Petra Johanna Mäkinen

*GIRLS IN TIGHT DRESSES / WHO DRAG WITH MUSTACHES*

LESBIAN LANGUAGE AND ITS TRANSLATION IN *THE L WORD*

MA Thesis
March 2014
The aim of this research was to analyse lesbian language features in *The L Code*, as well as their translation in the Finnish subtitles of the show. The research focused on which lesbian language features are present in the speech of the female queer characters of the show and to what extent, how many of the English lesbian language features had been transmitted to the Finnish-speaking audience in the subtitles of the show, and what types of translation strategies had been used in the translation.

The analysis of lesbian language features was based on previous studies conducted by Queen (1997) and Fiscus (2011). The lesbian language features of the show were divided into two main categories, Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features, which were examined separately during the analyses of both the original English lesbian language features and their Finnish translations. These two main sections were furthermore divided into various subsections that were examined individually. Women’s Language Features were divided into Tag Questions, Hedges, the word *Like*, and Intensifiers, and Men’s Language Features were divided into Taboo Language, Contracted Forms, and the use of the words *Man* and *Guys*. The research first examined whether or not these individual language features were present in *The L Word*, after which it was inspected how the language features had been translated into Finnish. The basis of the analysis on the translation of the lesbian language features was that there were three possible strategies according to which the language features could have been translated: they could have been retained in their original forms in the Finnish subtitles, they could have been re-created in the subtitles in some manner, or they could have been omitted from the subtitles altogether. The assumption of the research was that most if not all lesbian language features would be present in the show, and that there would be great variation in their numbers. It was also assumed that while some lesbian language features would be found in the subtitles of the show, many of them would have been omitted due to subtitling restrictions and conventions.

The results of the research showed that a great number of lesbian language features was found in *The L Code*, and that some of the language features had been translated into Finnish in the subtitles of the show as well. However, most of the lesbian language features had been omitted completely from the Finnish subtitles. The least translated lesbian language features in the show were the features often associated with spoken language, such as Tag Questions and Hedges. It is likely that the reason for this lies in the subtitling restrictions and conventions that have to do with the time, space and content of subtitles. Nonetheless, the results of the research revealed that various lesbian language features are present in *The L Code* and that they can be transmitted to the speakers of other languages as well.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................................... 1
2. GAY AND LESBIAN LANGUAGE ........................................................................................................ 5
   2.1 Definitions .............................................................................................................................. 5
   2.2 Language and Gender ............................................................................................................. 8
   2.3 Previous Research on Lesbian Language .................................................................................. 11
      2.3.1 Do Gay and Lesbian Languages Exist? .......................................................................... 14
      2.3.2 Lesbian Language Features .......................................................................................... 16
3. AUDIO-VISUAL TRANSLATION ....................................................................................................... 21
   3.1 Characteristics and Forms of Audio-visual Translation ............................................................. 21
   3.2 Constraints of Subtitling ......................................................................................................... 23
4. MATERIAL AND METHOD .......................................................................................................... 26
   4.1 Portrayal of Gays and Lesbians on Television and Film ............................................................ 26
   4.2 About The L Word .................................................................................................................. 30
      4.2.1 Reception .......................................................................................................................... 32
      4.2.2 Characters ......................................................................................................................... 34
   4.3 Research Methodology ........................................................................................................... 36
5. LESBIAN LANGUAGE FEATURES IN THE L WORD ............................................................. 39
   5.1 Women’s Language Features .................................................................................................. 39
   5.2 Men’s Language Features ....................................................................................................... 47
   5.3 Main Findings: Lesbian Language Features ............................................................................ 55
6. TRANSLATION OF LESBIAN LANGUAGE FEATURES IN THE L WORD .................. 60
   6.1 Translation of Women’s Language Features ........................................................................... 61
   6.2 Translation of Men’s Language Features .................................................................................. 70
   6.3 Main Findings: Translation of Lesbian Language ..................................................................... 77
7. CONCLUSION ................................................................................................................................. 82
WORKS CITED ................................................................................................................................ 85
APPENDICES ..................................................................................................................................... 90
FINNISH SUMMARY
1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between a person’s sexual identity and their language use has puzzled many researchers for decades, and ever since most of the persecution of gay and lesbian people in the Western world stopped, the research on the homosexual language use has become quite popular. There are studies that examine, for example, whether there is such a thing as homosexual language, and if it does exist, how it can be defined. However, most of the previous studies focus on the linguistic features that characterise specifically gay men’s speech, and the stereotyped features indexing a lesbian identity are not as prevalent (Cameron and Kulick 2003: 74). As Jaclyn Fiscus points out, there is no consensus about what lesbian language actually is (Fiscus 2011). This is well demonstrated by the results of a survey that Fiscus conducted in spring 2010, and repeated in fall 2010 for more data:

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. 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—lisping, /s/ pronunciation, high pitch, emphasized articulation, “flamboyant language” …, 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. (Fiscus 2011: 1-2).

