# 'No mam. You are heterosexual': Whose language? Whose sexuality?[1]

## Ana Cristina Ostermann (iD)

*Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos, Brazil*

This study analyzes phone calls to a Brazilian governmental health helpline. By means of Conversation Analysis and categorization analysis, it investigates a demographic survey at the end of the calls, used to collect information about the caller, including the caller's sexual orientation. What was originally a *wh*-question ('What is your sexual orientation?') is most frequently transformed by call takers (who conduct the survey) into a polar question ('Are you heterosexual?'), a format that triggers complex interactional trajectories and activates categorizations that demonstrate 'in-action' heteronormative understandings about gender and sexuality. The analysis reveals the helpline callers' unfamiliarity with what academics and activists have mostly considered everyday and perhaps universal terminology, and thus calls for more bottom-up and ecologically valid ways of talking about sexual orientations. This investigation also contributes to questioning the traditional dichotomy of the micro and macro perspectives, demonstrating how situated interactions respond to a wider sociocultural repertoire which makes what is local simultaneously *trans*local.

Este artigo analisa ligações para uma central telefônica governamental de informações sobre saúde. Por meio da Análise da Conversa e da Análise de Categorizações de Pertença, investiga uma enquete demográfica realizada ao final das ligações, utilizada para coletar informações sobre usuárias dessa central, incluindo sua orientação sexual. O que era previsto originalmente como uma pergunta de formato aberto ('Qual a sua orientação sexual?') é transformado, pelos atendentes da central, em uma pergunta polar – de sim ou não – ('Você é heterossexual?'), 'em ação' gerando trajetórias interacionais complexas e categorizações heteronormativas 'em ação' sobre gênero e sexualidade. A análise aponta a não familiaridade das usuárias dessa central com termos que acadêmicas/os e ativistas considerariam de uso cotidiano e mesmo universais, e sugere que termos mais locais e ecologicamente válidos sejam usados para tratar de orientação sexual nesses contextos. A investigação também contribui para questionar a tradicional dicotomia do micro e macro, ao demonstrar como interações situadas respondem a repertórios socioculturais mais amplos que fazem que o local seja simultaneamente *trans*local. [Portuguese]

## INTRODUCTION

Issues of how to analyze gender and sexual identities in interaction have been largely already discussed, in particular in the field of Conversation Analysis (CA) (Schegloff 1997, 1998; Wetherell 1998; Kitzinger 2000; Speer and Stokoe 2011). Some of the criticism addressed by conversation analysts is that much of the research on the relationships between language, gender, and sexuality lies in understanding speakers and talk as predetermined by abstract discourses 'from above' or 'beyond' talk (Speer and Stokoe 2011: 7).

Schegloff (1997) claims that gender has to be demonstrably relevant to the participants – instead of being (a priori and exogenously) imposed by analysts – in order to be used as an analytical social category in social interaction. The author notes, for instance, that

> it is not enough to justify referring to someone as a 'woman' just because she is, in fact, a woman – because she is, by the same token, a Californian, Jewish, a mediator, a former weaver, my wife, and many other things. (Schegloff 1997: 165)

CA methodological criteria on what counts as analytical categories, and its reluctance to bring wider (or macro) social issues[2] – such as power, heteronormativity, and oppression – aprioristically into the analysis, have not gone without criticism (e.g. Wetherell 1998). In response to the criticism of CA's conceptualization of what actually is relevant to the participants or what constitutes participants' orientation to gender (e.g. Wetherell 1998; Ehrlich 2002), a number of scholars have demonstrated how powerful the conversational analytical lenses might be at grasping gender and sexual identities *in action* (e.g. Ehrlich 2002; Kitzinger 2005, 2007; Speer and Stokoe 2011; Ostermann and Kitzinger 2012). As Weatherall (2002: 768) points out,

> [b]eing limited, as an analyst, to the overtly displayed concerns of the participants is *not to say* that gender is not omni-relevant. What it does mean is that it is incumbent on the researcher to show *how and that* gender as omni-relevant is produced and oriented to.

Moreover, once analysts have demonstrated and described the specific and practical ways of *how* gender is actualized *in* interaction, this might also allow them to show how such practices could possibly be changed (Ostermann and Kitzinger 2012).

Aligned with the perspective taken by other studies interested in unveiling how participants orient to gender and sexuality in talk and how larger social constructs come into being in social interaction, the current study also takes up Garfinkel's ethnomethodological claim (1967) that it is part of the analysts' task to actually show how interactants' production of their everyday activities is informed by certain categorizations and how the interactants demonstrate their orientation to them (Stokoe 2000, 2006; Stokoe and Smithson 2001;

Stokoe and Weatherall 2002; Speer and Stokoe 2011). In other words, the analysis and discussion presented in this paper assume an understanding that interactants are continuously attributing meaning to and demonstrating their understanding of interactions, the world around them and what is happening here and now. Thus, a close analysis of naturally occurring interactions is taken here as central to explaining the methods and everyday practices that participants use in order to produce such worlds (Garfinkel 1967; Speer and Stokoe 2011).

Such perspective also reflects how this paper connects with the special theme of this issue. The perspective assumed here is *not* one of North and South, West and non-West, developed and developing (or even underdeveloped), First and Third World, center and periphery, or the macro and micro. Instead, it assumes a tentatively less dichotomous perspective that proposes to simply shift our point of departure by *first* looking at the 'margins' (Milani 2014), and only then investigating how the margins – perhaps unavoidably – relate (or not) to what has been taken to be the 'metropole'.

What I propose, in fact, is not new: to (firstly) look at and (only later) theorize from language where language *is actually* used; to look at and theorize from the actual sites where people are interacting in the world to carry out their everyday affairs, investigating how they orient (or not) to certain categories and how they make sense of the world while doing so.[3] In this sense, Conversation Analysis and categorization analysis serve as empowering analytical lenses to investigate participants' own understandings and categorizations of gender and sexuality.

In order to frame the analysis of this paper within the larger theme of the Special Issue, I take here Comaroff and Comaroff's invitation (2012a: 1), originally formulated as 'What if we posit that, in the present moment, it is the *global south* that affords privileged insight into the workings of the world at large?' (emphasis added), and modify it slightly so as to propose that 'What if we posit that [...] it is *the micro level of everyday interactions* that affords privileged insight into the workings of the world at large'?

This work, thus, investigates the micro level of talk-in-interaction itself in the production and naturalization of understandings of gender and sexuality. By analyzing language as it is used by people when conducting their everyday affairs, the study looks at how 'heteronormativity' (Warner 1991) or 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich 1980; Butler 1990) are actualized in naturalistic data, and how intersubjectivity (understood here as the participants' mutual understandings), in particular when at stake, might reveal 'heteronormativity *in action*', to borrow Kitzinger's (2005) words. By relying on such an analytical perspective, the paper also aims to call into question the traditional dichotomy of the micro and macro perspectives, demonstrating how the interactional moment, as a condensed historicity of participants' own understandings and categorizations of gender and sexuality,

seems to respond to a wider sociocultural repertoire which makes what is local simultaneously translocal.

