is to analyze the conversations between the couples on the show. The plot of the main relationship on the

show, Bette and Tina, is heteronormative. Tina quits her job so she can prepare her body for pregnancy and Bette provides for them. Other relationships on the show are not so clear cut as theirs. Besides Bette and Tina's relationship, there are subsidiary relationships among other characters during Season 1 that are not as much of a focal point of the show. Because they are peripheral displays of lesbian relationships, they can be looked at to see if all representations of *The L Word* are heteronormative, or if other relationships complicate this idea.

Language can give insight about whether these relationships are heteronormative because there are conversational patterns commonly found in straight couples', all women's, and all men's conversations. Exploring language can provide a different way to evaluate this critique of heteronormativity; no critics have explored this avenue as a way of understanding the norms being established on the show even though language is a performance of identity and thus linguistic interactions can reveal relationship dynamics.

This chapter analyzes four relationships: Bette and Tina, Alice and Gabby, Jenny and Marina, and Lara and Dana. The central relationship on *The L Word* is Bette and Tina. They have been in a relationship for seven years and are married.¹ Further, they are the only two characters that remain in a relationship for the entirety of Season 1.² Their primary role in *The L Word* is evident because the second shot of the first episode is a shot of them sleeping together.³

One of the subsidiary couples is Alice and Gabby. Their revived relationship is very short-lived.⁴ Alice is a self-proclaimed bisexual and it is unclear if Gabby is a lesbian or

¹ According to Tina's quote: "We've been together for seven years" (1.1, 8).

² Bette and Tina break up in the last five minutes of the last episode of Season 1.

³ *The L Word* begins with a shot of Tim, another character, rearranging furniture. Immediately following this shot, there is a shot of Bette and Tina sleeping together.

⁴ There are other relationships in Season 1, i.e. Shane and Cherrie, Alice and Lisa, and Dana and Tonya. I have chosen to focus on Bette and Tina, Jenny and Marina, and Gabby and Alice. Consequently, I have only introduced those relationships.

bisexual. It appears Gabby and Alice had been in a relationship before because Gabby asks Alice to give her another chance (LW 1.2, 7). Alice and Gabby, like Bette and Tina, have a powerful/powerless binary. However, the characters talk about how Gabby does not treat Alice well. Gabby and Alice, then, have a marked relationship—one that exemplifies as a power-abusive relationship. This is different than Bette and Tina’s relationship, which also has the binary and the unequal distribution of power, but is seen as unmarked and normal. Thus, Gabby and Alice do have a heteronormative relationship; their relationship is just marked rather than the unmarked case of Bette and Tina.

In contrast, Jenny and Marina and Dana and Lara, two other couples on the show, do not seem to have this masculine/feminine and powerful/powerless binary that Bette and Tina and Alice and Gabby have. Marina is the first woman that Jenny is intimate with. They begin dating while Jenny is in a relationship with Tim, with whom she gets engaged to, marries, and divorces during her relationship with Marina. The conversations between Jenny and Marina are reminiscent of all women’s talk (Coates 1996). Dana and Lara, conversely, have conversations that are similar to all men’s talk (Coates 2003). Lara is Dana’s first girlfriend.

5.1 Unmarked and Marked Relationship Talk

Bette and Tina’s storyline is heteronormative. They fit into the stereotypical man/woman roles in a heterosexual relationship: Bette is a director of a museum, constantly talking about work and shown working, and Tina quits her job so she can stay at home and have their baby. Like straight relationships, there is an unequal distribution of power in Bette and Tina’s relationship. This creates a powerful/powerless binary that results from the masculine/feminine binary. Both of these themes—that their relationship is heteronormative and there is an unequal

power dynamic—is recognized in *The L Word: Welcome to Our Planet*, which is “The Official Companion Book to the Hit Showtime Series,” when Bolonik writes,

[Tina] would have never predicted that electing to carry their baby would result in a steady, semiconscious slippage into traditional heterosexual roles, with Tina as the passive wife and Bette as the domineering husband. (Bolonik 2005, 13)

Bolonik’s claim that they took part in heterosexual roles indicates that the relationship is heteronormative and her discussion of Tina being “passive” and Bette being “domineering” shows that the two do not hold the same amount of power in their relationship. Moore and Schilt also argue that Bette plays the role of “the stereotypical domineering husband” (Moore and Schilt 2006, 165).

Critics are not the only ones that observe that their relationship adheres to the feminine/masculine and powerful/powerless binary. There is a meta suggestion on *The L Word* that this is the case. Even without linguistic analysis of Bette and Tina’s relationship, it is clear that Bette is being portrayed as the dominant figure in their relationship.⁵ Other characters refer to how Bette is the “man” of Bette and Tina’s relationship. For instance, Harley thinks (and the audience hears these thoughts), “Wonder how lesbians know how they are done having sex? Cause women can go on and on. Hmm. I bet Bette’s the man.” (LW 1.8, 37). Harley vocalizes the portrayal *The L Word* represents for the audience: Bette is the dominant player in Bette and Tina’s relationship. Harley is a straight man and is thus seen as the stereotypical straight person who is oblivious to how lesbian relationships work, which is evident through his first question, “Wonder how lesbians know how they are done having sex?” He also places the frame of

⁵ Of course, women can also play the dominant role in a relationship. However, stereotypically, men do. Research has shown that male dominance, particularly in conversation, is a reality more often than not (Baker 2008, Coates 2004, De Klerk 1997, Livia 1995).

heteronormativity on Bette and Tina's relationship by calling her "the man." Of course this is not as powerful as another lesbian character on the show insisting Bette and Tina play heteronormative roles in their relationship. Nevertheless, it serves as a suggestion to the audience that Bette is indeed seen as the man of the relationship, making it clear that there is a masculine/feminine binary in lesbian relationship (because if Bette is "the man," then Tina must be "the woman") just like there would be a masculine/feminine binary in a heterosexual relationship.

Also, Kit sets Bette up as the man in Bette and Tina's relationship during a conversation with Bette. Kit asks Bette if she her relationship with Tina is okay and below is their conversation.

- 1 Bette: Yeah I just I you know I have some things on my mind but it's nothing
 - 2 Kit: I know what it is (5) you're having the daddy blues (3) you are worrying
 - 3 about all the responsibilities comin down on you, the financial responsibilities,
 - 4 the I can't take any more risk responsibilities (1) cause now there are two other
 - 5 lives that are totally dependent on you keeping everything together
- (LW 1.7, 30)

In this portion, Kit sets Bette up as the financial provider, which is not necessarily a male-centric role, but is stereotypically thought of as a masculine role. *The L Word* could have renegotiated stereotypes by having Kit say, "You're having the *mommy* blues." This would allow financial responsibility to be associated with motherhood and consequently be associated with femininity. Because she says "daddy blues" (line 2), however, Kit is associating financial responsibility with being a father. She is transferring that association to Bette, and thus thinking of Bette as the father of Bette and Tina's child rather than another mother of their child. Tina, then, is being positioned as the mother.

Despite the fact that they are fulfilling heteronormative roles (or perhaps because of this fact), Bette and Tina serve as the model relationship on the show. Other characters aspire to have a relationship like theirs. Shane, for example, says, “That gives me hope, because I love knowing that two people who’ve been together for so long, can make each other that happy” (LW 1.1, 60). Also, characters make reference to how perfect their relationship is. For instance, Dana says to Tina, “you guys have the best relationship of anybody I know, gay or straight” (LW 1.1, 6), and Kit says to Bette, “You and Tina are solid. You got a marriage like God chose you two to find each other, and that’s a thing you never wanna let go” (LW 1.7, 30). However, Dan Foxworthy, a character who plays a psychiatrist on the show, calls into question whether their relationship really is that perfect. Because all of the female characters applaud their relationship and only a straight man criticizes their relationship, the praise of Bette and Tina’s relationship may resonate with the audience more than the criticism.⁶

Turning to linguistic analysis of Bette and Tina’s conversations, this idea of Bette and Tina having a heteronormative relationship can be tested by seeing if Bette performs the more masculine role with her speech to Tina and if Tina simultaneously performs the feminine role in her speech to Bette. To determine this, it is important to look for the qualities that researchers claim are common for masculine speech. De Klerk writes, “the stereotypical powerful speech style is portrayed by the assertion of dominance, interruption, challenging, disputing and being direct...it is males who exhibit the dominant speech styles described above” (De Klerk 1997,

⁶ Bette cheats on Tina in the last episode of the show so the audience eventually does criticize the relationship, but none of the excerpts analyzed are from that episode so this point does not need to be considered in this portion of linguistic analysis. However, if this point was in my analysis of their relationship it does seem to strengthen the heteronormative qualities of this relationship because Bette demonstrates sexual agency and power (both of which denote masculinity) through cheating on her partner.

145). Women, on the other hand, are thought to be more cooperative and do more of the interactional work in the conversation (Coates 1996; De Francisco 1998; Fishman 1983).

The heteronormative nature of their relationship is immediately relayed to the audience because in the first spoken dialogue of *The L Word*, Bette functions as the topic initiator and Tina functions as the topic supporter, which is consistent with analysis of heterosexual relationships (Fishman 1983). The excerpt below is the first spoken dialogue of *The L Word*. Tina has just announced for Bette to come to the bathroom, which are the first words of the show. Upon her arrival, Tina shows Bette a test stick. Below is Bette and Tina's resulting conversation.

- 1 Bette: You're ovulating
(2)
- 2 Tina: I'm ovulating
(2)
- 3 Bette: Let's make a baby
((Bette kisses Tina)) (2)
- 4 Tina: Let's make a baby
((Bette and Tina are kissing)) (8)
- 5 Bette: Why don't you get dressed and I'll drop you off on my way to work
(LW 1.1, 4)

At first glance, Bette and Tina are having a conversation that most linguists would classify as a typical conversation between women (Coates 1996). They are not interrupting one another; it is cooperative, i.e. they are not competing for the conversational floor.⁷ Simultaneously, however, Bette introduces the topics (lines 1, 3, and 5) and Tina does the work of supporting Bette through repetition of what Bette says (lines 2 and 4). In *Interaction: The Work Women Do*, Fishman discovers that women do more of the "interactional shitwork" in conversations of heterosexual couples (Fishman 1983). Women initiate significantly more topics than men, yet men's topics

⁷ In linguistics, the "floor" is the term for the shared conversational space. This means that interlocutors can take the conversational floor, give it up, etc. The conversational floor is rule governed by communicative conventions, i.e. when people can speak, how many people can speak, appropriateness of speaking, and strategies of how to make yourself or others heard (or not heard) (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003, 110)

are almost always picked up as something to talk about while women's topics are rarely picked. Once the topic is picked up, women tend to do the interactional work of supporting those topics (i.e. asking questions, giving minimal responses to show support, etc.). Thus, Bette is playing the initiating role that Fishman found was typically the man's role in heterosexual couples' conversations. She is initiating all of the topics: ovulation (line 1), baby making (line 3), and planning for the day (line 5). Tina follows each of these topical shifts without hesitation (lines 2 and 4). She supports Bette's topic change by parroting—whatever Bette says, Tina says the same thing. This parroting does not allow Tina to offer any of her own thoughts; she can only support Bette's.