Cameron and Kulick (2003: 51) claim that that there is a cultural assumption that lesbians speak like men, but there is no stereotype about how exactly they supposedly do so. Of this Fiscus (2011: 1) notes that: “[b]ecause the ideas about lesbian language are created by the stereotype that lesbians speak like 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”. However, some research on lesbian language has emerged, such as Moonwomon (1995), Queen (1997) and Morrish and Sauntson (2007).

Research on homosexual and especially lesbian language is relatively new in the field of linguistics, and even more so in translation studies. It also appears that, as has been the case in linguistics, most research that discusses the translation of homosexual language has focused on gay men’s language. For example, both Harvey (1998) and Mazzei (2007) discuss
the translation of camp talk used by some gay men. Translation of lesbian language features, however, has been researched very little. One of the few studies conducted specifically on the translation of lesbian language is my Bachelor’s Thesis that discusses the translation of lesbian language in the comic *Dykes to Watch Out For* (Mäkinen 2011). To my knowledge, there are no similar studies that examine the English to Finnish translation of lesbian language. My Bachelor’s Thesis, however, was quite short and left me feeling that more research could and should be done on the translation of lesbian language features as well as the existence of such language features. I have therefore decided to extend my research beyond the study of the use of lesbian language features in printed text such as *Dykes to Watch Out For* and instead focus on spoken language and its translation in the television series *The L Word*.

My thesis has two main aims. My first aim is to examine if different lesbian language features are present in the language of the female queer characters of *The L Word* and if they are, to what degree. Secondly, I also aim at studying if these lesbian language features have been transmitted to the Finnish-speaking audience in the subtitles of the show, and if they have, what types of strategies have been used in their translation. It is worth noting that in 2011, Fiscus presented her extensive Bachelor’s Thesis which focuses on lesbian characters’ linguistic performance in *The L Word*, a topic which, interestingly, corresponds largely with the aims of my current research. Despite the similarities between Fiscus’s and my research, however, there are some differences. For example, Fiscus’s study has much to do with the analysis of the supposed heteronormativity of the show, which she analysed by inspecting the butch/femme binary of the show’s characters. My research, however, does not attempt to analyse the heteronormativity nor the butch/femme binary in *The L Word* at all, and instead it focuses on the individual lesbian language features and their translation into Finnish.

Fiscus states that “as lesbians predominate the show, *The L Word* must index the characters’ sexuality through actions, clothing, speech, etc. Looking at how the show portrays lesbian language gives insight into two things: 1) whether the show reifies or re-examines the stereotype that lesbians talk like men, and 2) what features *The L Word* uses to indicate its characters’ sexuality” (Fiscus 2011: 2-3). Fiscus’s thesis provides insight into stereotypical lesbian language by analysing the linguistic stereotypes that *The L Word* employs to index its characters’ sexuality. According to Fiscus, study of stereotypes is useful: stereotypes might not be strictly realistic, but they are powerful (Fiscus 2011: 4). Stereotypes can influence the
way in which people talk and how they are perceived by their listeners, and therefore investigating stereotypes can provide insight about lesbian language. Fiscus also states that language in *The L Word* is worth being analysed because “the show provides the most developed representation of the lesbian community in mainstream media to date” and because “it can provide insight into stereotypical lesbian language features” (Fiscus 2011: 6). The lesbian language features used in *The L Word* should be analysed because the show reflects how lesbians speak and provides the audience with a representation of how lesbians speak, and shapes how lesbians speak and people think they speak (ibid). Fiscus furthermore states that *The L Word* has the potential to change the cultural view of lesbian language from the vague notion that lesbians speak in a more masculine way than straight women to the ability to identify what specific linguistic features lesbians use to indicate their sexuality (ibid).

In order to analyse the lesbian language features in *The L Word*, I am going to analyse a number of linguistic features that have been associated with lesbians in previous studies (Queen 1997, Fiscus 2011). The analysis will discuss a number of different linguistic features that have been considered to stereotypically index either femininity or masculinity. The features analysed are based on the lesbian language features used by Fiscus and Queen in their respective studies. Using the same classification model as Fiscus, the linguistic features will be classified either into Women’s Language Features or Men’s Language Features. Chapter 2 will discuss the individual lesbian language features in more detail.

The underlying assumption of this thesis is that some of the lesbian language features mentioned by Queen and Fiscus will be found in *The L Word*, and it is possible that there will be great variation in their numbers. Moreover, it is furthermore my hypothesis that a number of different translation strategies have been used when translating the characters’ speech. There is, however, a possibility that a great deal of lesbian language features have been omitted from the subtitles of the show due to subtitling conventions which will be discussed in later chapters.