## SITUATING THE SETTING, DATA, AND METHODS

Helplines, the interactional context of interest here, are dedicated telephone-based services (delivered by both the private and public sector) that provide some type of assistance, guidance and/or simply information on a range of topics or concerns, such as legal, medical, emotional, among others (Baker, Emmison and Firth 2005). An example of a helpline would be a phone number made available by a software company to help customers with troubleshooting.

Within the context of helplines, it is by means of talk-in-interaction that callers and call takers conduct their main business, i.e. to request for and receive some type of help – whose nature, of course, can vary. In addition, it is by means of talk-in-interaction that specific meanings are negotiated, and the participants' reasoning, assumptions and beliefs are rendered visible.

The wider study from which this investigation derives comprises 308 audio recorded and fully transcribed, naturally occurring phone-call interactions directed to a Brazilian governmental health helpline, *Centro de Informações sobre Saúde* (also referred to here as CIS).[4] That is a toll free number, created by the Brazilian Ministry of Health to provide citizens with health information and referrals. Most users of the helpline are working-class citizens with low educational background whose access to health information (including internet access) is limited.

The interactions analyzed for the larger investigation from which this study derives, and whose main purpose was to investigate morality in action in interactions in women's public health services in Brazil, were limited to those initiated by a citizen, and then only those in which the caller selected 'women's health' in the initial menu, and further selected one of the following topics in the submenu: HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, cancer or contraception.

As is the case for most telephone services in Brazil nowadays, all CIS calls are automatically recorded by the management for quality control, with callers being informed of the recording at the start of every call by means of an automated message. It is important to register, however, that all calls are anonymous. At no instance in the interactions are callers asked to reveal their names. Thus, in order to ensure the highest possible ethical care while simultaneously abiding by the institutional demand to not interfere with their current practices at the time, written permission for participation in the study was requested only from the call takers.[5] Those who chose not to take part in the study had their wish respected and, thus, the institutional recordings of their calls were not analyzed. In addition, any mention of proper names that

might indicate who the participants are, including names of cities, streets, and institutions, were replaced by fictitious ones.

The analysis presented here focusses on the final phase of the phone calls; more specifically, the analysis is circumscribed to the phase when the institutional representative (call taker or CT) applies a survey that requests demographic information from the caller (C). This survey was introduced in 2010 by the Ministry of Health as part of the service provided by the helpline, CIS. The introduction of surveys at the end of the calls was motivated by the government's initiative to gather statistics about the helpline callers in order to propose actions more closely tailored to their profiles, including the need to serve LGBTT users more adequately in the public health system.

Out of the corpus of 308 recorded phone calls analyzed in the larger study, only 31 contained the recording of the survey. That survey comprised 20 questions, ordered in a pre-arranged way. Among the information requested about the caller were age, gender, sexual orientation, and educational level.

Despite some initial neglect of the survey recordings in the phone calls, a closer look at the data revealed that speakers interactionally demonstrated problems when dealing with one specific question: the one about the caller's sexual orientation. It is the interactional trajectory of the sequence surrounding such a question that this paper investigates.

Following the tradition of other conversation analytical studies (Kitzinger 2000; Paoletti 2002; Speer 2005; Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2014; Lindström, Näslund and Rubertsson 2015), in order to carry out such investigation, I combine Conversation Analysis (CA) (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974) with categorization analysis (Sacks 1992). Moreover, at some points in the analysis I also rely on some ethnographic notes about the call center and its workings.


## SEXUAL ORIENTATION AS INTERACTIONALLY DELICATE

The sequence involving the actions of requesting and providing information about the caller's sexual orientation reveals itself as interactionally 'delicate' (Silverman and Peräkylä 1990; Peräkylä 1995) by the participants' orientation to it. The first evidence for such a claim is that such a question is deliberately moved by the CTs from its middle position in the survey list – i.e. allocated by the Ministry of Health as the 10th out of 20 questions – to be asked as the very last, as Figure 1 below illustrates.

This change, as reported by the call takers in informal conversations with me, is a way to maximize the information obtained by means of the survey, since a number of callers hang up after being asked about their sexuality. Thus, according to the call takers, by requesting that information as the last question in the survey, if the call is abruptly terminated, the responses to the rest of the survey could still have been obtained.

## Survey questions

(1)  Accepts to take the survey?
(2)  Gender
(3)  Profile
(4)  Age
(5)  Education level
(6)  Marital status
(7)  City/State of residence
(8)  How was informed about the toll free number
(9)  Race/color
(10) **Sexual orientation**
(11) Children
(12) Internet access
(13) Occupation
(14) Socioeconomical class
(15) Number of people living in the same household
(16) Registration of household with the family health program
(17) Lenght of the registration
(18) Use (exclusive or not) of the public health system
(19) Use of the public health system in the past 12 months
(20) Evaluation of the public health system? **20th position**

**Figure 1:** Survey applied at the end of the calls to CIS and the repositioning of the question about sexual orientation

Secondly, as an attempt to deal with the complexity of the question about 'sexual orientation', call takers make use of alternative ways of designing the format of the request. The original structure of the question posed by the Ministry of Health – an open *Wh*-question (*What is your sexual orientation?*) – is actually informally modified and produced in three other formats, as represented in Figure 2:

1. polar (yes/no) questions (Heritage and Raymond 2012);
2. alternative questions (Bolinger 1978); or
3. in-progress 'list construction' (Jefferson 1991).

Call takers reported doing this in order to facilitate the interaction. According to them, responding 'yes' or 'no' (to a *yes-no* question) – instead of having to produce an answer to an open question – should make it 'easier' or simpler for the callers to respond.

Because the *polar yes-no question* was by far the most frequent format used by the call takers (28 out of the 31 occurrences), it is on sequences involving that specific format that this paper concentrates. The single occurrence of the *in-progress list construction* and its interactional consequences are discussed elsewhere (Ostermann in preparation).What follows are some examples of how
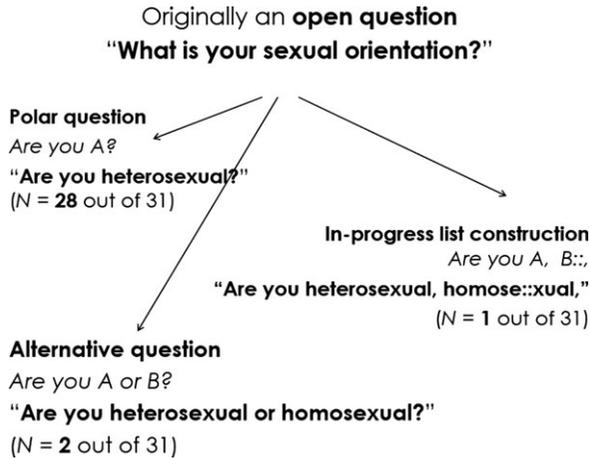
Originally an **open question**
**"What is your sexual orientation?"**

**Polar question**
*Are you A?*
**"Are you heterosexual?"**
(*N* = **28** out of 31)

**In-progress list construction**
*Are you A, B::,*
**"Are you heterosexual, homose::xual,"**
(*N* = **1** out of 31)

**Alternative question**
*Are you A or B?*
**"Are you heterosexual or homosexual?"**
(*N* = **2** out of 31)

**Figure 2:** Call takers' changes in the design of the question, in which A stands for heterosexual and B, homosexual (*N*=number of call takers using the design)

the survey open question about sexual orientation is actualized in interactions in its different formats.[6]

*Polar (yes/no) questions:*

(1)  Call taker:  *você é heterossexua:l?*
                         are you heterose:xual?