The way that Bette and Tina decide to do the insemination reinforces Bette's role as the father figure and the masculine figure in their relationship. Bette once again plays the role of the stereotypical man that Fishman documents. It is especially interesting in this context because Bette is the agent in this conversation; she suggests the insemination.

- 1 Bette: No, don't be grossed out (4) we have to honor it (3) we have to honor you
(2)
- 2 Tina: We honor you
- 3 Bette: ((laughter))
- 4 Tina: all 75 million of you
- 5 Bette: ((sigh)) (2) Do we have everything we need=
- 6 Tina =Yeah=
- 7 Bette: =let's see=
- 8 Bette: =Okay
(4)
- 9 Tina: Syringe (1) Diaphragm (1)
- 10 Bette: Magical juice
(1)
- 11 Tina: Magic juice
((Bette and Tina begin to make love))
- 12 Bette: Let's do it.
- 13 Tina: Yeah, let's do it.
((Bette puts the sperm in the syringe and presses the syringe plunger))

(LW 1.2, 13)

Again, in this excerpt, Bette dictates the conversation. When Tina has a negative reaction to the vial of sperm, Bette instead tells her to honor the sperm (line 1), which Tina obliges and even elaborates in her honoring of the sperm (line 2 and 4). Bette also changes the topic each time. For example, Bette changes the topic from honoring the sperm to checking to make sure they have all of the necessary items for the insemination (line 5). She then changes the topic from checking the supplies to doing the insemination (line 12). Each time Tina follows the topical shift and supports each shift doing the interactional work of reiterating or elaborating on each of Bette's statements. Most importantly, Bette controls when the sperm is released in to Tina both conversationally and literally because she both initiates the conversation and pushes the syringe to expel the sperm into Tina. By literally inseminating Tina, Bette physically takes on the masculine role in their relationship. She acts like the stereotypical man, eager to "spread his seed."

In the following example, Bette is playing out the stereotype of a man—a man that is too busy to talk to his wife. Consequently, topically it sets Bette up as the masculine figure: she is at work, too busy to pay attention to Tina. Further, she is linguistically being set up as more "masculine" in this conversation because Bette dominates the conversation. Men typically dominate conversations (De Klerk 1997; Holmes 1995; Livia 1995). Bette also does not employ WL features: Bette does not hedge when she refuses Tina's request. She instead employs ML: taboo language.

((phone conversation))

- 1 Bette: Baby I cannot talk right now
- 2 Tina: Okay okay I'll make it really quick (.) just promise that you'll come home for
- 3 dinner tonight (.) I'm cooking
- 4 Bette: That's gonna be a tough one to swing
- 5 Tina: Please it's really important I'll take care of you (.) I'll make it all better
- 6 Bette: The only way you can make it all better is if you come up with a show for my

- 7 big gaping spring slot.
 8 James: Sheldon Tomlin's on 2.
 9 Bette: Fuck Sheldon Tomlin!
 (1)
 10 Bette: Baby I can't talk right now I will try tonight that is the best I can do (.) Okay?
 11 Tina: Okay (.) try
 12 Bette: ((sighs)) Okay (.) Bye

(LW 1.4, 10)

In the excerpt above, Bette does allow Tina to speak, but Bette's speech is the majority of the conversation. She has three turns in a row (line 6, 9, and 10) without allowing Tina any time for commentary. Linguistically, being called dominating means that the speaker is not following the proper turn-taking rules, i.e. they are not allowing another interlocutor to speak by interrupting them, speaking for large spans of time without allowing another interlocutor to speak, or ignoring another interlocutor's wish to speak (Coates 2004). Dominating the conversational floor is an assertion of masculinity.

Bette also asserts masculinity through her use of *fuck* in this conversation. Taboo language is tied with masculinity (Coates 2004; De Klerk 1997). It is considered more acceptable for men to swear than women to swear, creating the stereotype that men swear more often than women and making men more apt to utilize taboo language than women.⁸ Of course this stereotype is not necessarily true; women (particularly impoverished, urban women) do swear (De Klerk 1992). Because taboo language in general is associated with masculinity (De Klerk 1997, 47), *fuck* arguably has the most shock value of any expletive, making it a very unfeminine thing to say.

⁸ This is easily seen by Kramer's two studies (1974, 1975) where she asked students to identify the gender of cartoon characters. She provided the students with no visual cues. They just had the captions of the cartoons. The students guessed the correct gender of the cartoon characters the vast majority of the time, commenting that the presence of taboo language tipped them off that a character was a man (Coates 2004).

Also, Bette refuses Tina's request to come to dinner without any hedging even though refusing requests is face threatening, i.e. a speech act that does not meet an interlocutors face needs.⁹ In general, Bette uses the average number of hedges that the rest of the characters use; Bette uses 22.83 hedges for every 1000 words and the average number for all of the character is 23.29. Tina also uses close to the average number of hedges; she has 23.24 hedges per 1000 words. Interestingly, even though both characters typically do use hedges, Bette does not hedge her statements with Tina, but Tina continues to hedge her statements with Bette. This phenomenon illustrates their power dynamic. Bette performs her power in this relationship by not using hedges with Tina. Bette acts more like the boys in Maria Stubbe's study (1991) that found "boys tend to use more 'bald' disagreements than girls" (Holmes 1995, 62).

Bette neglecting to use hedges is a common theme for Bette when talking to Tina, but is not the case when Bette is talking to other people. For instance, Bette uses hedges (which are bolded for emphasis below) when she is on the phone with Sheldon Tomlin in the phone conversation immediately proceeding the conversation she has with Tina.

- 1 Bette: (phone) (fake pleasantries) Sheldon! Thank you so much for calling me
- 2 back (2) Y - no, it's true **well, you know**, because a big institution, it's
- 3 hard to compete (.) look, **um**, the reason that I was calling you ((sigh)) **what**
- 4 **you're about to hear is the sound of me eating my words** (.) Sheldon I
- 5 would like to book "Impressions In Winter" and **I hope that you don't hold**
- 6 **it against me that** (listening) (4) Franklin didn't tell me anything (3) (listening)
- 7 That is absolutely not true. No, the C.A.C. is not in turmoil! (3) No! Of
- 8 course (.) **You know**, and nothing personal on my part, either (.) Okay (.) Bye
(LW 1.4, 11)

⁹ People have "face needs, or basic wants" (Holmes 1995, 5), which are essentially being accepted and uninhibited by others. In order to meet these face needs, interlocutors use negative politeness, which is all of the linguistic devices that speakers use to make people feel uninhibited, and positive politeness, which is all of the linguistic devices to make people feel welcome (5).

In this excerpt, Bette is using a multitude of hedges to soften her request (line 1-6 and 8). She is asking Sheldon for a favor, and is using negative politeness to negotiate. However, with Tina, she does not try to renegotiate or soften her refusal. Moreover, Bette is not polite in her conversation with Tina (a tool she uses with Sheldon), which is a quality of speech that is a stereotypical feminine way of talking. She does not thank Tina for offering to make dinner, nor does she apologize for not knowing if she can make it.

This trend of Bette using hedges with others, but not with Tina, and this frequent display of her power in their relationship is also visible during the therapy group that she and Tina attend when Bette acknowledges her fear of financially supporting her family later in the season.¹⁰ Dan asks the group what their biggest fear about being a parent is. Bette passes initially and so Tina is asked to respond.

- 1 Tina: Uh (.)I know Bette and I must have *some* fears, because, uh (.) otherwise
 2 what would we be doing in this group? But we're pretty comfortable with the
 3 whole lesbian parent thing (.) I guess our greatest fear would be:: (.) whether
 4 or not Bette's father will accept our child (2) Yeah that's it (1) That Bette's
 5 father won't consider um (.) our baby his grandchild
 6 Dan: Now(.) The next exercise
 (.)
 7 Bette: My greatest fear about being a parent is:: that I uh won't be a (.) good
 8 enough (.) provider.

(LW 1.8, 7)

Even though the question was just about what her own greatest fear was Tina uses *we* in line 2, indicating she is answering the question on behalf of her and Bette. Arguably Tina is trying to position herself in a place of power; she has the power to answer on behalf of her and Bette. Her possible power ploy is immediately made a demonstration of her powerlessness because Tina is

¹⁰ As mentioned before, being a financial provider is not an exclusively male role. However, *The L Word* has clearly set up that being the financial provider was a fatherly role through Kit's comment of Bette having "the daddy blues" (LW 1.7, 30). Thus, *The L Word* is still positioning Bette as the father figure, or man, by having her be concerned about financial responsibility.

portrayed as uncomfortable doing this, which is most obviously seen with her use of hedges. Her statements have multiple instances of *uh* and *um* (line 1 and 5). She also uses *would be* rather than *is* in line 3, making her response less confident. Arguably Tina's hedging could stem from her fear of speaking on behalf of Bette.

This appears to be the case because Bette's response does not support Tina's statement. Bette's pronoun usage in line 7 is important. She reclaims her agency; it is a clear display of power. Bette signals that Tina cannot speak on behalf of her (because Tina is less powerful than her), her greatest fear is not what Tina thought their greatest fear might be, and Bette does not think her and Tina have the same fear because she would have said, "No. Our greatest fear is..." if she thought they had the same fear. Also, what is striking about this excerpt is Bette's use of hedges. Bette does hedge her actual statement of her fear (line 7), making her seem uncomfortable with being open about her feelings, which is a stereotypically masculine thing to do. However, Bette does not hedge her disagreement with Tina even though it is face threatening (line 7).

Bette also plays out the stereotype of a man not having enough time for his wife in the following example. Her hedge use is also of primary interest in this excerpt. Bette does not use hedges with Tina, nor does she with her assistant. This is important because Bette speaks to Tina in very similar ways than she does with her assistant, who is clearly inferior to her.

- 1 Tina: She's always running late (.) she had a board meeting then she had a meeting
- 2 with an artist (.) Bette's the director of the California Arts Center
- 3 Dan: I see
- 4 Tina: And she's probably gonna be really stressed about time (.) after this we have
- 5 to go get sperm (.) We're trying to have a baby (.) and our friend Sean's
- 6 donating
- 7 Bette: ((chuckles)) Sorry I'm late (.) (phone) James? Yeah I gotta go in a minute
- 8 ((listening)) (.) nononono, the artwork is way too delicate, it's being flown
- 9 in from Paris and Annie is already a total and complete nervous wreck
- 10 ((listening)) (2) just call Adam's Fine Art Movers ((listening)) (1) tell them

11 if they want to do business with C.A.C. again (.) ((listening)) exactly (.)
 12 okay great thanks bye (.) Okay! Here I am!