The structure of this paper will be as follows. Chapter 2 focuses on the discussion of language and sexuality, and especially lesbian language and its features. Section 2.1 will also provide the readers with definitions for certain terms that are essential to my study. Chapter 3 discusses audio-visual translation. Of particular importance is Section 3.2 on the constraints and conventions of subtitling, as they affect largely how certain language features are
translated or sometimes omitted from the translation. Chapter 4 presents the material and methods used in this study. Section 4.1 will provide the readers with background information on how gay men and lesbians have been portrayed on television and film on both American and Finnish television, Section 4.2 provides an overview of *The L Word* and its characters, and Section 4.3 focuses more on the actual research methodology. Both Chapters 5 and 6 present the findings of my research: Chapter 5 discusses the lesbian language features that are present in *The L Word*, and Chapter 6 provides discussion on how these lesbian language features have been transmitted to the Finnish-speaking audience of the show. Both chapters are divided into two main sections that will be discussed separately: Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features. Finally, conclusions are drawn in Chapter 7. The Appendices will provide the readers with additional information of the research such as lists of certain lesbian language features found in the show, as well as tables for non-normalised total number of lesbian language features per character.
2. GAY AND LESBIAN LANGUAGE

As Fiscus (2011: 9) states in her thesis, "The L Word provides a rich source for understanding how the media portrays lesbian language". This chapter aims at providing an overview of previous studies that touch the subject of lesbian language. Much like in Fiscus’s study, this chapter contains a brief description of terms essential to this study in order to ensure clarity. After this, the chapter moves on to discuss the previous research conducted on lesbian language, and will finally present the lesbian language features that will be examined in the present paper.

2.1 Definitions

As stated by Fiscus (2011: 9), some of the central terms in language and gender and language and sexuality studies are often misunderstood due to competing definitions. Certain terms essential to these studies, such as performance, sex, gender, and sexuality are quite commonly used in both colloquial and academic discussion, and therefore their meanings can often be misunderstood unless defined. Fiscus discusses in her study how lesbian identity can be performed through language, which is quite similar to the aims of my thesis as well, and therefore it is important to define performance in this context. Fiscus also states appropriately that such words as sex, gender, and sexuality are “often conflated as the same term or interchangeable” (ibid.). Each of the words, however, has a unique meaning in this particular academic context and therefore it is essential to provide definitions for each one of them. All of the terms will be discussed and defined in the subsections below.

Performance

The idea of performance in language use stems from the speech theory introduced by John Austin (1962) who claimed that performatives could be either felicitous or infelicitous, or, in other words, effective or ineffective. The effectiveness is determined on the basis of whether the illocutionary force, that is, what the speaker intends the speech act to mean, and the perlocutionary force, that is, what the listener understands the speech act to mean, agree with each other (ibid.). According to Cameron and Kulick, Jacques Derrida criticised Austin by claiming that the intention of the speaker had no bearing on whether the speech act succeeded in being a performative speech act and that performativity was only successful if the speech
act had iterability, or was both repeatable and changeable (Cameron and Kulick 2003: 126-127).

Judith Butler (2008) claims that identity performance is similar to performance in theatrical context: through socialisation, individuals learn how to portray different aspects of their identity, and individuals perform identities by using stereotypes and social norms to indicate a certain personae. After this knowledge has been acquired, individuals use “stylised repetition of acts”, or ritualised actions, to create identity (Butler 2008: 900-901). This is both subconscious and conscious (Butler 2008), which means that most of the time people do acts to perform their identity without even being aware of it, but sometimes they can also choose whether to perform an identity or not.

According to Fiscus, the majority of researchers in linguistics, gender 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 (Fiscus 2011: 11). Fiscus continues that performance refers to the outward, physical expression of an identity that one mentally holds, and that all speech is thought to be performative: a person’s linguistic choices indicate different identities of that person (ibid.). In addition, performance is only effective when a person employs the correct actions to index a certain type of identity. The idea of performance is especially important when studying the characters of a fictional television series. In order to make their characters credible, real-life actors have to perform in a manner that is expected from the characters they are portraying. This is also the case for The L Word which centres on the lives of lesbian characters that are portrayed mostly by heterosexual actors. It is also possible that, on occasion, the performance of a lesbian character can mean even enhancing the stereotypical lesbian qualities, either consciously or subconsciously.

Sex, Gender, and Sexuality

The terms sex and gender are often used interchangeably both inside and outside academic environment, but they mean two different things. It is important to distinguish these two terms from each other in the present paper because gender and sexual identities can be performances and therefore they can influence the characters’ identity performance on The L Word. This will be discussed in greater detail below.
In this context, sex stands for a person’s biological sex, which falls into two categories: female or male. There can sometimes be exceptions to this main binary, such as the intersexual people, but they shall remain outside the discussion here. Gender is the performance of a person’s biological sex, which creates the pair feminine/masculine. Sometimes what is considered to be masculine or 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 perform their gender identity in some way. These aspects can include, for example, the person’s way of speaking or their outward appearance.