(2)  Call taker:  *.h e com relação à sua opçã- à sua <u>orientação sexual</u> você é heterossexu↑a:l*
                         .h and in relation to your sexual opt- to your sexual orientation are you heterosexu↑a:l

*Alternative questions:*

(3)  Call taker:  *é: orientação sexual você se considera .h heterossexual ou homossexual*
                         uh: sexual orientation do you consider yourself .h heterosexual or homosexual

*In-progress list construction:*

(4)  Call taker:  *é: orientação sexual você se considera .h heterossexua::l, homossexua::l,*
                         uh: sexual orientation do you consider yourself .h heterose::xual, homose::xual,

Such deliberate transformation, in particular, the most frequently used format in the data set (i.e. yes-no questions), besides creating a number of interactional problems for the participants in terms of intersubjectivity, as

discussed elsewhere (Ostermann in preparation), also reveals the workings of heteronormativity (or of 'heteronormativity in action'; Kitzinger 2005), as explored in this paper.

Finally, the interactional delicacy surrounding the sequence that involves the request and provision of information about the callers' sexual orientation becomes noticeable also through 'perturbations' (Silverman and Peräkylä 1990) in the participants' talk – i.e. disturbances in their speech, such as pauses, hesitations, repairs and laughter.

## A NEUTRAL QUESTION? A PRESUPPOSED HETEROSEXUAL WORLD

Interactional studies of naturally occurring ordinary and institutional interactions have demonstrated that questions may perform a number of different actions besides that of requesting information (Freed and Ehrlich 2010; Hayano 2013). Other actions performed by questions might include inviting, challenging, requesting accounts and initiating repair, among others (Hayano 2013). However, questions do even more. They also communicate the questioner's beliefs, reasoning and expectations; questions presuppose (Heritage 2010).

When deliberately transforming an originally open question about sexuality ('What is your sexual orientation?') into a yes/no interrogative ('Are you heterosexual?') or an alternative question ('Are you heterosexual or homosexual?') – or any combinations of the two formats – call takers communicate some of their beliefs and assumptions about the callers and the world. The major format used by the call takers (Y-N questions) reveals itself as problematic for being shaped in a non-neutral format and creating presuppositions about the caller. The alternative question-format ('Are you heterosexual or homosexual?'), used alone on only two occasions, creates a binary world of sexual orientation, thus limiting the choices one might have. An answer that does not conform to any of the choices offered in the first-pair part of the adjacency pair will tend to demand more interactional work from the participants and be 'dispreferred' (Lee 2013; Pomerantz and Heritage 2013).

Another presupposition operates in polar (yes/no) interrogatives (Heritage 2010; Raymond 2010; Ostermann and Jaeger 2012). As Heritage (2010: 51) explains, 'the conversation analytic term *preference* is used to describe the bias or tilt of questions that are designed for, favor, or suggest an expectation of an answer of a particular type.' In that sense, the grammatical design of the interrogative 'Are you heterosexual?' favors a 'yes' answer (see also Raymond 2010).

By transforming an originally open question ('What is your sexual orientation?') into a *yes*-preferred question ('Are you heterosexual?' or the alternative 'Are you heterosexual or not?'), the call taker communicates preference of some kind: a *yes* agreement. Beyond that, she/he also selects a specific sexual orientation (or a specific category) as a default, 'more favorable' one, thus revealing 'heteronormativity' (Warner 1991) – most commonly discussed as a *macro* level concept – in operation at the *micro* level of everyday interactions.

The data show that when the caller responds *affirmatively* to the first production of a *yes*-preferred question, her answer is not problematized and the interaction evolves to its closing, as shown in Extract 1.

**Extract 1** [Disk040909ReginaAIDS]

| 234 | Call taker: | *hhh a::h a senhora se considera heterossexual* |
| 235 | | hhh u::h do you consider yourself heterosexual |

| 236 | Caller: | *↑s:i:::m:* |
| 237 | | **↑y:e:::s:** |

| 238 | Call taker: | *oquei senhora (.) <u>muito</u> obrigado por colabo↑rá (.) o* |
| 239 | | *ministério da saúde <u>agradece</u> a sua ligação ligue <u>sempre</u> que* |
| 240 | | *for necessá:rio .hh tenha um ↑bom ↓di:a* |
| 241 | | **okay mam (.) thank you <u>very</u> much for colla↑borating (.) the** |
| 242 | | **ministry of health <u>thanks</u> you for your call call <u>whenever</u>** |
| 243 | | **necessary .hh have a ↑great ↓da:y** |

| 244 | Call taker: | *bom dia* |
| 245 | | **have a good day** |

After receiving a type-conforming as well as a preference-conforming answer by the caller (i.e. 'yes'), the call taker immediately moves to the closing of the interaction (lines 238–240 / 241–243). Notice that this is so despite the markedness with which such a *yes*-preferred answer is produced in Excerpt 1 (lines 236 / 237) – a one syllable agreement marked not only with stretched sounds but also with a rising intonation (↑y:e:::s:).

Conversely, in all but six cases in which the caller provides a *no* as a response, her answer is met with some type of 'problematization' by the CT. Repair sequences are initiated, and, as a consequence, the sequence gets extended over a number of turns in talk until its closing. However, another fact calls attention to the data set being analyzed. Despite the preferred *yes*-answer in the design of the question, and taking into consideration that we live in a world largely defined as heterosexual (Warner 1991), it might be somewhat intriguing that out of 28 survey respondents replying to Y-N questions, only six categorized themselves as being heterosexual. It is to those interactions that the next section in this paper turns.

## CO-CONSTRUCTING A HETEROSEXUAL WORLD

The sequence involving the request and provision of information about the caller's sexual orientation in which the caller answers negatively to being heterosexual, in addition to revealing large confusion about what heterosexual means, opens up trajectories of interaction that activate categorizations and make accessible demonstrably naturalized understandings about gender and sexuality. This section of the analysis, thus, investigates such interactional trajectories and, in doing so, reveals the operation of heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 1980) at the very micro, social level of

human interaction. The excerpts described below were selected on the basis of
the recurrence of the phenomenon they represent in the larger corpus.