(LW 1.1, 7)

In this example, Bette is once again working. Tina acknowledges this and tells the audience the fact that Bette is not just late now, but she is always late (line 1). This excerpt takes place during the first episode, where the characters' personas are emphasized; the characters are almost like caricatures of what they are like for the rest of the show. Bette is being portrayed as a workaholic that is so consumed in herself that she cannot even get off the phone when she enters the psychiatrist's office. Again, Bette lacks hedges and politeness in this excerpt. She says quickly, while she is still on the phone, "Sorry I'm late" (line 7). Using Austin's terminology, this utterance is not felicitous, or in other words, it is not seen culturally accepted as a truly genuine apology. This is because Bette neglects the "I'm" in the more sincere utterance of "I'm sorry," and, more importantly, is on the phone, making her apology seem less genuine.

In Bette's phone conversation with her assistant, James, she uses directives rather than a question form. For example, Bette says, "tell them" (line 10) rather than "can you tell them." Her lack of hedges also contributes to Bette's aura of power in this conversation. Bette does use the word "just" in line 10, which slightly softens her first command. However, besides that, Bette does not use any hedges in her string of directives. Further, she does not hedge her emphatic negation of "Nonononono" (line 8). Instead, Bette emphasizes her face-threatening act by repeatedly disagreeing with James by stringing no's together.

When Bette finally gets off the phone, she announces, "Okay! Here I am!" (line 12) as if now that she is here, they can begin. Bette does not assume that Tina and Dan were talking about something before she got there. Instead, she assumes that the conversation revolves around her, which is impolite.

Bette's apology differs quite a bit with Tina's apology later in the show during episode 6. Tina uses the intensifiers and the "I'm" that Bette neglects to do earlier in the show. Bette does use the WL features that are absent from her speech in past excerpts, but Bette still maintains her power by refusing to do the felicitous response to an apology.

- 1 Bette: What happened I was so worried (.) I mean you left all these messages
 2 and then I couldn't reach you
 3 Tina: So you got on a plane and you flew all the way home?
 4 Bette: I was worried (5) so what happened
 5 Tina: There's this crazy woman (.) and Marcus Allenwood's girlfriend (.) she was
 6 at the Chinese herbalist and she completely freaked out on me and uh (.) I
 7 couldn't handle it
 8 Bette: I-I came home all the way from New York.
 9 Tina: I'm so sorry (2) I'm sorry.
 10 Shane: Bette (.) so how was New York?
 11 Bette: It was um (.) it was incredible (.) I mean it seemed like all of New York
 12 knew the story about how I grabbed "Provocations" out from under MOCA's
 13 nose (.) I was like (.) kind of a star you know Peggy Peabody was throwing
 14 a dinner party for me tonight in my honor and I was cultivating this major,
 15 major donor that I was hoping to get on my board of directors=
 16 Kit: =And now you're
 17 not gonna be there
 18 Tina: It must be the hormones (.) I'm just ((groans and waves her hands))
 19 Bette: I'm just relieved everything's okay (.) That's all that really matters
 20 Tina: I'm sorry.
 21 Bette: ((sighs))

(LW 1.6, 29)

In this excerpt, Bette actually has many features of WL. She hedges her statements a lot (line 1, 11, and 19). She says, *I mean* twice, *I'm just* once, *um* once, *kind of* once, and *you know* once. She also uses the intensifier *so* (line 1) and has all /ŋ/ endings. Further, Bette uses the word *like* as a focuser in line 13, which is a hyper-feminine linguistic feature and unusual for Bette to use.¹¹ Yet, at the same time Bette dominates the topic of the conversation. Bette's trip to New York takes precedence over Tina's terrible experience with Marcus Allenwood's girlfriend. Tina

¹¹ Focuser *like* is used to introduce new information. Its use is role governed. See Dailey O'Cain (2000).

first downplays the story. Lei Ling, Marcus Allenwood's girlfriend, was leaving incessant messages on Tina's phone and told her that she would go to court to take custody of Tina's child. Yet, when Tina tells the story she does not give Bette any of these details to make her story seem worthy of Bette's attention. When Tina apologizes twice, Bette ignores her apology, only staring at her in return. Apologizing is a negative politeness strategy, making Tina appear polite (Holmes 1995, 154). Shane then questions Bette about New York. Bette easily transitions to talking about herself, still ignoring Tina's apology and apparently uninterested about what Lei Ling did to upset Tina so badly. When Tina tries to justify why she reacted so strongly, i.e. her hormones were causing her to act rashly, Bette does not say that she understands or that it is okay, nor does she accept Tina's apology by saying, "It's okay," the felicitous response to accepting an apology. Instead, Bette says, "I'm just relieved everything's okay. That's all that really matters" (line 19). Bette does not validate Tina's statement; she refuses the topic that Tina brings up (Tina's hormones) and changes the topic to how she feels (that she's glad everything is okay). When Tina apologizes again, Bette still does not say that it is okay; she just sighs. She still refuses to accept her apology in a felicitous way.

Through the analysis of all these excerpts, it is clear that Bette is playing the more dominant role in their relationship. In Bette and Tina's relationship, Bette and Tina are clearly not shown as two characters with equal power in their relationship. Consequently, Bette's dominance in conversation sets her up as masculine and Tina's passiveness portrays her as feminine. Bette and Tina's relationship then is heteronormative; there is a feminine/masculine binary present.

Like Bette and Tina's relationship, Gabby and Alice also have a powerful/powerless binary in their relationship, which is associated with the stereotypical masculine/feminine binary

in some relationships. As mentioned earlier, Gabby and Alice have a marked relationship while Bette and Tina have an unmarked relationship. Their relationship is marked because it is seen as an abuse of power, rather than Bette and Tina's unequal power distribution that is seen as unmarked, heteronormative, and thus "normal." This is very clear because the characters complain about their relationship. For instance, when Alice's friends realize there might be a possibility that Alice is going to be intimate with Gabby again, Dana says, "Didn't she treat you like shit, Al?" and Shane responds, "Worse than that Al. I swear I will kill you if you get back together with her" (LW 1.2, 15). Later in that episode, Shane voices her disapproval again, saying, "Al, you get with her and I will kill you. She'll step on your dignity with those boots. Trust me" (LW 1.2, 30). Alice's friends' vehement reactions to her relationship with Gabby stem from the fact that Gabby is seen as having the power in this relationship. Gabby can only treat Alice "like shit" or "step on her dignity" if she has more power than Alice. Their power dynamics are very clear linguistically.

One example where Gabby very clearly has the power in their relationship is when Gabby and Alice are shown waking up in the morning together during episode 3. It is the first time the audience sees them in an intimate setting. Because the setting is intimate, i.e. they are in bed, it is more generally expected that the two of them be kind to one another. The following conversation it is quite the opposite.

- 1 Gabby: god damn it
((Gabby wakes up and gets out of bed. She starts putting on her clothes.))
- 2 Alice: ((groggy)) What
- 3 Gabby: I thought you set the alarm
- 4 Alice: I did you snoozed it
- 5 Gabby: I'm late for my fucking dumb-ass job
- 6 Alice: I'm sorry
- 7 Gabby: Fuck
- 8 Alice: Do you want me to make us coffee?
- 9 Gabby: No thanks I'll get some on the way

- 10 Alice: So are we gonna get together later or what
 ((Gabby sits on the bed.))
 11 Gabby: I have a screening with Joanie
 ((Gabby leans over and kisses Alice.))
 12 Gabby: But I'll call you
 ((Gabby leaves.))
 13 Alice: Bye

(LW 1.3, 3)

In this excerpt, Gabby blames Alice for her lateness (line 3). She automatically assumes that it is Alice's fault that the alarm was not set and does not apologize to Alice when Alice corrects her. What is especially notable about this excerpt is Gabby's multiple uses of expletives (line 1 and 5). As discussed earlier, taboo language can index masculinity and power (De Klerk 1997). Further, Gabby uses *fuck* as a response to Alice saying that she was sorry that Gabby was late. Alice does not need to apologize; she did not cause Gabby's lateness. However, Alice does choose to apologize out of sympathy for Gabby. Gabby's response is therefore rude. First, she does not provide a felicitous response for an apology. Second, Gabby does not acknowledge that it is in fact not Alice's fault. Third, she uses a strong expletive without mitigation or apology. Alice ignores all of these factors and instead offers to do something nice for Gabby: make her coffee. This shows the power dynamic in their relationship. Alice does not even bring up the fact that Gabby is being rude. Even though Gabby then refuses her request politely and Alice asks Gabby to spend time with her, Gabby puts herself back in power by saying she will call Alice.

Gabby also is portrayed as the powerful one in their relationship when Gabby and Alice are supposed to be on a date, but Gabby brings her friends. Gabby's action, to bring other people when Alice thought it was a date, inherently shows her power. Linguistically, she also demonstrates her power because she dominates the conversational floor and is rude to Alice.

- 1 Alice: Gabby? Gabby.
- 2 Gabby: Hm?
- 3 Alice: I was kind of hoping we could be alone
- 4 Gabby: We can be alone when we're dead (.) Is that Fiona over there? I can't believe she'd even show her face in here

(LW 1.3, 11)

In this example, Gabby begins her display of dominance by not giving Alice attention when she asks for it in line 1, i.e. Gabby ignores Alice's requests for the floor. Gabby does not give Alice her attention immediately. This is a demonstration of Gabby's powerfulness. Then, Alice uses hedges to address the situation. Hedges are also commonly used with superiors (Holmes 1995). In this case, Alice is setting herself up as the inferior interlocutor in this situation. Gabby does not acknowledge this request politely. She does not use hedges to refuse Alice's request and she responds in a rude, abrupt way in line 4. Gabby then does not even give Alice the time to respond to the insult. She merely changes the subject in the middle of line 4, dismissing her rudeness and Alice without hesitation.

This portrayal of a marked relationship with a powerful/powerless binary complicates the notion that the show is exclusively heteronormative. Although this relationship still functions within the systems of heteronormativity because the powerful/powerless binary stems from the feminine/masculine binary instituted by heteronormativity, it does not go by unnoticed like Bette and Tina's heteronormative relationship. Instead, the characters criticize the relationship as an abuse of power. This demonstrates that *The L Word* does have a main heteronormative relationship that is heteronormative and accepted, but does have another heteronormative relationship that does not go by unnoticed. In this periphery relationship between Gabby and Alice, *the L Word* appears to question heteronormativity, or at least the abuse of power of heteronormativity.