Gender is a social construction (Cameron and Kulick 2003; Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003), and, as Eckert and McConnell-Ginet state, “gender is not something we are born with, and not something we have, but something we do … something we perform” (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003: 10). In addition, as Butler states, “gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo” (Butler 2008: 901), meaning that gender is a performance that is governed by social norms. For example, heterosexual women are usually thought to perform in a feminine manner and heterosexual men in a masculine manner. This performance is governed by a set of culturally accepted expectations for what constitutes masculinity and femininity (Fiscus 2011: 14). The performance of gender is not arbitrary; it is learned. Through the actions of adults, children learn how to perform the roles of boys and girls, and, as Butler writes, “gender is not passively scripted on the body” (Butler 2008: 910). Furthermore, adults often treat children differently according to their biological sex, and by doing so, adults teach the children how to act like a boy or a girl. This can be seen in, for example, the way the advertisements and media reach to the children: the toys and television shows aimed at girls can differ considerably from those aimed at boys.

The notion of gender is tied to sexuality. In order to appear heterosexual, men are expected to appear masculine whereas women are expected to behave in a feminine manner. According to Thorne (1993), women and men are seen as complimentary factions that should be joined. According to Fiscus, this affects the societal order (Fiscus 2011: 16). 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)

Fiscus states that if an individual does not meet the expectations of heterosexuality, the idea that masculinity and femininity should be paired together still applies, and the heterosexual market extends itself into expectations for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community (Fiscus 2011: 16). For example, butch lesbians who behave in masculine manner are often expected to prefer feminine women, and vice versa.

Sexuality has often been used to refer to one’s sexual preference, or sexual orientation. There is also 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). Cameron and Kulick, for example, define sexuality in this manner, and it ultimately creates a subgenre of language study that can potentially encompass all things related to sex. In my study, however, the definition of sexuality 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). In the same manner as Fiscus does in her study (2011), I will use sexuality to refer to the performance of one’s sexual desire, or how one performs gay man, lesbian, straight woman, or other identities. In other words, I will be analysing how the lesbian characters of The L Word perform their sexual, or lesbian identity through language.

2.2 Language and Gender

In order to be able to discuss language and sexuality, it is important to first understand the ties between language and gender. As has been previously mentioned in this paper, there are certain linguistic stereotypes according to which lesbians and gay men are sometimes expected to behave: lesbians are assumed to talk in a masculine manner, whereas gay men are stereotypically assumed to be more feminine than lesbians or heterosexual men. In both language and gender and language sexuality studies it is essential to be aware what the linguistic gender stereotypes are. As became apparent in the survey conducted by Fiscus (see Introduction), most of the population has no clear idea which specific linguistic features
define lesbian language, and, as Fiscus states, both language and gender and language and sexuality studies have overlooked the study of lesbian language until recently (Fiscus 2011: 18).

Robin Lakoff, who has often been cited as the founder of language and gender studies, established the idea of women’s language. In her work entitled Language and A Woman’s Place (1975), Lakoff discusses stereotypical women’s language features, or WL, which include the features associated with white, heterosexual women’s performance of femininity. While Lakoff’s work typically focuses on heterosexual studies, language and gender research has influenced language and sexuality studies as well: the features Lakoff lists as women’s language are still considered valid, and many researchers use her claims as a starting point from which to build their own analyses and theories (Fiscus 2011: 19).

According to Lakoff (1975), women have a tendency to use detailed colour terms, superfluous adjectives, hedges, super polite forms, and tag questions. Women also tend not to use taboo language. The use of detailed colour terms refers to women’s use of, for example, such a word as fuchsia while a man might call the same colour pink. Hedges are used to soften an utterance or response, or to make it more polite. For example, in a sentence that goes “Well, that might be a bad idea”, well and might are considered to be softening factors and therefore hedges. Because of the presence of the hedges, the statement is less a direct, less forceful way of stating that something is a bad idea. Superfluous adjectives such as divine are, according to Lakoff, seen as hyper-feminine. Lakoff also claims that women use tag questions frequently. Fiscus explains tag questions thus: “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” (Fiscus 2011: 20). An example of a tag question would be “It is a hot day, isn’t it?” Fiscus also states that, according to Lakoff, tag questions demonstrate a lack of confidence on the part of the speaker. However, some other researchers argue that a tag question can be a powerful utterance: for example, if the speaker emphasises will and right in “You will be home at 6, right?”, he or she might be implying that it is in the best interest of the listener to be home at 6 (ibid.). In such cases, tag questions can be used as a way of commanding. Lakoff also argues that women do not use taboo language, or lexical items that are not socially acceptable. This includes swear words and words that are deemed socially inappropriate. Instead, Lakoff claims that women are
prone to using euphemisms to taboo language, such as *darn* instead of *damn*. All of the above features are, according to Lakoff, constituents of women’s language.

Lakoff states that, in addition to women’s language, there is also men’s language, or ML, and she consequently creates a binary of women’s language vs. men’s language in her study (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. It is worth noting that in her research, she also generalises across all women and men without accounting for such things as race, ethnicity, sexuality, or class. Fiscus (2011) states that this is problematic because Lakoff’s research does not allow for any sort of variation or combination of the two languages that she identifies. However, Fiscus continues by stating that Lakoff admits in her work that some women do not employ women’s language all the time and some men do not employ men’s language all the time (Fiscus 2011: 21).