**Extract 2** [DISK080909HelenaCAN]

```
260   Call taker:   ce::rto (.) .h é: po- en↓tão senhora- (.) a senhora se considera
261                 heteressexu↑al
262                 oka::y (.) .h ah: you so- ↓okay mam- (.) do you consider yourself
263                 heterosexu↑al
264                 (1.4)

265   Caller:       nã:o
266                 no:
267                 (0.6)

268   Call taker:   heterossexual senhora é a pessoa que tem afinidade pelo sexo
269                 o↑posto >ou seja a mulher ter afinidade por um homem<
270                 heterosexual mam is a person who has affinity with the
271                 opposite ↑sex. >in other words< the woman who has affinity
272                 with a ↑man.

273   Caller:       a: então sim (hh) eu não entendi muito bem
274                 oh: then yes (hh) I hadn't understood it very well
275                 (.)

276   Call taker:   oque:i senhora então o ministério da saúde agra↑dece a sua
277                 ligação ligue sempre que for necessário, e tenha um ↑bom dia.
278                 oka:y mam then the ministry of health thanks for your call. call
279                 whenever necessary, and have a ↑good day.
```

In Extract 2, after receiving a *no* (lines 265 / 266) to her *yes*-preferred question
(260–261 / 262–263) – which is delivered with a number of perturbations
(stretches, hesitations, inbreaths) – in her next turn, the CT problematizes such
an answer. Such problematization is done by means of a repair initiation
(Schegloff 1992), which consists of an unrequested explanation of what
heterosexual means – 'a person who has affinity with the opposite ↑sex' (lines
268–269 / 270–272). Such explanation is further modified by the CT to be
more recipient-designed, i.e. by replacing 'a person' with 'a woman' and
'opposite sex' with 'a man'. In other words, the call taker designs her further
explanation of 'heterosexual' to be a type of relationship that is (potentially)
more adjusted to that specific caller – an adult female.

The repair initiation implemented by the CT in lines 268–269 and 270–272
reveals at least two assumptions at this point: *(1)* that the caller is
heterosexual and *(2)* that by answering *negatively* (i.e. that she is *not*
heterosexual) the caller either *(2a)* has not understood the CT's question or
*(2b)* does not understand what heterosexual means. As revealed in the caller's
next turn (lines 273 / 274), marked with a change of state token ('oh:') and
the delivered 'online' realization of how her sexual orientation is named ('then

yes (hh) I hadn't understood it very well', in lines 273 / 274), assumptions *(1)*
and *(2b)* are interactionally revealed to be actually the case.

Another – and perhaps even stronger – instance of presupposed
heterosexuality, as well as of misunderstanding what heterosexual means,
takes place in Extract 3.

**Extract 3** [DISK110909MaribelCAN]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 338 | Call taker: | *oque:i. (.) ẹ a senhora é heterossexua:l ou seja a senhora tem* |
| 339 | | *atração pelo sexo o↑po:sto, a senhora tem a[tração]*= |
| 340 | | oka:y. (.) <u>and</u> are you heterose:xual that is are you attracted |
| 341 | | to the opposite ↑sex, are you a[ttracted]= |
| 342 | Caller: | [*nã:o*] |
| 343 | | [no:] |
| 344 | Call taker: | =*por ho:mens?* |
| 345 | | =to me:n? |
| 346 | | (1.4) |
| 347 | Caller: | *não* |
| 348 | | no |
| 349 | | (1.1) |
| 350 | Call taker: | **nã:o?** |
| 351 | | **no:?** |
| 352 | | (.) |
| 353 | Caller: | *não.* |
| 354 | | no. |
| 355 | | (.) |
| 356 | Call taker: | *a senhora tem atração por homens e não por mulheres ou a* |
| 357 | | *senhora tem atração por °mu↓lhe:res°* |
| 358 | | are you attracted to men and not to women or are you |
| 359 | | attracted to °wo:↓men° |
| 360 | | (0.8) |
| 361 | Caller: | *nã:o também não.* |
| 362 | | no: not that either. |
| 363 | Call taker: | *.h a senhora tem atração por ↑ho:mens* |
| 364 | | .h are you attracted to ↑me:n |
| 365 | | (.) |
| 366 | Caller: | *só por meu marido ↓mesmo* |
| 367 | | only to my husband ↓really |
| 368 | Call taker: | *correto. que é ho:mem. (.) ce:r[to]* |
| 369 | | okay. who is a ma:n. (.) ri:[ght] |
| 370 | Caller: | [*ahã*] |
| 371 | | [yeah] |

| 372 | Call taker: | *então a senhora é heterossexua:l* |
| 373 | | **so you are heterose:xual** |
| 374 | | (.) |

| 375 | Caller: | *[ahã]* |
| 376 | | [aham] |

| 377 | Call taker: | *[oque:i] obriga:do por colaborar e o ministério da saúde* |
| 378 | | *agradece a sua ligação ligue sempre que necessário e tenha* |
| 379 | | *um bom di:a* |
| 380 | | [oka:y] thank you for your collaboration and the ministry of |
| 381 | | health thanks for your call. call whenever necessary and |
| 382 | | have a goo:d day |

The question about the caller's sexual orientation in Extract 3 is designed in a slightly different way from the one in Extract 2. The *yes*-preferred question ('<u>and</u> are you heterose:xual', in lines 338 / 340) is immediately revised into a format that supposedly explains what heterosexual means ('that is are you attracted to the opposite ↑sex', in lines 338–339 / 340–341) and again into another question that further elaborates the explanation ('are you a[ttracted] to me:n?', lines 339 and 344 / 341 and 345). However, before the third question reaches a possible transition point, the caller provides, in overlap with the CT, a negation ('[no:]', lines 342 / 343), which is repeated in lines 347 and 348 – possibly to resolve possible problems of hearing caused by the earlier overlap.

Interestingly, at this point the CT challenges (Levinson 2013) the caller's negative answer, by repeating the caller's 'no' with rising intonation ('no:?', lines 350 / 351), to which the caller answers once again with a negation (lines 353 / 354). Demonstrating that she is not yet satisfied with the caller's third negation, in lines 356–357 and 358–359, the CT further elaborates her question in an alternative format that could be represented as: *Are you A and not B, or are you B?*. At this point, the caller simply negates *all* the possibilities presented so far. However, once again evidencing what seems to be a pursuit of a 'yes-I-am-heterosexual' answer, the CT presents the question in yet another format ('.h are you attracted to ↑me:n', lines 363 / 364). At this point we have access to yet another disclosure of misunderstanding when the caller replies that she is attracted *only* to her husband.

Thus, what we see happening in this interaction, just as in the previous one, is an assumption by the CT that the caller: *(1)* is heterosexual and that *(2)* she does not reply affirmatively because she does not understand the word heterosexual nor any of the explanations provided by the CT – assumptions that are again revealed to be congruent.

Interestingly, however, and differently from Extract 2, in Excerpt 3 we also have access to an understanding and belief of the caller herself which might represent female sexuality at a more general level: that her sexual desire is not

directed towards *all* or *any* men, but only to her husband. In terms of categorizations, the caller makes reference to a relational pair of husband-wife in which the wife has limited rights to sexual attraction – *only* to her husband – which, in its turn, also points to a certain understanding of female sexuality: that of fidelity or even of chastity.

Extract 4, below, reveals another made-explicit categorization by the caller about female sexuality.