5.2 Feminized Relationship Talk

Jenny and Marina also complicate the idea that *The L Word* is exclusively heteronormative. At first glance, their relationship does seem to have a powerful/powerless binary—at least their storyline appears this way. Jenny is in a relationship with another man and this is her first relationship with a woman. Marina acts a bit like a mentor to Jenny in some ways. Marina is portrayed as a temptress, pushing herself on Jenny. For instance, their first kiss happens when Jenny goes to the bathroom and Marina follows her in the bathroom uninvited. Without saying anything, Marina pushes Jenny against the wall and kisses her. Jenny abruptly breaks the embrace, pushes Marina away from her, and walks out of the bathroom. Because of the storyline of their relationship, Marina appears to have the upper hand in their relationship; she initiates it and pursues Jenny. Jenny waffles about whether she wants to be with Marina and Marina respects those decisions each time. Regardless of the topical powerful/powerless binary, linguistically the couple is not heteronormative at all. In general, their conversations are very cordial and more polite than the other characters' conversations (both friendship and relationship conversations) are with each other. This polite, collaborative nature of their conversations is reminiscent of all women talk. All women talk tends to be very collaborative; a woman will present a topic and then the other female interlocutors will build up that topic with their responses (Coates 1996). The interlocutors in all women conversation tend to use WL strategies (turn-taking, politeness, etc.) and features (hedging, intensifiers, /η/ endings, etc.). This is definitely the case in Jenny and Marina's conversations

For example, Marina and Jenny's conversations follow these same trends of all women talk in the following excerpt. Jenny asks Marina if she can talk to her so that Jenny can tell Marina she does not want to date Marina anymore.

- 1 Marina: Hey
 2 Jenny: Hey °can I speak to you please
 3 Marina: Sure. I'll be right there. Wait a minute? ((says to a worker)) Due bicchieri
 4 d'acqua per la tre ((translation: Two glasses of water for table three.)) ((to
 5 Jenny)) Do you want some coffee?
 6 Jenny: No
 ((Marina reaches out as if to touch Jenny's arm. Jenny shrinks away. Marina pulls back.))
 7 Jenny: Thank you
 ((The camera cuts to another scene, then cut scene then back to them))
 [...]
 8 Marina: Do you want to go to my office?
 9 Jenny: No this is just gonna take a minute
 ((Alice and Shane walk in and spot Jenny and Marina.))
 10 Alice: Hey! How are ya?
 11 Marina: Hey!
 ((Alice and Marina hug.))
 12 Alice: Hey Jenny!
 13 Jenny: (to Marina) Can we go into your office please
 14 Marina: Yeah sure
 15 Jenny: Thank you (.) Okay

(LW 1.3, 3-5)

Jenny is using negative politeness in this excerpt. She uses the word *please* when she makes her requests in lines 2 and 13 and *thank you* in line 15 when Marina obliges. Both of these words reflect that Jenny realizes she is inconveniencing Marina. Marina reacts favorably to Jenny's questioning, saying *sure* (line 3 and 14) to both her requests (speaking to her in line 2 and going to her office in line 13). Marina's request in line 3 is not as polite as Jenny's because she does not use the word *please* when she asks Jenny to wait. However, Marina also does not use a directive, i.e. "Wait a minute Jenny." Instead, her rising intonation allows Jenny to take this as a suggestion—something she can tell Marina she does not want to do.

When Jenny and Marina go to Marina's office, the conversation continues to be polite, cooperative, and has WL features. This is surprising because Jenny is breaking up with Marina, which is doing something that is face-threatening for her (she is at risk of not being liked) and

Marina (she is also at risk for not feeling liked). The conversation is still typical for all women's talk despite the face threatening nature of the conversation.

- 1 Marina: What's on your mind Jenny?
(2)
- 2 Jenny: ((sigh)) I can't be around you anymore it's confusing to me and it makes me
3 feel insane (2) you know Tim has been so wonderful to me (4) and I think that
4 this is the very first time in my life (1) that I've actually felt safe
(8)
- 5 Marina: Do you want to be safe?
(8)
- 6 Jenny: I'm gonna marry Tim (2) I can't imagine my life without him (2) I don't want
7 to imagine my life without him
(3)
- 8 Marina: (nodding) Is that what you want?
- 9 Jenny: (smiles) Yes (.) That is what I want
- 10 Marina: (smiling) Then I wish you well
((Marina kisses Jenny on the cheek and leaves.))

(LW 1.3, 6)

Jenny carefully phrases what the problem is. Instead of saying, "Marina you make me crazy," Jenny blames her feelings of insanity on being around Marina in lines 2-3, which removes the blame from Marina and applies it to the situation of them being together. This is a polite thing to do. Further, Jenny uses hedges (a WL feature) to mitigate her statements (*I feel like, you know, I think*). Marina is also polite in how she handles the situation. She does not yell or say anything inappropriate to Jenny when she is rejected. There is no interruption at all in this conversation. This type of polite conversation is thought to be prevalent in all women talk.

The interactional work that Marina does in this excerpt is reminiscent of the role typically associated with women in Fishman's study (Fishman 1983). Marina asks Jenny all of the questions (line 1, 5, and 8), causing Jenny to elaborate. Yet, Jenny does not do the same work of asking questions to allow Marina the time to tell Jenny how she feels. It is not until the end of the conversation that Marina offers her unsolicited blessing to Jenny about the situation, i.e. that

she wishes Jenny well. Jenny's lack of questioning most likely stems from the fact that she is breaking up with Marina. Breaking up with someone is not the time to ask how the other person is feeling; it does not matter what they are feeling because the decision has already been made. In which case, Jenny's lack of questioning and Marina's questions is not evidence of the couple being heteronormative. The powerful/powerless dynamic in this excerpt stems from the break up; it makes Jenny more powerful than Marina. Despite this inherent binary created from the situation and the interactional work that results, Jenny and Marina do successfully maintain a very cooperative conversation, making it appear like an all women conversation.

In the next excerpt, the politeness in the conversation is still prevalent and the interactional work is distributed more evenly.

- 1 Marina: I think it has amazing potential.
- 2 Jenny: Potential?
- 3 Marina: Well, it's a draft right?
- 4 Jenny: Yes
- 5 Marina: Well you can't expect every story you write to fall out of you and be
- 6 gold (1) writing is re-writing.
- 7 Jenny: Mmhm::
- 8 Marina: It doesn't make you less talented
- 9 Jenny: Right
- ((Jenny, leaned back against the window, puts her leg in Marina's lap. Marina leans close, over Jenny.)) (3)
- 10 Marina: Your strength is you write from here (2) ((Marina puts her palm over
- 11 Jenny's heart.)) The demons that tempt you (3) That you struggle
- 12 with (4)((Jenny pushes Marina's hair back and looks at her.)) Am I
- 13 that demon

(LW 1.5, 11)

Marina is offering criticism on Jenny's writing, which is a face-threatening act. She acknowledges this and gives feedback in a very polite way. Marina does negative politeness by using hedges. In her criticism, that Jenny's draft has potential, she uses *I think* in line 1, which allows Marina to mitigate her statement, i.e. the draft is not inherently just full of potential; Marina just feels that way. When Jenny seems offended, she uses the word *well* in line 3 to

soften her response. Then, Marina uses positive politeness by giving Jenny two compliments: Jenny is talented and Jenny writes from her heart (line 8 and 10). Jenny also back-channels (*Mhmm, right*) in lines 7 and 9 to indicate that she is listening to Marina, a common feature of women listeners—especially in all women conversation.¹²

During Jenny and Marina’s actual break up, their conversation again is like conversation in all women talk. This conversation is like a stereotypical “cat fight” among two women.

- 1 Marina: Jenny this is not the solution we have to talk about this (.) you have
 2 to understand the difference between you and I (.) Francesca and I (.) it's
 3 so different
 ((Jenny is about to walk out, then spots pictures on a wall and stops to look at them. They're of Marina and Francesca.))
 4 Marina: ((sees Jenny’s gaze and talks about Francesca)) She travels 4 to 5 months a
 5 year (.) She's a costume designer
 6 Jenny: What's her last name?
 7 Marina: Wolff (1) With 2 f's.
 (8)
 8 Jenny: Who are you?
 (4)
 9 Marina: Someone who cares about you (2) you'll find that your life is richer more
 10 full of possibilities and choices (2) I've opened up your world
 (3)
 11 Jenny: Fuck you
 12 Marina: Jenny
 ((Marina reaches out to Jenny. Jenny jerks her arm away.))
 13 Jenny: Don't! (3) don't touch me
 ((Marina backs down. She looks hurt. Jenny, crying, grabs her bags and leaves.))
 (LW 1.7 26-8)

Marina insists that Jenny “talk” to her in line 1 so that Jenny understands the situation, which is a stereotype about women—they always want to talk. Jenny reacts by storming out of the house and telling Marina not to touch her (line 13), which is another stereotypically feminine response—acting in emotionally charged ways. Jenny’s use of “fuck you” (line 11) does not

¹² Back-channeling is also called minimal responses. It is essentially any utterance that indicates the listener is in fact listening (*yeah, mhm, uh huh*, etc.) and is strategically placed between the breaks of the speaker’s speech as to not interrupt. See p.276 of *How English Works* (Curzan and Adams 2009).

create the performance of masculinity that is usually the case in the use of taboo language. Instead, her “fuck you” seems again to be like a stereotypical feminine response of being “hysterical.”¹³

5.3 Masculinized Relationship Talk

Dana and Lara, on the other had, do not have this all women talk phenomenon that is found in Marina and Jenny’s relationship, nor do they have this kind of heteronormative relationship that Bette and Tina and Gabby and Alice have. Instead, they are portrayed as a couple that has conversations that are similar to all men talk. Men talk is usually competitive; there are interruptions, one-upmanship, and ML features prevalent.

In the following example, Dana asks Lara have a very clear one-upmanship pattern occurring. Dana is asking Lara out on a date, but Lara does not just allow Dana to take the lead and either 1) do the interactional work to make that conversation happen (a heteronormative approach) or 2) collaborate (common in all women talk). Lara, instead, seems to be competing with Dana.

- 1 Dana: Um (2) I was wondering if maybe sometime=
- 2 Lara: =I would love to
- 3 Dana: Really?
- ((Lara smiles and nods.))
- 4 Dana: Okay Okay! Is Thursday night okay?
- 5 Lara: Thursday night is great
- 6 Dana: Where do you wanna go?
- 7 Lara: Anywhere you're going
- 8 Dana: Yeah, but you're a food person (.) so I want to take you someplace really
- 9 good like L'Orangerie
- 10 Lara: No no no that's way too expensive
- 11 Dana: I know I'll take care of it
- 12 Lara: We're not starting out that way um there's - there's this little place in Korea
- 13 town that I've been dying to check out

¹³ Hysterical’s root, hysteria, is a medical condition that was thought to be more commonly found in women. Being hysterical, then, is used as an adjective for emotionally unstable people—typically women, which is why I use it here and place it in scare quotes.