Lakoff’s generalisations on how women supposedly speak have been tested, contested, and built upon by many researchers (Fiscus 2011: 22), and because Lakoff’s work has often been used as a starting point for many research questions, a number of things can be inferred, as stated by Fiscus:

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. (Fiscus 2011: 23).

Lakoff’s work has influenced, for example the work of Deborah Tannen who argues that women talk differently than men (Tannen 1998), as well as the work of Maltz and Borker (1998) who claim that men and women are socialised differently, which results in the difference between male and female speech (Fiscus 2011: 23). They claim that miscommunication between men and women stems from the two different cultures women and men live in and the resulting language difference. Certain other researchers, however, do not agree with these claims. O’Barr and Atkins (1998), for example, claim that there are two ways of speaking: powerful and powerless, and while there is a binary between different speech styles, it is not necessarily because of the speaker’s sex or gender.
2.3 Previous Research on Lesbian Language

As stated earlier on in this paper, the fields of language and gender research and language and sexuality research are interconnected, and the former has had a great impact on the latter. General language and sexuality research precedes the research on homosexual language, which, in turn, precedes research on lesbian language.

Although there is a common misapprehension that there is very little previous research conducted on gay and lesbian language (Kulick 2000: 246), linguistic research that examines language and homosexuality is actually quite common (Cameron and Kulick 2003: 74). There are several studies that examine gay and lesbian languages, attempt to define them, discuss whether or not there are homosexual speech communities or subcultures, and so forth. Cameron and Kulick outline a number of phases that language and sexuality research has gone through (Cameron and Kulick 2003). According to Cameron and Kulick, the first phase of the language and sexuality studies centred upon how homosexuality could be physically recognised. They state that although this had often to do with actual physical appearance, certain linguistic features, such as lisping, were said to be indicators of sexuality. The second phase was a continuation of the lexical focus with the added idea that gay people talk in a particular way. The focus of this phase was most of all lexical, and researchers documented different lexical items that gay males used. This was, according to Cameron and Kulick, primarily a political move: gay activists thought that if gay people had their own language, perhaps they could be considered a legitimate homogeneous group like other minorities. The third distinct phase centred upon the words used by the queer community to describe both the community itself and the members of the community (McConnell-Ginet 2002). Recently, one of the main focuses of research has been the intonational differences between gay men’s speech and straight men’s speech (Munson 2007).

The researchers of language and sexuality have constantly struggled with defining the exact parameters of the queer community they have been studying (Fiscus 2011: 26), and much of the previous research on the language of homosexuals has included discussion on homosexual speech communities and subcultures. In his article, John Kulick (2000) discusses gay and lesbian language, and on many occasions, pays special attention to speech communities and their definitions. In his article he refers to the work by Conrad and More (1976) who argue that there could not be such a thing as “the homosexual”, i.e. something all
homosexuals are expected to be like, nor could there be a single homosexual subculture. In
the same article, Kulick also refers to Penelope and Wolfe, who state that the homosexual
community cannot exist. Their claim is that

[a]ny discussion involving the use of such phrases as ‘gay community’, ‘gay slang,’
or ‘gayspeak’ is bound to be misleading, because two of its implications are false:
first, that there is a homogenous community composed of Lesbians and gay males,
that shares a common culture or system of values goals [sic], perceptions, and
experience; and second, that this gay community shares a common language
(Penelope and Wolfe 1979: 1)

In the 1980s, a new kind of homosexual culture that was based on assertion rather than
concealment was becoming more visible, which can be seen from the first scholarly volume
devoted to gay and lesbian language, Gayspeak in 1981 (Cameron and Kulick 2003:86). In
defence of the earlier critique of single gay language or gay community, several contributors
to Gayspeak acknowledged that gay men and lesbians do not speak the same way. They
argued that instead of one ‘homosexual community’, there is both ‘gay community’ and
‘lesbian community’. Queen (1997) states that one of the primary issues with the definition of
the lesbian community usually revolves around trying to specify who might or might not
belong to such a community. Queen (ibid.: 235, italics in the original) also mentions that

the basic dichotomy between relative … invisibility and … negative stereotypes that
come from external sources adds to the difficulty of defining lesbian and the lesbian
community. ... Because lesbians have identities not defined by a single characteristic
(such as lesbianism) … it is futile to try and define either lesbian or the lesbian
community using externally imposed criteria.

Both Morrish and Sauntson (2007) and Morrish and Leap (2007) discuss the ‘communities of
practice’ that are defined as “a nexus of social relations with fluid membership that is
constantly in formation and becomes a site of struggle as often as a site of solidarity and
a community of practice as an “aggregate of people who come together around mutual
engagement in an endeavour. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power
relations … emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour”. Morrish and Sauntson (2007)
discuss the communities of practice and lesbian conversations at greater length in their study,
mentioning the criticism the term ‘speech community’ has faced. They do not mention it
directly, but one could assume that they view lesbian communities as more than simply
communities of speech. According to these scholars, lesbian communities are communities where ways of communicating with other lesbians are defined by, for example, mannerisms and choices of speech topics in addition to a certain way of using language.