**Extract 4** [DISK080909ÍsisCONTRA]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 257 | Call taker: | ↑*oquei e você é heterossexua:l?* |
| 258 | | ↑okay and are you hereterosexua:l? |
| 259 | | (0.9) |
| | | |
| 260 | Caller: | *como assi:m?* |
| 261 | | what do you mea:n? |
| 262 | | (.) |
| | | |
| 263 | Call taker: | *se você tem preferência por* <u>ho</u>:*mens ou se você tem preferência* |
| 264 | | *por mulhe:res* |
| 265 | | if you have preference for me::n, or if you have preference |
| 266 | | for wo::men |
| 267 | | (2.6) |
| | | |
| 268 | Caller: | *preferê:ncia?* |
| 269 | | pre:ference? |
| | | |
| 270 | Call taker: | *preferência sexu*↑*a:l senho:ra* |
| 271 | | sexu↑a:l preference (.) mam. |
| 272 | | (2.2) |
| | | |
| 273 | Call taker: | *sua preferência sexual é por* ↑*HOmem (0.7) ou é por* |
| 274 | | *mu[lher]* |
| 275 | | your sexual preference is for ↑MEN (0.7) or is it for |
| 276 | | wo[men] |
| | | |
| 277 | Caller: | [*eu sô*] *mulher né tem que ser homem (.)*°*(hh)*° |
| 278 | | **[I'm] a woman of course. it has to be for men (.) °(hh)°** |
| | | |
| 279 | Call taker: | *oque:i obrigada por colaborá (.) o ministério da saúde agradece a* |
| 280 | | *ligação (.) ligue sempre que for necessário e tenha um bom- uma* |
| 281 | | *boa* ↑*tarde* |
| 282 | | oka:y. thank you for your collaboration (.) the ministry of health |
| 283 | | thanks for your call (.) call whenever necessary and have a good |
| 284 | | mor- after↑noon |

This interaction shows in so many words the caller's problem with understanding the CT's question – or more specifically, with what heterosexual means – as she explicitly initiates repair of the trouble source question with another question, in 'what do you mea:n?' (lines 260 and 261). After taking more turns to repair that understanding and others (i.e. about

what the CT means by preference), in lines 275 and 276 the CT and caller finally seem to reach shared understanding with regards to the information being requested. This moment comes, however, with a meaningful categorization by the caller: that because of being a woman, her sexual preference *has to be* for men. Another interesting point here is the design of her answer – a response that does more than the simple provision of the information requested (for a discussion on answers that resist questions and on answers that do other (or more) than answering, see Stivers and Hayashi 2010; Walker, Drew and Local 2011; Couper-Kuhlen 2014). The caller uses the discourse marker *né* (roughly translated as 'of course' here) in the second position to the question, showing thus the 'obviousness' of what has been asked, in '[I'm] a woman **of course**. it has to be for men (.) °(hh)°'.

On what concerns how the answer is produced, it happens both *(1)* in overlap with the previous question and *(2)* with an account (i.e. that she is a woman) which is positioned *before* the actual provision of the requested information (i.e. that she is attracted to men). Such features in the design of her answer point to the relevance of the categorization in process taking place here: that of compulsory heterosexuality, of biological sex determining her sexual desire for males (Rich 1980; Butler 1990).

Possibly, it is Extract 5, below, that most emblematically represents all of the complexities involved in the sequences of the helpline survey question about the caller's sexual orientation.

**Extract 5** [Disk160909AfonsoAIDS]

| 138 | Call taker: | *a senhora é heterossexu↑al* |
|-----|-------------|------------------------------|
| 139 |             | are you heterosexu↑al        |
| 140 |             | (2.7)                        |

| 141 | Caller: | *oi?* |
|-----|---------|-------|
| 142 |         | what? |

| 143 | Call taker: | *a senhora é ↑heterossexual ou ↓não* |
|-----|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| 144 |             | are you ↑heterosexual or ↓not        |

| 145 | Caller: | *↓nã:o não.* |
|-----|---------|--------------|
| 146 |         | ↓n:o no.     |

| 147 | Call taker: | *a senhora ↑sabe o que é heterossexu↑a:l* |
|-----|-------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 148 |             | do you ↑know what heterosexual means?     |

| 149 | Caller: | *↓sei sim.* |
|-----|---------|-------------|
| 150 |         | ↓I do. yes. |

| 151 | Call taker: | *a senhora é: ↑lé:sbica:* |
|-----|-------------|---------------------------|
| 152 |             | are you:: a les↑bian      |

153  Caller:      *não.*
154               no.

155  Call taker:  *nã::o?*
156               no::?

157  Caller:      *não.*
158               no.

159  Call taker:  *a senhora enquadra a sua orientação sexual co:mo en↓tão*
160               how would you categorize your sexual orientation ↓then
161               (.)

162  Caller:      *ah eu sô totalmente femi↓ni:na não so::u ↑nem lé:sbica não*
163               *sou <u>nada</u> disso*
164               oh I'm totally femi↓ni:ne. I'm no::t ↑neither lesbia:n nor
165               <u>anything</u> of that kind

166  Call taker:  *en↓tão a sen[hora compreen]de=*
167               ↓so you [understand]=

168  Caller:                   *[graças a ↓deus(h)]*
169                            [<u>thanks</u> ↓god(h)]

170  Call taker:  *=o que é [heterossexual é]*
171               =what [heterosexual means]

172  Caller:               *[EU SEI o que que] é i:sso eu ↓sei*
173                        [I DO know what what] that is: I ↓do

174  Call taker:  *é a pessoa que sente atração sexual pelo sexo ↑o↓po:sto*
175               it's a person who feels attracted to the ↑opposite ↓sex

176  Caller:      *↑eu ↓se:i*
177               ↑I ↓kno:w

178  Call taker:  *en↓tã:o*
179               ↓so:
180               (1.2)

181  Call taker:  *a senhora deseja <u>não</u> respondê: essa per↑gunta:*
182               do you prefer <u>not</u> to answer this ques↑tion

183  Caller:      *↑nã::o ↓nã::o eu não ↓sou eu não sou heterossexual ↓não*
184               ↑no:: ↓no:: I don't ↓I'm not heterosexual ↓no
185               (0.9)

186  Call taker:  *a senhora en↑tende o que é heterossexu↓al*
187               do you understand what heterosexual ↑means

188  Caller:      *<u>eu en↓te::ndo</u> eu entendo. meu primo <u>ele é</u> heterossexu↓al*
189               <u>I un↓dersta:nd</u> it I understand it. my cousin <u>he is</u> heterosexu↓al
190  Call taker:  *↓não senhora heterossexual é a pessoa que sente atração pelo*

```
191                sexo oposto
192                ↓no mam. heterosexual is the person who is attracted to the
193                opposite sex
194   Caller:      ↑a::h então eu sô heterossexu↓al (h)(h)(h)((riso))
195                ↑o::h then I am heterosexu↓al (h)(h)(h)((laughs))
196   Call taker:  ↓a::h entendi senhora muito obrigado [pela re]sposta
197                ↓o::h I understand mam thank you [for your] answer
198   Caller:                                        [tá bom]
199                                                  [okay]
```