- 14 Dana: Do I need to make a reservation?
 15 Lara: How about if I take care of that part and you just pick me up at 8?
 16 Dana: Okay

(LW 1.3, 7-8)

In the beginning of this excerpt, Dana is portrayed as the man of the relationship. She does the traditional male role of asking someone on a date. She does hedge her request in line 1, indicating that she is nervous and allowing Lara to have an easier time refusing if necessary. Lara's response, "I would love to" (line 2), functions as an interruption. It is a pleasant interruption; she wants to go to dinner with Dana. However, Lara's refusal to wait until Dana has finished asking the question makes it seem like she wants the power back in the conversation. Lara is competing with Dana for the conversational floor; she takes it before Dana is done talking. Thus, her over-eager response is also a power move.

Dana is also portrayed as the man when she offers to pay: also a traditionally male thing to do. However, Lara renegotiates the power dynamic by saying, "We're not starting out that way" (line 12), and telling Dana she will take care of the reservation. In doing so, Lara takes control in the situation and simultaneously; she keeps autonomy by dictating where they will eat and calling the restaurant for the reservation. This display of power from both characters, and especially their competition of who should hold the power, is a feature of all men's talk. Dana tries to take on the masculine roles in this conversation (asking Dana out, calling for the reservation, picking her up, etc.), but Lara refuses; she competes for the power (saying yes in the middle of Dana's inquiry, rejecting Dana's idea for a restaurant, calling for the reservation, etc.)

In the following excerpt, Dana again attempts to play the more masculine role, but Lara competes with her. The two participate in one-upmanship until Tina, an observer of their conversation, looks at them discouragingly. The two of them are at Tina's house because Tina is afraid Lei Ling, the girlfriend of Tina's sperm donor, is coming to her house for a confrontation.

1 Dana: Alright alright let's go around the house make sure all the doors
 2 and windows are locked
 3 Lara: Yeah that's a good idea (.) you're so smart
 4 Dana: No you're the smart one.
 5 Lara: No::: only in cooking.
 6 Dana: No::: and photography.
 7 Lara: But you have mind and body intelligence.
 ((Tina stops and raises her eyebrow at the two.))
 8 Dana: ((giggles)) ((to Lara)) No::: you do.
 9 Lara: No::: you do.
 10 Dana: Shut up I said it first
 11 Lara: I said it second
 12 Dana: ((laughs))
 ((Tina leers at Dana and rolls her eyes))
 13 Dana: Sorry

(LW 1.6, 21)

In this example, Dana suggests that they check all the windows and doors in line 1. This concern for safety is arguably masculine. Further, Dana is telling Lara what to do. Then, the two of them compliment each other (lines 3-12). Complimenting in general is a feminine thing to do; women pay compliments more often than men (Holmes 1998, 105). However, this complimenting is very masculine because Dana and Lara try to one-up each other.

This theme of all-men talk is prevalent in all of their conversations except one. In this last excerpt, Lara plays the more dominant role. Conrad is telling Dana about an event Dana is invited to attend, but Lara consistently answers for Dana. This, in a sense, is also like the competitive nature seen in the excerpts above. Lara is competing with Dana; the difference here is that Lara is always winning.

1 Conrad: Hey!
 2 Dana: Hey
 (5)
 3 Conrad: So (.) Guess who's having an event tonight and wants you to come
 (1)
 4 Lara: Subaru?
 5 Conrad: Who are you? Her psychic? ((laughs))
 6 Conrad: Yeah so uh Subaru's hosting a dinner (.) Some kind of charity event
 7 to support the arts in uh public schools (.) It'll be teeming with the who's

8 who how hot is that!

9 Dana: That's very hot

((Lara puts her hand on Dana's back. Conrad watches the display.))

10 Lara: (to Dana) See how you're a star? (.) So where is it

11 Conrad: Morton's (.) 8 o'clock.

12 Lara: I'm so excited it's gonna be so great

((Lara puts her arms around Dana's neck and moves closer, whispering in her ear.))

13 Lara: You are so fucking hot (.) I wanna have sex with you right now

(LW 1.5, 6-7)

In this excerpt, Conrad asks a Dana question (line 3), not Lara, yet Lara answers it and asks Conrad for more information (line 4 and 10). It is almost like Lara is Dana's agent or spokesperson. Lara also uses an expletive to tell Dana that she wants to have sex with her in line 13, both of which are associated with masculinity. It appears like Lara is over-eager (like she was when Dana asked her out on a date) to answer for Dana.

In the relationships on *The L Word* there are a multitude of representations. Bette and Tina have a clear binary of feminine/masculine, Gabby and Alice have a powerful/powerless binary, Marina and Jenny have all women talk, and Dana and Lara generally have all men talk. Thus, the criticism of *The L Word*—that the show is heteronormative—is not exclusively the case; it is more complicated than that. Bette and Tina do have a heteronormative relationship, which makes this representation more powerful because they are the most central representation of a lesbian relationship on the show. Their relationship is therefore more influential on the overall perception of how a lesbian relationship functions because it is the focal point of the show and their heteronormativity is relatively unmarked; it is accepted. The peripheral relationships on the show, however, do present the audience with other views of lesbian relationships. There are other ways that lesbian relationship dynamics can function—marked for unequal power, like two heterosexual women, or like two heterosexual men. This complicates the critique of the show being heteronormative because the show is in fact not representing only

heteronormative relationships. Of course these relationships are peripheral, so these other representations are not nearly as strong as Bette and Tina's heteronormative relationship, but nevertheless do not allow complicate the criticism that *The L Word* functions exclusively and unquestioningly under the system of heteronormativity.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The L Word represents a groundbreaking attempt to inclusively represent the lesbian community. That it pioneers such a representation gives the show the power to reify or alter existing stereotypes about lesbians. It matters how *The L Word* represents lesbians—if they are hyper-feminine and if their relationships function under the heteronormative system—because *The L Word* has the power to shape norms. Norms are not static; a number of factors, including the media, consistently affect norms.¹ This is not to say that television should be thought of as a ‘representation of reality’—a reality ostensibly ‘out there’ beyond the screen—but as a cultural practice that produced and reproduces the norms of gender and sexuality that *are* our lived reality (both political and social). (Chambers 85, 2006)

The L Word, then, has the power to create new norms about lesbians being feminine and participating in relationships that fall outside the system of heteronormativity. One of the ways in which *The L Word*'s representation can be tested is by looking at language, which provides evidence for more subtle cues of identity performance and is not something that has ever been done in other research about the show. Furthermore, analysis of *The L Word*'s language gains insight into broader understanding of lesbian language.

This thesis suggests that *The L Word* does more than simply portray hyper-feminine or hyper-masculine language. Critics argue that the show is hyper-feminine, but the linguistic analysis complicates that notion. The quantitative research provided in Chapter 3 demonstrates that *The L Word* moves past the prevalent cultural stereotype that lesbians “talk like men,” which

¹ According to Chambers, “as a constitutive element of culture, television participates in both the fashioning and refashioning of norms. To make this connection clear it must be stressed that a norm is not a structured, static position; rather, norms are always produced socially and they remain variable, *contingent*” (Chambers 84-5, 2006).

the introduction mentions. Perhaps this more nuanced linguistic representation will allow the public to imagine how it is that lesbians talk.

Linguistic analysis demonstrates that relationship talk is somewhat but not exclusively heteronormative. Language choice creates a clear butch/femme binary between Shane and the rest of the main lesbian characters, which Chapter 4 demonstrates. Her relationship, though, is not exclusively heteronormative because visually it is (Shane appears butch and Cherie appears femme) but linguistically it is not; both Shane and Cherie use masculine language and conversation style when talking to each other. As Chapter 5 demonstrates, Bette and Tina have a heteronormative relationship both contextually and linguistically. Because *The L Word*'s main relationship does not fall outside the system of heteronormativity—and perhaps more importantly this heteronormative relationship goes unmarked and is applauded by the other characters—it could possibly strengthen the norms created by the system of heteronormativity (under the logic: if even lesbians are heteronormative, then heteronormativity must be natural because it must apply to all people). Consequently, *The L Word* could then make it more difficult to question the system of heteronormativity and the binary gender it creates (Chambers 2004, 87). Its subsidiary relationships, though, complicate this prediction. Alice and Gabby's marked heteronormative relationship talk, Marina and Jenny's feminized relationship talk, and Dana and Lara's masculinized relationship talk all work to demonstrate that 1) heteronormative relationships in the lesbian community are not universally applauded (as in the case of Alice and Gabby) and 2) other relationship models exist. Representing relationships that fall outside of heteronormativity does more than just reshape ideas about lesbians; it questions the system of heteronormativity itself by providing an idea of gender different than the feminine/masculine

binary and showing a representation of relationships that does not function within the masculine/feminine roles dictated by heteronormativity.

What does all of this say about lesbian language? Is there such thing as lesbian language? Analysis of *The L Word* shows that there is not one set of linguistic characteristics that indexes lesbian speech. As Queen argues and my results demonstrate, lesbian language relies on a variety of registers. *The L Word* reshapes the stereotype that lesbians simply “talk like men,” and does not just index the characters’ sexuality with contextual clues. Language choice for lesbians on *The L Word* is more complicated than that; it provides lesbians that use mostly masculine language, mostly feminine language, and a hybrid of both. This representation arguably creates a new stereotype about how lesbians speak.

The question of what is lesbian language is nowhere near exhausted. Linguistic analysis of Season 1 of *The L Word* gives some insight into how lesbian speech was represented on one season of one television show. However, work could be done to see if these findings are consistent through all six seasons. Moving past *The L Word*, the language of other lesbians in the media (either fictional characters or real people) could be analyzed to see if their language also performs their sexual identity by using a variety of registers or if a new result is found. Recently, there have been television shows that contain lesbian/bisexual characters (i.e. *Glee*, *Grey’s Anatomy*, *Tila Tequila*). Although these shows do not have the variety of characters that *The L Word* has, they still do create or perpetuate stereotypes about lesbian language—and arguably have the potential to shape stronger stereotypes because these shows are even more popular than *The L Word*. Further, prominent lesbians in the media could be analyzed to see how actual lesbians speak while still in the context of media representation. Analyzing speech of women like Ellen DeGeneres and Rachel Maddow could provide insight into how lesbians

speak. All of these ideas for research can examine the same questions asked here about if lesbian representations propagate a hyper-feminine image of the lesbian community, if they reify heteronormativity by only portraying heteronormative lesbian relationships, and—most importantly—how they portray lesbian language.