According to Barrett (1997), the main issue with research done on the LGBTQ community is how hard it is for the queer community to be defined (Barrett 1997). He argues that it may be easier to define the way the queer community is imagined. Barrett furthermore claims that any “homo-genius” speech, that is, speech from a community that is essentially queer (Barrett 1997: 181), cannot be examined like a homogeneous community’s speech is examined. According to Barrett, homogeneous communities can be researched by having one or a few ideal speakers represent an entire community. Homo-genius speech communities, however, must be part of a “linguistics of contact” model. 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. According to Barrett, this is because queer language is not taught by parents, and he points out that “generally, people do not raise their children to talk like homosexuals. Quite the contrary, language associated with gayness is probably discouraged by parents” (Barrett 1997: 191). Using the linguistics of contact model, a linguist can argue that some linguistic features can index gay or lesbian identity in some contexts and another identity in a different context (Fiscus 2011: 27).

My view on lesbian and gay speech communities corresponds mostly with the ideas presented by Morrish and Sauntson (2007) and Barrett (1997). In 1976, Conrad and More argued that there cannot be such a thing as “the homosexual” or a homosexual subculture. I agree with them that there is not a single homosexual subculture, nor a speech community, but instead, there are several homosexual subcultures within the main homosexual culture. The main culture is initially divided into two main subcultures: the lesbian subculture and the gay men’s subculture, both of which, in turn, are divided into several subcultures. While all the subcultures have their own ways of using language, such as the language of African-American drag queens or the language of radical activist lesbians, they are also similar to each other in many ways. In addition, as stated by Barrett, gay men and lesbians create their own speech styles, or languages if you will, by utilising features from a variety of different registers, including the stereotypical women’s language and stereotypical men’s language.
that Lakoff discussed in her study in 1975. In my study, this is reflected in the selection of the different linguistic features that are being analysed in this thesis.

2.3.1 Do Gay and Lesbian Languages Exist?

Gay and lesbian languages and their very existence are tied closely to the ideas of speech communities. Much of the previous research attempts to define what marks gay and lesbian language, but some have claimed that there is no gay or lesbian language. Penelope and Wolfe (1979) are against both the notion of a gay community and, consequently, common gay language. However, Penelope (Stanley 1970\(^1\)) states that that there is homosexual slang that is not known to all homosexuals. This slang varies according to gender and according to whether the speaker lives in an urban centre or a rural town (Kulick 2000). Penelope also suggests that homosexual slang consists of a core vocabulary that is also known to many heterosexual people, as well as fringe vocabulary that is mostly known by gay men in large urban centres. In Gayspeak, Hayes (1981: 68) suggests that homosexual speech has three specific functions, or dimensions: first, it is a secret code developed for protection against exposure. Second, it is a code that enables the user to express a broad range of roles within the gay subculture. Third, it is a resource that can be used by radical-activists as a means of politicising social life. It should be noted, as has been mentioned before in this study, that almost all preliminary research on language and sexuality has focused primarily on the language of gay men in urban areas (Cameron and Kulick 2003). Gay men living outside the urban setting have generally been excluded from the research, and lesbian language and its features have been almost completely ignored. Recently, however, the gap in lesbian language research has been taken up by a variety of linguists (Fiscus 2011: 29). For example, Livia and Hall’s book entitled Queerly Phrased (1997) is a compilation of linguistic research done about queer linguistics, and has a significant number of articles that address lesbian language.

Kulick (2000: 257) states that all the research on gay and lesbian language has greatly expanded the knowledge about the homosexual subculture. However, it has failed to come up

\(^1\) During the course of her career, Julia Penelope has published articles under the surnames Stanley, Penelope Stanley, and Penelope. In the references, those articles are listed alphabetically according to the surname, but in the text I am referring to the author as Penelope for the sake of clarity.
with any structural, morphological or phonological features that are unique to gay men and lesbians. This point of view is similar to Darsey’s (1981) criticism on Hayes’s list in *Gayspeak*. He points out that nothing on Hayes’s list is “in any way uniquely employed by gay persons” (Darsey 1981: 82). In general, the fact that gays do X does not make X gay (Kulick 2000: 259).

Some linguists have studied lesbian language by determining how listeners identify lesbian language. Moonwomon-Baird, for example, attempts to uncover the stereotypes of lesbian language by asking listeners to identify a speaker’s sexuality on the basis of listening to their speech (Moonwomon-Baird 1997). Benjamin Munson also tests whether lesbians can be identified through speech, and his results show that they can be. Munson recounts that participants can accurately label the sexual orientation of the speaker and rate lesbians as relatively less feminine than heterosexual women the listeners identified (Munson 2007).