This interaction presents again a series of repair sequences. After producing a *yes*-preferred question ('are you heterosexu↑al', lines 138 / 139), the CT's question is met with a long temporal gap (2.7 seconds) before the caller initiates repair (lines 141 / 142). In lines 143 and 144, the CT offers a modified version of a *yes*-preferred question, revising it into an even more strongly-yes-preferring format ('are you ↑heterosexual or ↓not'). The double negative particle used by the caller shows her orientation to the second version of the question as a Y/N question indeed (and not an alternative one). In addition to conveying assurance, the double negative might also point out that that course of action has persisted beyond what is necessary (Stivers 2004). One could potentially claim, however, that it is this marked answer (double negative) – in addition to the CT's previous experience with callers' misunderstanding of the term 'heterosexual' and his assumption of an unlikely 'queer planet' (Warner 1991) – that prompts the CT to challenge the caller's knowledge of the meaning of 'heterosexual' ('do you ↑know what heterosexual means?', lines 147 / 148). The caller, however, responds affirmatively, reiterating, thus, the validity of her very first answer (i.e. that she is not heterosexual).

Upon returning to the task of filling in a slot in the survey about the caller's sexual orientation, the CT reformulates his question so as to ask whether the caller is a lesbian (lines 151 / 152), to which she replies with a negative without any delay (lines 153 / 154). At this point, being confronted with negative answers to both being heterosexual and a lesbian, the CT produces a somewhat conclusive (see the use of 'then') open-format question (*wh*-question): 'how would you categorize your sexual orientation ↓then' (lines 159 / 160). The caller shows resistance to categorizing her sexual orientation in any of the terms proposed so far. She starts her turn by first claiming that she is 'totally feminine', followed by a negation of the categories proposed so far: that she is not a lesbian 'nor anything of that kind' (lines 162–163 / 164–165).

The interaction reveals some important categorization processes at work. By characterizing herself with the attribute of being 'totally feminine' and establishing such attribute in a relation of opposition to 'being a lesbian' or 'anything of that kind', the caller evokes an understanding of some type of (naturalized) linearity between gender practices and sexual orientation (i.e.

that being 'feminine' corresponds to *not* being a lesbian). In addition, the caller characterizes being a lesbian as an undesirable sexual orientation when she places it as part of a larger collection that comprises 'anything of *that* kind', followed by a response cry ('[<u>thanks</u> ↓god(h)'], in lines 168 / 169), conveying relief and a positive assessment of not being a member of such a (undesirable) collection (of 'lesbians' and 'anything of that kind').

Sequentially speaking, such categorization processes seem to support the inference the CT seems to make – that the caller does not understand what heterosexual means. In lines 166 / 167 and 170 / 171, once again the CT looks for confirmation of the caller's understanding of the category 'heterosexual'. He does so by means of a 'formulation' (Heritage and Watson 1980), starting with the conclusive 'so' (in 'so you understand what heterosexual means'), which is once again confirmed by the caller (lines 172 / 173). Important as well here is that one could possibly speculate that, by drawing an inference from the caller's latest contribution (lines 162–163 / 164–165), the CT shows that he aligns himself with the caller's orientation to the fact that being 'totally feminine' cannot be an attribute of a lesbian.

The CT's offer of an explanation of what heterosexual means (lines 174 / 175) further evidences his pursuit of repairing what he infers to be a misunderstanding. Upon the caller's confirmation of her knowledge of the meaning of heterosexual, the CT takes a new turn, however, which is not to accept the answers provided by the caller (i.e. that she is heterosexual and that she knows what heterosexual means). Instead, he offers her the option of *not* answering the question about sexual orientation (lines 181 / 182). Interestingly, however, the caller vehemently rejects such an offer by producing a triple negative to the offer ('↑no:: ↓no:: I don't') (see Stivers 2004) and rejecting twice that she is heterosexual ('↓I'm not heterosexual ↓no', lines 183 / 184), thus pointing out the unsuitability of such an offer.

For the third time in this sequence, the CT looks for confirmation of the caller's understanding of the term heterosexual (lines 186 / 187). It is at this point that we see a dramatic change in the course of action. Right after (re)confirming her understanding, the caller provides what should work as some type of evidence that she knows what 'heterosexual' means: she informs the call taker that she has a heterosexual cousin.

As is well known in the literature, facts have to be 'tellable' to be worth reporting (Shuman 1986; Georgakopoulou 2007). By reporting that she has a cousin who is heterosexual, besides attempting to show evidence of her knowledge, the caller also seems to orient herself to the 'tellable' principle – and so does the call taker. It is precisely that mutual orientation that provides the evidence the CT needs to confirm the inference he was making before; i.e. that the caller did not know the word heterosexual. In other words, by drawing on the common sense belief of compulsory heterosexuality and, thus, that someone being heterosexual is not frequently a 'reportable' event, the CT is able to draw an important inference here. The CT produces an other-initiated-other repair,

starting his turn with a negation token ('no') and going on to produce the same explanation he has made twice before, but that now corrects the caller's understanding ('↓no mam. heterosexual is the person who is attracted to the <u>opposite</u> sex', in lines 190–191 / 192–193), which is accepted by the caller. In lines 194 and 195, the caller shows realization of what her sexual orientation is named in a turn that starts off with a token that signals a 'change of state' (Heritage 1998) ('↑o::h' in English; originally produced as ↑a::h in Brazilian Portuguese). In other words, the caller expresses having moved from one understanding into a new one ('↑o::h then I am heterosexu↓al (h)(h)(h)((laughs))').

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The interactions analyzed in this study reveal a number of facts concerning language and its relation to gender and sexuality identities. The paper discusses how heteronormativity emerges in interactions as a very palpable concept both in how the questions are asked and how they are answered.

The most frequently used format to request the caller's sexual orientation, the polar question 'Are you heterosexual?', is revealed as highly problematic, both in interactional terms as well as in the selection it makes of a range of sexual orientation possibilities in order to serve the 'optimization principle' (Heritage 2010). As argued, questions do more than asking; they communicate the questioner's beliefs, reasoning and expectations; they presuppose. The format of a *yes*-preferred question communicates preference of some kind: a *yes* agreement. Moreover, the selection of a specific sexual orientation as a *default*, a 'more favorable' one, reveals how heteronormativity – most commonly discussed as a *macro*-level concept – operates at the very micro level of everyday interactions. In other words, such selection is not neutral and works towards (re)constructing (and actively pursuing) the normalization of an understanding that we live on a heterosexual 'planet' (Warner 1991).

Nevertheless, a yet larger and more encompassing problem about questions on sexual orientation arises, and that refers to the fact that any question format about sexual orientation that asks what the interlocutor *is* (including an open *wh*-question, which actually does not happen in this data set) reveals an understanding of sexual orientation as a static one; a category a person *is* or *belongs to*, thus not envisaging any possibility for a more queered and fluid understanding of sexuality and sexual desire.