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Appendix 1: Transcription Conventions

The following transcription conventions are taken from the explanations provided by Coates, Jennifer. Ed. 1988. *Language and Gender: A Reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. They are based off of Jeffersonian conventions.

| | |
|--|---|
| A: I had [them] B: [Did] you | Brackets around portions of utterances indicate that the portions bracketed overlap one another. |
| A: they're meant to be= B: =adults/ | Equals signs indicate 'latching': there is no discernible gap between the two chunks of talk. |
| THIRteen | Capital letters mark speech that is much louder than surrounding talk. |
| °thirteen | A degree sign marks speech that is much quieter than surrounding talk. |
| ?,! | Punctuation symbols are used to mark intonation, not grammar. |
| (0.5) | Numbers in parentheses mark silences in seconds and tenths of seconds. |
| (.) | Parentheses are a period/full stop indicate a pause of one-tenth of one second. |
| we::ll | Colons indicate that the sound just before the colon has been lengthened. |
| but- | A hyphen marks an abrupt cut-off point in the production of talk. |
| ((chanting)) | Double parentheses enclose transcriber's comments or descriptions. |
| [. . .] or [three lines] | An ellipsis or number of lines enclosed in brackets indicated material edited by me. This convention is my own and not included in Coates 1998. |

Appendix 2: List of Hedges, Intensifiers, Taboo Language, and /n/ and /ŋ/ Counted

Note that the /n/ and /ŋ/ represented here are only the words counted that were not present progressive verbs. All present progressive verbs were counted, but are not recorded here.

| Hedges | Intensifiers | Taboo Language | /n/ | /ŋ/ |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------|
| but not really | absa-absa-absolutely | ass(es) | anythin | amazing |
| haven't really | absolutely | asshole(s) | fuckin | anything |
| I can't really | amazingly | bitch | everythin | evening |
| I don't mean to be rude | completely | bulldyke | good-lookin | nothing |
| I guess | definitely | bullshit | | morning |
| I mean | extremely | christ | | something |
| I might have | incredibly | cock | | |
| I should probably | really | crazy-ass | | |
| I think that I've probably | remotely | dammit | | |
| incredibly | so | damn | | |
| isn't really | totally | dick | | |
| it might be | truly | dyke | | |
| just | unbelievably | dykes | | |
| kind of | utterly | fags | | |
| kinda | very | fuck | | |
| maybe you should | way | fuck me | | |
| practically changed | wonderfully | fuck you | | |
| pretty | | fucked | | |
| probably | | fuckin | | |
| sort of | | fucking | | |
| sort of like | | fucks | | |
| taking | | god | | |
| uh | | god dammit | | |
| um | | hell | | |
| wasn't really | | holy shit | | |
| well | | jesus | | |
| wonderfully | | jesus christ | | |
| you know | | lame-ass | | |
| | | mind fucks | | |
| | | mother fucker | | |
| | | my god | | |
| | | penis | | |
| | | playa | | |
| | | pussy | | |
| | | shit | | |
| | | shit-faced | | |
| | | shitty | | |
| | | smart ass | | |
| | | tits | | |
| | | un-fucking-believable | | |

Appendix 3: Non-normalized Total Number of Features per Character

| | Gonna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Language | /n/ ending | /ŋ/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|--------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|----------------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| Alice | 29 | 126 | 44 | 18 | 54 | 47 | 94 | 20 | 12 | 0 |
| Bette | 21 | 185 | 80 | 4 | 38 | 13 | 198 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Dana | 8 | 116 | 39 | 12 | 38 | 5 | 65 | 5 | 10 | 0 |
| Jenny | 23 | 167 | 68 | 16 | 44 | 4 | 122 | 11 | 4 | 3 |
| Kit | 18 | 67 | 33 | 0 | 12 | 43 | 26 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| Marina | 2 | 28 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Shane | 23 | 75 | 19 | 0 | 58 | 11 | 81 | 0 | 8 | 6 |
| Tim | 17 | 79 | 20 | 0 | 43 | 35 | 66 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Tina | 42 | 126 | 62 | 15 | 30 | 25 | 99 | 1 | 3 | 0 |

Appendix 4: Total Number of Words per Character

| SEASON ONE | Bette | Alice | Jenny | Tina | Dana | Shane | Tim | Kit | Marina |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|-------|------|------|--------|
| Episode 1: Pilot | 1363 | 892 | 1201 | 1178 | 639 | 304 | 844 | 333 | 411 |
| Episode 2: Let's Do It | 585 | 902 | 167 | 421 | 449 | 485 | 407 | 240 | 199 |
| Episode 3: Longing | 793 | 434 | 289 | 385 | 294 | 261 | 178 | 30 | 127 |
| Episode 4: Lies Lies Lies | 554 | 689 | 410 | 366 | 144 | 111 | 309 | 144 | 39 |
| Episode 5: Lawfully | 488 | 299 | 371 | 319 | 164 | 355 | 360 | 423 | 80 |
| Episode 6: Losing It | 523 | 237 | 262 | 504 | 142 | 163 | 625 | 127 | 87 |
| Episode 7: L'Enui | 485 | 476 | 226 | 348 | 299 | 287 | 129 | 387 | 248 |
| Episode 8: Listen Up | 555 | 470 | 481 | 301 | 342 | 222 | 14 | 161 | 65 |
| Episode 9: Luck Next Time | 562 | 366 | 185 | 197 | 294 | 187 | 105 | 226 | 125 |
| Episode 10: Liberally | 665 | 175 | 342 | 225 | 331 | 572 | 103 | 155 | 111 |
| Episode 11: Looking Back | 427 | 822 | 640 | 576 | 287 | 262 | 0 | 12 | 11 |
| Episode 12: Locked Up | 543 | 89 | 530 | 186 | 147 | 171 | 149 | 360 | 250 |
| Episode 13: Limb from Limb | 559 | 234 | 449 | 414 | 214 | 291 | 182 | 338 | 57 |
| TOTAL WORDS | 8102 | 6085 | 5553 | 5420 | 3746 | 3671 | 3405 | 2936 | 1810 |

Appendix 5: Summary of
Total Features for All Characters

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Languag | /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|--------------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|---------------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| Alice | 29 | 126 | 44 | 18 | 54 | 50 | 91 | 20 | 12 | 0 |
| Bette | 21 | 185 | 80 | 4 | 38 | 13 | 198 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Dana | 8 | 116 | 39 | 12 | 38 | 5 | 65 | 5 | 10 | 0 |
| Jenny | 23 | 167 | 68 | 16 | 44 | 4 | 122 | 11 | 4 | 3 |
| Kit | 18 | 67 | 33 | 0 | 12 | 43 | 26 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| Marina | 2 | 28 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Shane | 23 | 75 | 19 | 0 | 58 | 11 | 81 | 0 | 8 | 6 |
| Tim | 17 | 79 | 20 | 0 | 43 | 35 | 66 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Tina | 42 | 126 | 62 | 15 | 30 | 25 | 99 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| Abby Reynolds | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Alma | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Annette | 5 | 18 | 9 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 23 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Andrew (1.9) | 0 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Agent | 1 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 7 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| assistant of jaffe | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bert | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bicyclist | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Candace | 2 | 15 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cashier | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Carla | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Carol | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cherie Jaffe | 1 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Clea | 1 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Clive | 0 | 17 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Coach | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cop 1.1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cop 1.12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cop 1.13 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dr. Wilson | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dan | 0 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| David | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Director 1.9 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Director 1.10 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| duane 1.8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Elle Zimmer | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Eric | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fae Buckley | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Appendix 5: Summary of
Total Features for All Characters

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Language | /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|--------------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|----------------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| Fan 6 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fan 8 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Flower guy | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| fancesca | 4 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| franklin | 0 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| friend of harry | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| harrison | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| gabby | 1 | 11 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| gay guy | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| gene | 0 | 40 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 12 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| george | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| girl 1.9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| girl with nadia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| girl with shane 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| girl with shane 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| girl # 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| girl #3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| girl in car | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| gurudev | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| guard | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| guy filting with b | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| guy at party | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| harley | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| harry | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| hotel manager | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| helen | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| herbalist | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| howie | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| irwin | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| isabella | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ivan | 1 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| james | 1 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| jean paul | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| jeremy | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| jerry | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| john(shanes boss) | 1 | 12 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| karen | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Appendix 5: Summary of
Total Features for All Characters

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Language | /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|-------------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|----------------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| lacey | 1 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| lady on intercome | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| lara | 3 | 8 | 17 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 17 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| lei ling | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Leslie | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Leonore | 1 | 10 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| lisa | 0 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| malcom | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| male petitioner | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| man | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| man on the phone | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| marianne | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| matt | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| melvi | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| mikela | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| passerby | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| peggy peabody | 0 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| photographer | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| protestor 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| nadia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| nick | 0 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| officer 1.6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| oscar | 2 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| randy | 1 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| receptionist | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| reporter | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| reporter 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| robin 1.1m | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| robin 1.11 f | 1 | 20 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 19 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| roommate | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| sammy | 5 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| sean | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| sharon | 0 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| simon | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| slim | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| smoothie guy | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| steve jaffe | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Appendix 5: Summary of
Total Features for All Characters

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Language | /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|------------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|----------------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| subaru rep | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| tess | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| tonya | 3 | 7 | 10 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| trish | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| waiter 1.5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| woman 1.1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| woman 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| woman 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| woman 1.4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| woman 1.6 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| woman 1.8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| woman preacher 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| woman 3 1.11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| woman 4 1.11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| yolanda | 0 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Summary Total | 240 | 1377 | 516 | 82 | 450 | 281 | 1224 | 60 | 44 | 31 |

Appendix 6
Alice: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifier | Oh My God | Taboo Lan/n/ ending/n/ ending/n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|------------|-------|--------|-------------|-----------|---|------|------|-----|
| accepting | | | | | | 1 | | |
| adding | | | | | | 1 | | |
| alarming | | | | | | 1 | | |
| amazing | | | | | | 1 | | |
| amazingly | | | 1 | | | | | |
| annoying | | | | | | 1 | | |
| anything | | | | | | 3 | | |
| asses | | | | | 1 | | | |
| asshole | | | | | 1 | | | |
| assuming | | | | | | 1 | | |
| bein | | | | | | 3 | | |
| being | | | | | | 2 | | |
| bitch | | | | | 1 | | | |
| blessing | | | | | | 1 | | |
| boring | | | | | | 3 | | |
| bringin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| brushing | | | | | | 1 | | |
| bulldyke | | | | | 1 | | | |
| bullshit | | | | | 1 | | | |
| callin | | | | | | 1 | | |
| calling | | | | | | 1 | | |
| christ | | | | | 1 | | | |
| cleanin | | | | | | 1 | | |
| clingin | | | | | | 1 | | |
| cock | | | | | 1 | | | |
| coming | | | | | | 6 | | |
| completely | | | 1 | | | | | |
| cutting | | | | | | 1 | | |
| dating | | | | | | 2 | | |
| disgusting | | | | | | 1 | | |
| doin | | | | | | 3 | | |
| doing | | | | | | 6 | | |
| drinkin | | | | | | 1 | | |