Morrish and Sauntson (2007) argue for the existence of gay and lesbian languages, referring to such authors as Leap and Moonwomon. They especially mention Leap’s two books: *Beyond the Lavender Lexicon* (1995) and *Word’s Out* (1996). According to Morrish and Sauntson (2007: 7), Leap’s work on ‘gay English’ examines how lesbian or gay identity materialises through discourse. Leap’s work is not a straightforward search for the linguistic properties of gay speech. Instead, it examines how gay men construct and signal identity and difference through both coded and explicit language. Morrish and Sauntson (2007: 8) emphasise the fact that context and contingency make meaning: without proper context, there is no gay and lesbian language. Fiscus, however, comments on this that language is a performance (Fiscus 2011: 28) and more than just context-bound.

In her article published in Livia and Hall’s *Queerly Phrased* (1997), Queen (1997) investigates stereotypical lesbian speech by studying the language used in lesbian comics, most notably *Hothead Paisan* and *Dykes to Watch Out For*. In her research, Queen finds that there is a type of a lesbian language. However, this language is not a new set of linguistic features that are indicative of lesbianism, but instead it is a combination of many different speech registers combined that indicate lesbian identity. Queen suggests that this could be a result of the fact that the lesbian community is an “imagined community”. In other words, there is no cohesive lesbian community. In her research, Queen applies Barrett’s argument that the LGBTQ community should adopt a linguistics of contact model to the lesbian
community because, like the LGBTQ community, lesbians’ sexuality functions as a unifying commonality, but the lesbian community is in no way homogeneous (Barrett 1997). Based on this argumentation, then, the lesbian community is heterogeneous because lesbians have a multifaceted identity and they use a variety of registers to indicate their sexuality.

Queen’s article has been used as the basis for at least two previous studies on lesbian language. First of all, it was used by Fiscus in her Bachelor’s Thesis on lesbian language on heteronormativity and butch/femme binary in The L Word in 2011, as has been mentioned earlier on in this paper. Secondly, Queen’s article was also used by me in my Bachelor’s Thesis (Mäkinen 2011) on lesbian language features and their Finnish translations in the comic Dykes to Watch Out For. As far as I am aware, Fiscus and I conducted our respective studies completely unaware of each other, and while my present study is also on lesbian language features in The L Word, I was not aware of Fiscus’s study until towards the end of my own writing process. While my study on the lesbian language features in Dykes to Watch Out For was considerably shorter than Fiscus’s research, I was able to discover that while all of the lesbian language features presented by Queen could not be found out in Dykes to Watch Out For, quite a few of them were still present. I also noted that as my material consisted of written language presented in a number of comic strips, certain language features, such as intonational patterns, could not be analysed extensively. This placed quite a few restrictions on my study, which is one of the reasons why I have decided to examine how lesbian language features are present in a television show like The L Word, as well as in its Finnish subtitles.

2.3.2 Lesbian Language Features

Bucholtz and Hall (1995) state that there is a stereotype concerning the ways in which women speak, and it is this stereotype that women either aspire to or reject, or sometimes do both simultaneously. However, as Fiscus states, the very notions of both women’s language and men’s language are problematic: “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?” (Fiscus 2011: 29-30). The same problems apply to gay men’s language and lesbian language. Fiscus furthermore states that it becomes clear that the notions of women’s, men’s, gay men’s, and lesbian language do not describe the linguistic features that are always
employed by women, men, gay men, or lesbians respectively, and that some people may hardly ever employ the linguistic features attached to their identity (ibid). This, however, does not mean that the notions of the languages of the aforementioned groups are completely useless. According to Fiscus, these different types of languages exist and can be used to perform an identity: people abide by the norm that there is a feminine and masculine way of speaking, and perform either consciously or subconsciously according to these binaries to index an identity (ibid).

Fiscus argues 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 static binaries that they are sometimes portrayed as (Fiscus 2011: 31). However, these languages can both represent and recreate a stereotype about how straight women, straight men, gay men, and lesbians talk, and therefore the languages can be used to perform an identity (ibid). Therefore, despite the fact that it can be deemed controversial to use such terms as, for example, women’s language or men’s language, I will be using them in my research. The reason for this is that other researchers have done so in their studies, and therefore it appears it is the commonly accepted title to call these linguistic features.