The analysis of the data unveils even more about naturalized understandings of gender and sexuality. The misunderstanding of the term 'heterosexual' discloses in very concrete ways important heteronormative categorizations to studies of gender and sexuality. This is the case, for instance, when callers (as well as CTs) exhibit their understanding of some type of linearity between sex, gender and sexuality. Thus, a woman who is supposedly 'totally feminine' cannot be a lesbian, a caller who has a husband who is 'very macho' (as it happened in another interaction not presented here), and a

woman who is biologically female can only be attracted to men (e.g. '[I'm] a woman right. it has to be for men (.) °(hh)°'). In addition, female sexual desire is related to attributes of fidelity or even chastity, as revealed by the caller who claims to be attracted only to her husband.

The recurrent problems of intersubjectivity around the word heterosexual also concretely point out the existence of a *default* category – what I will call here a *default* 'h-sexual' orientation. That default category would be the one that does not circulate in discourse – which in this case is the word heterosexual itself. That would be the category one does not talk about. It simply *is*. And it so much *is* that callers reveal not knowing what that word actually means. They simply know it is an *h-sexual* word. The interactions show, however, that when an h-sexual word is indeed produced in discourse, when it becomes 'tellable' or 'reportable' (e.g. 'my cousin is heterosexual'), it must mean the 'other' category; the category one *is not* (e.g. 'I'm not a lesbian or anything of that kind') nor wants to be (e.g. 'thanks god'). Because it is taken as a *default* sexual orientation, and perhaps because it is not an ecological term used by members of that community (i.e. members might use words that are more colloquial such as *straight* to refer to heterosexuals), the word heterosexual does not circulate in discourse. Consequently, it ends up being understood as the *h-sexual* word refering to the 'reportable' sexual orientations; i.e. the 'other' one or ones.

Such findings pose some important considerations for the discussion of the theme of this Special Issue, and for what one can learn from the global South (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012a, 2012b) or, in this case, from the 'margins' (Milani 2014). In particular, they bring to light an important topic raised by Gunkel (2010) when discussing female sexuality in South Africa: the 'invention' of western sexual identity terms or what Connell (2007: 218) claims to be the research terminology getting 'exported from the metropole to the periphery'. The analysis highlights the fact that the long-term and always enlarging academic theorizations and political activism about language, gender and sexuality do not seem to have yet reached an important slice of the population: the less economically and educationally privileged groups at the margins – here, the users of this government toll free number, who rely on a helpline for health information exactly because they cannot access it elsewhere.

The callers to this helpline (who are the respondents of the survey) disclose not being familiar with what academics and activists have taken as everyday, basic or, perhaps, 'universal' terms. In fact, users of the toll free number also demonstrate not to be able to distinguish how sexual orientations in general are named. However, that obviously does *not* mean that a diversity of sexual practices and orientations are not part of their everyday lives. Upon being faced with a situation of 'sexual illiteracy', call takers (those who conduct the survey) end up playing another role in these interactions: the role of 'educating' callers, even though in very crude, heteronormative, and, just as

important, *colonizing* ways, about how the callers' should name their own sexual identities (e.g. 'then you are heterosexual, mam').

Similarly to what is described by Gunkel (2010) in relation to sexuality in South Africa, it seems that words and concepts about sexuality in the Brazilian context are not simply equivalent to mere universalized translations of sexual orientations, which explains the title of this paper, 'Whose language? Whose sexualities?'[7] What this analysis reveals, thus, also calls for the need for the deconstruction of supposedly universal terms; it calls for a more bottom-up, locally emerged and ecologically valid description of sexual orientations – ways that are locally used and understood. It requires a language that actually comes from the 'margins' (Milani 2014), from where it is actually spoken. Thus, if a 'theory from the South' is not, as Comaroff and Comaroff (2012a) contend, any grand theory, but more of a grounded theory based on encounters with human practices, then investigations of *local* understandings of sexuality should also – and *firstly* – be done in encounters 'with grounded human practices' (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012b: para. 2) and 'in places where we have not classically thought to look' (2012b: para. 2), like everyday interactions, where the actual discursive practices and displays of understandings of human sexuality take place.

## NOTES

1. I would like to thank Michelle Lazar, Tommaso Milani, Bonnie McElhinny, Allan Bell and the anonymous reviewers for comments and reactions to this paper in whole or in part. I alone remain entirely responsible for its contents.
2. See Stokoe, Hepburn and Antaki (2012) and Ostermann and Kitzinger (2012).
3. In fact, what could be considered simply a methodological constraint here (i.e. CA approach to theorization), was, in fact, what yielded me the possibility of relating the analytical findings to the major theme of this Special Issue.
4. For the purposes of preserving the anonymity of the participants involved in the project, the name of the helpline has also been replaced with a fictitious one.
5. The research project has been submitted to and reviewed by the Universidade do Vale dos Sinos (UNISINOS) IRB, which, in turn, has issued the approval certificate 'Resolução 045/2005'.
6. Transcription conventions follow Jefferson (1884). Bold indicates speech that is discussed in the article.
7. The title was also inspired by Mey (1995), Schegloff (1997) and Billig (1999).

## REFERENCES

Baker, Carolyn, Michael Emmison and Alan Firth (eds.). 2005. *Calling for Help: Language and Social Interaction on Telephone Helplines*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: John Benjamins.
Billig, Michael. 1999. Whose terms? Whose ordinariness? Rhetoric and ideology in Conversation Analysis. *Discourse & Society* 10: 543–558.

Bolinger, Dwight. 1978. Yes-no questions are not alternative questions. In Henry Hiz (ed.) *Question*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Reidel Publishing Company. 87–105.

Butler, Judith. 1990. Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory. In Sue-Ellen Case (ed.) *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press. 270–282.

Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff. 2012a. *Theory from the South: Or, How Euro-America is Evolving toward Africa*. Boulder, Colorado: Paradigm Publishers.

Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff. 2012b. Theory from the south: A rejoinder. *Fieldsights – Theorizing the Contemporary, Cultural Anthropology Online*, 24 February. Paper originally presented at *American Anthropology Association Annual Meeting*, Montreal, November 2011.

Connell, Raewyn. 2007. *Southern Theory: Social Science and the Global Dynamics of Knowledge*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press.

Couper-Kuhlen, Elizabeth. 2014. What does grammar tell us about action? *Pragmatics* 24: 623–647.

Ehrlich, Susan. 2002. Legal institutions, nonspeaking recipiency and participants' orientations. *Discourse & Society* 13: 731–747.

Freed, Alice and Susan Ehrlich. 2010. The function of questions in institutional discourse: An introduction. In Alice Freed and Susan Ehrlich (eds.) *Why Do You Ask? The Function of Questions in Institutional Discourse*. New York: Oxford University Press. 3–19.

Garfinkel, Harold. 1967. *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Georgakopoulou, Alexandra. 2007. *Small Stories, Interaction, and Identities*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing.

Gunkel, Henriette. 2010. *The Cultural Politics of Female Sexuality in South Africa*. New York: Routledge.

Hayano, Kaoru. 2013. Questions design in conversation. In Jack Sidnell and Tanya Stivers (eds.) *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis*. Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell. 395–414.