Appendix 6
Alice: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifier | Oh My God | Taboo Lan/n/ ending/n/ ending/n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|--------------|-------|--------|-------------|-----------|---|------|------|-----|
| drivin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| dyke | | | | 1 | | | | |
| eavesdroppin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| extremely | | | 1 | | | | | |
| fascinating | | | | | | 1 | | |
| fighting | | | | | | 2 | | |
| fishin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| floating | | | | | | 2 | | |
| freakin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| fuck | | | | 9 | | | | |
| fucked | | | | 1 | | | | |
| fuckin | | | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| fucking | | | | 9 | | 9 | | |
| fucks | | | | 2 | | | | |
| gettin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| getting | | | | | | 1 | | |
| givin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| giving | | | | | | 1 | | |
| god | | | | 13 | | | | |
| goin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| goin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| going | | | | | | 5 | | |
| gonna | 29 | | | | | | | |
| good-lookin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| growing | | | | | | 2 | | |
| guys | | | | | | | 12 | |
| happening | | | | | | 2 | | |
| havin | | | | | 3 | | | |
| hearing | | | | | | 1 | | |
| hell | | | | | 1 | | | |
| hiding | | | | | | 1 | | |
| hopin | | | | | | 1 | | |
| I mean | | 20 | | | | | | |

Appendix 6
Alice: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifier | Oh My God | Taboo Lan/n/ ending/n/ ending/n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|-----------|-------|--------|-------------|-----------|---|------|------|-----|
| shit | | | | | 4 | | | |
| smokin | | | | | 2 | | | |
| so | | | 13 | | | | | |
| something | | | | | 3 | | | |
| something | | | | | | 5 | | |
| starin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| stayin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| staying | | | | | | 1 | | |
| talkin | | | | | 3 | | | |
| talkin | | | | | | 3 | | |
| tellin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| thinkin | | | | | 3 | | | |
| timing | | | | | | 1 | | |
| totally | | | 8 | | | | | |
| trimming | | | | | | 1 | | |
| tryin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| uh | | 22 | | | | | | |
| um | | 14 | | | | | | |
| utterly | | | 1 | | | | | |
| very | | | 3 | | | | | |
| waitin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| wearing | | | | | | 1 | | |
| well | | 20 | | | | | | |
| wondering | | | | | | 1 | | |
| writing | | | | | | 1 | | |
| you know | | 23 | | | | | | |
| Total | 29 | 126 | 44 | 18 | 54 | 50 | 91 | 20 |
| | | | | | | | | 12 |
| | | | | | | | | 0 |

Appendix 7
 Bette: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Lan | /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|----------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| absolutely | | | 2 | | | | | 2 | | |
| amazing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| answering | | | | | | 1 | | 7 | | |
| anythin | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| anything | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| arriving | | | | | | | | | | |
| asking | | | | | | | | | | |
| asshole | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| assholes | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| attacking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| bein | | | | | | 1 | | 6 | | |
| being | | | | | | | | | | |
| bitch | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| boring | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| breaking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| bringin | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| buying | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| calling | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| challenging | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| coming | | | | | | | | 4 | | |
| completely | | | 5 | | | | | | | |
| congratulating | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| courting | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| crying | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| cultivating | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| curating | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| definitely | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| disgusting | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| doin | | | | | | 4 | | | | |
| doing | | | | | | | | 13 | | |
| drinking | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| eating | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| evening | | | | | | | | 1 | | |

Appendix 7
 Bette: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Lan | /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|--------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| everything | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| expecting | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| exploiting | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| falling | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| fascinating | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| feeling | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| finding | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| flaying | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| forgetting | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| fuck | | | | | | | | 7 | | |
| fucked | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| fucking | | | | | | | | 4 | | |
| gaping | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| getting | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| gift-giving | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| god | | | | | | | | 9 | | |
| god damn it | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| goin | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| going | | | | | | | | 7 | | |
| gonna | 21 | | | | | | | | | |
| happening | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| havin | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| having | | | | | | | | 4 | | |
| hearing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| hell | | | | | | | | 3 | | |
| holding | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| hoping | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| I guess | | 5 | | | | | | | | |
| I mean | | 34 | | | | | | | | |
| implying | | | | | | | | | | |
| incredibly | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| jesus | | | | | | | | 4 | | |
| jesus christ | | | | | | | | 1 | | |

Appendix 7
 Bette: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Lan | /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|------------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| just | | 42 | | | | | | | | |
| keeping | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| kidding | | | | | | | 2 | | | |
| kind of | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| knowing | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| leavin | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| leaving | | | | | | | 3 | | | |
| letting | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| like | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| longing | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| looking | | | | | | | 2 | | | |
| lying | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| making | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| meeting | | | | | | | 3 | | | |
| misunderstanding | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| morning | | | | | | | 3 | | | |
| moving | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| nothing | | | | | | | 7 | | | |
| obstructing | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| offering | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| oh my god | | | | 4 | | | | | | |
| opening | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| opposing | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| ovulating | | | | | | | 4 | | | |
| panicking | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| playing | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| pretty | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| pulling | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| pushing | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| putting | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| raving | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| reading | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| really | | | 30 | | | | | | | |

Appendix 7
Bette: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Lan | /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|-----------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| um | | 17 | | | | | | | | |
| using | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| using | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| very | | | 6 | | | | | | | |
| violating | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| waiting | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| wearing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| well | | 38 | | | | | | | | |
| willing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| working | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| writing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| you know | | 24 | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 21 | 185 | 80 | 4 | 38 | 13 | 198 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

Appendix 8
 Dana: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Lan | /r/ ending | /n/ ending | /r/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|----------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| anything | | | | | | | | | 5 | | |
| ass | | | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| being | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| boring | | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| christ | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| clamoring | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| comforting | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| coming | | | | | | | | | 4 | | |
| dating | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| dick | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| doing | | | | | | | | | 7 | | |
| dyke | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| everything | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| feeling | | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| fuck | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| fuck you | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| fucked | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| getting | | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| god | | | | | 14 | | | | | | |
| goin | | | | | | | 3 | | | | |
| going | | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| gonna | 8 | | | | | | | | | | |
| guys | | | | | | | | | | 10 | |
| hangin | | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| haven't really | | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| having | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| hell | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| I guess | | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| I mean | | 9 | | | | | | | | | |
| inviting | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| jesus | | | | | | | | | | | |
| just | | 34 | | | | | | | | | |
| kidding | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |

Appendix 8
Dana: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Lan | /n/ ending | /ŋ/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|-----------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| um | | 14 | | | | | | | | |
| very | | | 4 | | | | | | | |
| waxing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| wearing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| well | | 16 | | | | | | | | |
| wondering | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| you know | | 17 | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 8 | 116 | 39 | 12 | 38 | 5 | 65 | 5 | 10 | 0 |

Appendix 9
Jenny: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo | Lan /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|----------------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|-------|----------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| absa-absa-absolutely | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| absolutely | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| acting | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| amazing | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| anythin | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| anything | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| apologizing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| asking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| being | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| bitch | | | | | 2 | | | | | |
| but not really | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| calling | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| coming | | | | | | | | 5 | | |
| completely | | | 5 | | | | | 1 | | |
| confusing | | | | | | | | 3 | | |
| dating | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| definitely | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | |
| distracting | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| doin | | | | | | | | 8 | | |
| doing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| embarrassing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| evening | | | | | | | | 4 | | |
| everything | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| feeling | | | | | | | | 17 | | |
| finding | | | | | | | | 3 | | |
| fuck | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| fuck you | | | | | | | | 13 | | |
| fucked | | | | | | | | 3 | | |
| fucking | | | | | | | | 13 | | |
| getting | | | | | | | | 3 | | |
| giving | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| god | | | | | | | | 4 | | |
| going | | | | | | | | 3 | | |

Appendix 9
Jenny: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo | Lan | /n/ | ending | /n/ | ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|----------------------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|-------|-----|-----|--------|-----|--------|------|------|-----|
| gonna | 23 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| guys | | | | | | | | | | | | 4 | |
| hallucinating | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| having | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| I guess | | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I mean | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I think that I've probably | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| isn't really | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| it might be | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| just | | 33 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| kind of | | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| laughing | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| leaving | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| leaving | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| letting | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| like | | | | | | | | | | | 11 | | |
| looking | | | | | | | | | | | 3 | | |
| losing | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| making | | | | | | | | | | | 3 | | |
| man | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3 |
| meeting | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| morning | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| nothing | | | | | | | | | | | 5 | | |
| nothing | | | | | | | | | | | 5 | | |
| offering | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| oh my god | | | | 16 | | | | | | | | | |
| pinning | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| pretty | | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| probably | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| reading | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| really | | | 22 | | | | | | | | | | |
| recruiting | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| renting | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| ringing | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |

Appendix 9
Jenny: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo | Lan /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|---------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|-------|----------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| running | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| saying | | | | | | | | 3 | | |
| screaming | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| shit | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| shitty | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| shocking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| sitting | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| so | | | 20 | | | | | | | |
| something | | | | | | | | 8 | | |
| sort of | | 5 | | | | | | | | |
| sort of like | | 4 | | | | | | | | |
| stalking | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| standing | | | | | | | | 3 | | |
| talking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| telling | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| thinking | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| totally | | | 2 | | | | | | | |
| trying | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| turnin | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| uh | | 34 | | | | | | | | |
| um | | 49 | | | | | | | | |
| very | | | 15 | | | | | | | |
| waiting | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| walking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| wasn't really | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| watching | | | | | | | | 4 | | |
| well | | 8 | | | | | | | | |
| wonderfully | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| wondering | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| working | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| writing | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| you know | | 18 | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 23 | 167 | 68 | 16 | 44 | 4 | 122 | 11 | 4 | 3 |

Appendix 10
Kit: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Lan | /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|-----------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| adios chiquitas | | | | | | | | | | |
| aight | | | | | | | | | | |
| ain't | | | | | | | | | | |
| anythin | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| anything | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| ass | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| beatin | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| bitch | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| blessing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| bullshit | | | | | 2 | | | | | |
| calling | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| changing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| comin | | | | | | 2 | | | | |
| crazy-ass | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| damn | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| disappearing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| doin | | | | | | 7 | | | | |
| drinkin | | | | | | 3 | | | | |
| everythin | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| everything | | | | | | | | 3 | | |
| falling | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| fucked | | | | | 2 | | | | | |
| gettin | | | | | | 2 | | | | |
| girl | | | | | | | | | | |
| givin | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| god | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| going | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| gonna | 18 | | | | | | | | | |
| groovy | | | | | | | | | | |
| guys | | | | | | | | | 3 | |
| having | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| hidin | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| hola | | | | | | | | 1 | | |

Appendix 10
Kit: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Lan | /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|------------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| holy shit | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| I guess | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| I mean | | 4 | | | | | | | | |
| I'm down with it | | | | | | | | | | |
| jonesin | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| just | | 10 | | | | | | | | |
| keep it real | | | | | | | | | | |
| keepin | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| keeping | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| kidding | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| letting | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| like | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| lookin | | | | | | 3 | | | | |
| making | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| man | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| meeting | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| motherfucker's | | | | | | | | | | |
| nothin | | | | | | 2 | | | | |
| nothing | | | | | | | 2 | | | |
| overwhelming | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| payin | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| performing | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| playa | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| promising | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| puttin | | | | | | 2 | | | | |
| really | | | 21 | | | | | | | |
| sayin | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| shitfaced | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| so | | | 10 | | | | | | | |
| somethin | | | | | | | 8 | | | |
| something | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| spending | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| splittin | | | | | | 1 | | | | |

Appendix 10
Kit: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Lan | /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|----------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| takin | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| telling | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| thinking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| totally | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| tryin | | | | | | 3 | | | | |
| uh | | 12 | | | | | | | | |
| um | | 7 | | | | | | | | |
| very | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| well | | 13 | | | | | | | | |
| wonderin | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| worrying | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| you know | | 20 | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 18 | 67 | 33 | 0 | 12 | 43 | 26 | 4 | 3 | 1 |

Appendix 11
Marina: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifier | Oh My God | Taboo Lan | /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|---------------------|-------|--------|-------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| acting | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| admiring | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| anything | | | | | | | | 5 | | |
| asking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| behaving | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| bringing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| coming | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| doing | | | | | | | | 3 | | |
| everything | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| fitting | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| getting | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| going | | | | | | | | 3 | | |
| gonna | 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| having | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| helping | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| I guess | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| just | | 2 | | | | | | | | |
| looking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| lying | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| making | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| morning | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| organizing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| paying | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| playing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| practically changed | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| pretty | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| reading | | | | | | | | 3 | | |
| really | | | 2 | | | | | | | |
| referring | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| re-writing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| ringing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| seeing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| siiping | | | | | | | | 1 | | |

Appendix 11
Marina: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifier | Oh My God | Taboo Lan | /n/ ending | /ŋ/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|-----------|-------|--------|-------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| so | | | 8 | | | | | | | |
| something | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| talkin | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| talking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| thinking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| trying | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| turning | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| uh | | 2 | | | | | | | | |
| um | | 8 | | | | | | | | |
| very | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| well | | 12 | | | | | | | | |
| writing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| you know | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 2 | 28 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 45 | 0 | 0 |

Appendix 12
Shane: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifier | Oh My God | Taboo | Lan/n/ | ending/n/ | ending/n/ | Like | Guys | Man | Other |
|------------|-------|--------|-------------|-----------|-------|--------|-----------|-----------|------|------|-----|-------|
| abandoning | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| amazing | | | | | | | | | 2 | | | |
| anything | | | | | | | | | 3 | | | |
| asshole | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| being | | | | | | | | | 2 | | | |
| bleeding | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| boring | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| bouncing | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| calling | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| coloring | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| coming | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| completely | | | 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| coursing | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| craving | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| cutting | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| dammit | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| dating | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| dick | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| doin | | | | | | | 4 | | | | | |
| doing | | | | | | | | | 3 | | | |
| enjoying | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| everything | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| expecting | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| fags | | | | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| fuck | | | | | | 14 | | | | | | |
| fuck me | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| fucked | | | | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| fuckin | | | | | | 2 | 2 | | | | | |
| fucking | | | | | | 6 | | | 6 | | | |
| funky | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| getting | | | | | | | | | 2 | | | |
| god | | | | | | 6 | | | | | | |
| god dammit | | | | | | 2 | | | | | | |

Appendix 12
Shane: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifier | Oh My God | Taboo Lan | /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man | Other |
|--------------|-------|--------|-------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|-------|
| goin | | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| going | | | | | | | | 4 | | | |
| gonna | 23 | | | | | | | | | | |
| guys | | | | | | | | | 8 | | |
| hanging | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| having | | | | | | | | 4 | | | |
| hell | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| I mean | | 6 | | | | | | | | | |
| interesting | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| jesus | | | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| jesus christ | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| just | | 8 | | | | | | | | | |
| kind of | | 3 | | | | | | | | | |
| knowing | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| laughing | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| leaning | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| leaving | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| living | | | | | | | | 2 | | | |
| lying | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| mackin | | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| man | | | | | | | | | | 6 | |
| meeting | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| missing | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| morning | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| nothin | | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| nothing | | | | | | | | 7 | | | |
| opening | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| paying | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| pretty | | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| really | | | | | | 6 | | | | | |
| sayin | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| saying | | | | | | | | | | 2 | |
| setting | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |

Appendix 12
Shane: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifier | Oh My God | Taboo Lan/n/ | ending/n/ | ending/n/ | ending/n/ | Like | Guys | Man | Other |
|-----------------------|-------|--------|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------|------|-----|-------|
| shit | | | | | 14 | | | | | | | |
| singing | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| sleeping | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| smartass | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| smoking | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| so | | | 7 | | | | | | | | | |
| something | | | | | | | | | 6 | | | |
| taking | | | | | | | | | 3 | | | |
| talking | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| thinkin | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| thinking | | | | | | | | | 2 | | | |
| totally | | | 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| uh | | 12 | | | | | | | | | | |
| um | | 17 | | | | | | | | | | |
| un-fucking-believable | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | |
| very | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| waiting | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| way | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| well | | 21 | | | | | | | | | | |
| you know | | 7 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 23 | 75 | 19 | 0 | 58 | 11 | | 81 | 0 | 8 | 6 | |

Appendix 13
Tim: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Lan/n/ ending/n/ ending/n/ ending/n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|---------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|---|------|------|-----|
| absolutely | | | 2 | | | | | |
| amazing | | | | | | 1 | | |
| askin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| ass | | | | 1 | | | | |
| beating | | | | | 1 | 1 | | |
| bein | | | | | | | | |
| bullshit | | | | 1 | | | | |
| cheating | | | | | | 2 | | |
| comin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| coming | | | | | | 1 | | |
| craving | | | | | | 1 | | |
| dammit | | | | 1 | | | | |
| damn | | | | | | 1 | | |
| doin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| doing | | | | | | 2 | | |
| dyke | | | | 1 | | | | |
| dykes | | | | 1 | | | | |
| eating | | | | | | 1 | | |
| fuck | | | | 8 | | | | |
| fucked | | | | 1 | | | | |
| fuckin | | | | 7 | 7 | | | |
| fucking | | | | 16 | | 16 | | |
| getin | | | | | 1 | | | |
| getting | | | | | | 3 | | |
| god | | | | 2 | | | | |
| goin | | | | | 8 | | | |
| going | | | | | | 1 | | |
| gonna | 17 | | | | | | | |
| happening | | | | | | 1 | | |
| havin | | | | | 2 | | | |
| heading | | | | | | 1 | | |
| I cant really | | 1 | | | | | | |
| I mean | | 7 | | | | | | |

Appendix 13
Tim: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Lan/n/ | ending/n/ | ending/n/ | Like | Guys | Man |
|--------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------|------|-----|
| incredibly | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| interrupting | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| joking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| just | | 20 | | | | | | | | |
| kind of | | 2 | | | | | | | | |
| kinda | | 2 | | | | | | | | |
| laughing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| letting | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| liking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| lookin | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| looking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| makin | | | | | | | 3 | | | |
| man | | | | | | | | | | 3 |
| meaning | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| nothing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| playing | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| pretty | | 3 | | | | | | | | |
| probably | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | |
| puking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| really | | | 3 | | | | | | | |
| saying | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| screwing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| shit | | | | | 3 | | | | | |
| shitty | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| shopping | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| so | | | 11 | | | | | | | |
| something | | | | | | 1 | | 4 | | |
| something | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| standing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| swimming | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| takin | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| talkin | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| talking | | | | | | | | 3 | | |

Appendix 13
 Tim: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Lan/n/ | ending/n/ | ending/n/ | Like | Guys | Man |
|----------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------|------|-----|
| telling | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| thinking | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| tryin | | | | | | | 2 | | | |
| turnin | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| uh | | 27 | | | | | | | | |
| um | | 6 | | | | | | | | |
| very | | | 3 | | | | | | | |
| waitin | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| watching | | | | | | | | 4 | | |
| well | | 5 | | | | | | | | |
| workin | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| working | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| writin | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| writing | | | | | | | | 3 | | |
| you know | | 5 | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 17 | 79 | 20 | 0 | 43 | 35 | 66 | 0 | 0 | 3 |

Appendix 14
Tina: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Lan | /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| amazing | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| answering | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| anything | | | | | | | | 4 | | |
| blessing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| boring | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| breakin | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| brooding | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| chanting | | | | | | | | | | |
| checkin | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| comin | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| coming | | | | | | | | | | |
| completely | | | 1 | | | | | 2 | | |
| cooking | | | | | | | | | | |
| dammit | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | |
| dating | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| definitely | | | 2 | | | | | | | |
| doin | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| doing | | | | | | | | 5 | | |
| donating | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| enticing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| evening | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| everything | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| exciting | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| exorcising | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| feeling | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| flipping | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| freakin | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| fuck | | | | | 2 | | | | | |
| fuck you | | | | | 11 | | | | | |
| fuckin | | | | | 2 | | | 2 | | |
| gestating | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| gettin | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| getting | | | | | | | | | 2 | |
| givin | | | | | | | | 1 | | |

Appendix 14
Tina: Non-normalized Results

| | Gunna | Hedges | Intensifiers | Oh My God | Taboo Lan | /n/ ending | /n/ ending | Like | Guys | Man |
|--------------|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------|------|-----|
| pulling | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| really | | | 24 | | | | | 1 | | |
| running | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| saying | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| seeing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| shit | | | | | 3 | | | | | |
| shitty | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| sitting | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| so | | | 28 | | | | | | | |
| something | | | | | | 1 | | | | |
| something | | | | | | | | 5 | | |
| sort of | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| starting | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| taking | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| talking | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| telling | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| thinking | | | | | | | | 5 | | |
| throbbing | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| totally | | | 3 | | | | | | | |
| touching | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| tryin | | | | | | 2 | | | | |
| trying | | | | | | | | 4 | | |
| ubelievably | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| uh | | 42 | | | | | | | | |
| um | | 20 | | | | | | | | |
| unbelievably | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| very | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| well | | 9 | | | | | | | | |
| wondering | | | | | | | | 1 | | |
| workin | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| working | | | | | | | | 2 | | |
| you know | | 4 | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 42 | 126 | 62 | 15 | 30 | 25 | 99 | 1 | 3 | 0 |

Appendix 15: Representation of "The Chart" (Boltonik 2005)