Heritage, John. 1998. Oh-prefaced responses to inquiry. *Language in Society* 27: 291–334.

Heritage, John. 2010. Questioning in medicine. In Alice Freed and Susan Ehrlich (eds.) *Why Do You Ask? The Function of Questions in Institutional Discourse*. New York: Oxford University Press. 42–68.

Heritage, John and Geoffrey Raymond. 2012. Navigating epistemic landscapes: Acquiescence, agency and resistance in responses to polar questions. In Jan P. de Ruiter (ed.) *Questions: Formal, Functional and Interactional Perspectives*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press. 179–192.

Heritage, John and Rod Watson. 1980. Aspects of the properties of formulations. *Semiotica* 30: 245–262.

Jefferson, Gail. 1984. Transcript notation. In J. Maxwell Atkinson and John Heritage (eds.) *Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press. ix–xvi.

Jefferson, Gail. 1991. List construction as a task and resource. In George Psathas (ed.) *Interactional Competence*. New York: Irvington Publishers. 63–92.

Kitzinger, Celia. 2000. Doing feminist Conversation Analysis. *Feminism & Psychology* 10: 163–193.

Kitzinger, Celia. 2005. Heteronormativity in action: Reproducing the heterosexual nuclear family in 'after hours' medical calls. *Social Problems* 52: 477–498.

Kitzinger, Celia. 2007. Feminist conversation analysis: Research by students at the University of York, UK. *Feminism & Psychology* 17: 133–148.

Lee, Seung-Hee. 2013. Response design. In Jack Sidnell and Tanya Stivers (eds.) *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis*. Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell. 415–432.

Levinson, Stephen. 2013. Action formation and ascription. In Jack Sidnell and Tanya Stivers (eds.) *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis*. Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell. 103–130.

Lindström, Ann, Shirley Näslund and Christine Rubertsson. 2015. The interactional organisation of sex assignment after childbirth. *Gender and Language* 9: 189–222.

Mey, Jacob L. 1995. *Whose Language? A Study of Linguistic Pragmatics*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins.

Milani, Tommaso. 2014. Marginally speaking. *Multilingual Margins* 1: 9–20.

Ostermann, Ana Cristina. In preparation. Intersubjectivity in action (and at stake) in survey question-answer sequences about sexual orientation.

Ostermann, Ana Cristina and Aline Jaeger. 2012. Gênero e identidade no consultório ginecológico: Pressupostos identitários jamais questionados. In Ana Cristina Ostermann and Stela Meneghel (eds.) *Humanização. Gênero. Poder: contribuições dos estudos de fala-em-interação para a atenção à saúde*. Rio de Janeiro and Campinas, Brazil: Editora Fiocruz e Editora Mercado de Letras. 119–132.

Ostermann, Ana Cristina and Celia Kitzinger. 2012. Feminist conversation analysis and applied conversation analysis. *Calidoscópio* 10: 239–244.

Paoletti, Isabella. 2002. Caring for older people: A gendered practice. *Discourse & Society* 13: 805–817.

Peräkylä, Anssi. 1995. *AIDS Counseling: Institutional Interaction and Clinical Practice*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Pomerantz, Anita and John Heritage. 2013. Preference. In Jack Sidnell and Tanya Stivers (eds.) *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis*. Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell. 210–228.

Raymond, Geoffrey. 2010. Grammar and social relations: Alternative forms of yes/no-type initiating actions in health visitor interactions. In Alice Freed and Susan Ehrlich (eds.) *Why do You Ask? The Function of Questions in Institutional Discourse*. New York: Oxford University Press. 87–107.

Rich, Adrienne. 1980. Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 5: 631–660.

Sacks, Harvey. 1992. *Lectures on Conversation* (Vols. 1 and 2, Gail Jefferson, ed.). Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell.

Sacks, Harvey, Emmanuel A. Schegloff and Gail Jefferson. 1974. A simplest systematics for the organisation of turn-taking for conversation. *Language* 50: 696–735.

Schegloff, Emmanuel A. 1992. Repair after next turn: The last structurally provided defense of intersubjectivity in conversation. *American Journal of Sociology* 97: 1295–1345.

Schegloff, Emmanuel A. 1997. Whose text? Whose context? *Discourse & Society* 8: 165–187.

Schegloff, Emmanuel A. 1998. A reply to Wetherell. *Discourse & Society* 9: 413–416.

Shuman, Amy. 1986. *Storytelling Rights: The Uses of Oral and Written Texts by Urban Adolescents*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Silverman, David and Anssi Peräkylä. 1990. AIDS counselling: The interactional organisation of talk about 'delicate' issues. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 12: 293–318.

Speer, Susan A. 2005. *Gender Talk: Feminism, Discourse and Conversation Analysis*. London: Routledge.

Speer, Susan A. and Elizabeth H. Stokoe. 2011. *Conversation and Gender*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.

Stivers, Tanya. 2004. 'No no no' and other types of multiple sayings in social interaction. *Health Communication* 30: 260–293.

Stivers, Tanya and Makoto Hayashi. 2010. Transformative answers: One way to resist a question's constraints. *Language and Society* 39: 1–25.

Stokoe, Elizabeth H. 2000. Towards a conversation analytic approach to gender and discourse. *Feminism & Psychology* 10: 552–563.

Stokoe, Elizabeth H. 2006. On ethnomethodology, feminism, and the analysis of categorial reference to gender in talk-in-interaction. *Sociological Review* 53: 467–494.

Stokoe, Elizabeth, Alexa Hepburn and Charles Antaki. 2012. Beware the 'Loughborough School' of social psychology? Interaction and the politics of intervention. *British Journal of Social Psychology* 51: 486–496.

Stokoe, Elizabeth H. and Janet Smithson. 2001. Making gender relevant: Conversation analysis and gender categories in interaction. *Discourse & Society* 12: 217–244.

Stokoe, Elizabeth H. and Ann Weatherall. 2002. Gender, language, conversation analysis and feminism. *Discourse & Society* 13: 707–713.

Walker, Tracy, Paul Drew and John Local. 2011. Responding indirectly. *Journal of Pragmatics* 43: 2434–2451.

Warner, Michael. 1991. Introduction: Fear of a queer planet. *Social Text* 29: 3–17.

Weatherall, Ann. 2002. Towards understanding gender and talk-in-interaction. *Discourse & Society* 13: 767–781.

Wetherell, Margaret. 1998. Positioning and interpretative repertoires: Conversation analysis and post-structuralism in dialogue. *Discourse & Society* 9: 387–412.

Wilkinson, Sue and Celia Kitzinger. 2014. Conversation analysis in gender and language studies. In Susan Ehrlich, Miriam Meyerhoff and Janet Holmes (eds.) *The Handbook of Language and Gender* (2nd edition). Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell. 141–160.

Address correspondence to:

*Ana Cristina Ostermann*
*Programa de Pós-Graduação em Linguística Aplicada*
*Avenida Unisinos, 950*
*São Leopoldo, RS, 93022-970*
*Brazil*

*ana.cristina.ostermann@gmail.com*