In my research, I will analyse lesbian language features that are similar to the ones present in Queen’s (1997) and Fiscus’s (2011) studies. According to Queen (1997), lesbians draw on several stereotyped styles when speaking, including stereotyped women’s speech. Queen furthermore explains that “[l]inguistic features may be combined to simultaneously create and enact a uniquely lesbian language”, and that “[b]y combining the stereotypes of nonlesbian communities with the stereotypes that lesbians hold about themselves, they create an indexical relationship between language use and a lesbian ‘identity’” (Queen 1997: 239). In her work, Queen claims that lesbian language draws from the following “languages”: stereotyped women’s language, stereotyped nonstandard varieties that are often associated with working-class urban males, stereotyped gay male language, and stereotyped lesbian language. As her resources for these languages, Queer refers to such scholars as Lakoff, Labov, and Barrett. In the case of stereotyped lesbian language, the language features are based on Queen’s “personal discussions with lesbians as well as informal elicitations in three introductory courses in linguistics at the University of Texas at Austin” (Queen 1997: 254). Queen lists the lesbian language features used in her study in the following manner (Queen 1997: 240):
1. **Stereotyped women’s language** (see Lakoff 1975: 53-56)
   - A large stock of words related to specific interests, generally relegated to “woman’s work”. *dart* (in sewing) and specific colour terms
   - Empty adjectives like *divine, charming, cute*
   - “Question” intonation where we might expect declaratives: for instance, tag questions (it’s hot, isn’t it) and rising intonation in statement contexts
   - Use of hedges of various kinds. Women’s speech seems in general to contain more instances of *well, y’know, kinda* and so forth
   - Related to this, is intensive use of *so*; again, this is more frequent in women’s speech than men’s
   - Hypercorrect grammar (women are not supposed to talk rough)
   - Superpolite forms (women don’t use off-colour or indelicate expressions; women are the experts at euphemism)
   - Lack of humour (women don’t tell jokes)

2. **Stereotyped nonstandard varieties, often associated with working-class, urban males** (see Labov 1972)
   - Cursing
   - *in’ vs. ing*
   - Postvocalic /r/ deletion (may be regionally marked as well)
   - Nonnormative consonant cluster simplification
   - Contracted forms, for instance *gonna, oughta, I dunno*
   - Ethnically marked linguistic forms, *kaepeesh, yo’ mama*
   - Some vowel quality changes depending on region

3. **Stereotyped gay male language** (see Barrett 1997)
   - Use of wider pitch range for intonational contours
   - Hypercorrection: the presence of phonologically nonreduced forms and the use of hyperextended vowels
   - Use of lexical items specific to gay language
   - Use of H*L intonational contour (often co-occurring with extended vowels like FAABulous)

4. **Stereotyped Lesbian language**
   - Use of narrow pitch range and generally “flat” intonation patterns
   - Cursing
   - Use of expressions such as *bite me* and *suck my dick*, which are normally associated with men and their anatomy
   - Lack of humour and joking, especially in terms of sarcasm and irony

Queen emphasises the importance of stereotyped women’s language because it could be used both positively and negatively: lesbians could choose to use the stylistic features associated with women’s language, or they could reject them. By rejecting the features they would attempt to distinguish themselves from the stereotyped woman, and by using them they would index their identity as a woman. Queen’s emphasis can also be seen from the list above, as the list of *stereotyped women’s language* has the most items on it. Interestingly, the
list of stereotyped lesbian language has the least items listed, and one of the listed items, cursing, is also shared by the list of stereotyped non-standard varieties.

Fiscus bases much of her research on lesbian language features on Queen’s article, and adopts some of the language features mentioned in it. In her study, Fiscus categorises the language features into women’s language (WL) and men’s language (ML) without separate categories for gay male language and lesbian language. She also disregards some of the language features mentioned by Queen altogether, amongst them all of the features that have directly to do with intonation, for example. In her study, Fiscus employs analysis of the following features (2011: 7): /n/ versus /ŋ/ endings in progressive participles; /n/ versus /ŋ/ endings in the words something, anything, nothing, morning, and evening; taboo language; oh my god; like; guys; man; gonna; intensifiers; and hedges.

Like Fiscus, I will use two main categories when discussing lesbian language in The L Word, along with its translations. These categories are Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features. There are a number of reasons for excluding specific categories for gay male language and lesbian language that are present in Queen’s study. First of all, many of the features included in the categories in Queen’s list have to do with intonation which would be difficult to include in the analysis of the subtitling of lesbian language. Secondly, such language features as cursing and lexical items specific to gay language can be listed under the broader term taboo language, which is categorised under men’s language. I am also excluding a number of features Queen lists specifically under stereotyped women’s language or stereotyped nonstandard varieties. This includes, most notably, the empty adjectives. The reason for this lies in the problematic definition of empty adjectives and the fact that there might not be a universal agreement on exactly what adjectives could be classified as “empty”. The language features that I will be discussing in this paper are:

1) Women’s Language Features
   - Tag questions
   - Hedges
   - Like
   - Intensifiers
2) Men’s Language Features

- Taboo language
- Contracted forms
- *Man/guys*

Further information on the individual language features and their properties will be provided in Chapter 5 where their use in *The L Word* will be analysed.
3. AUDIO-VISUAL TRANSLATION

Audio-visual translation entails mainly the translation of television programmes and films, but other fields of audio-visual translation, such as the translation of video games and websites, are gaining ground as well these days. Subtitling and dubbing are the most well-known and widespread forms of audio-visual translation. Out of these two main forms of audio-visual translation, subtitling is the most common one in Finland, and also one of the main focuses of this paper. This chapter aims at providing background information on subtitling and especially its conventions and constraints, as they are some of the main reasons for certain translation strategies in subtitling.

3.1 Characteristics and Forms of Audio-visual Translation

The history of audio-visual translation is relatively short. During the earlier days of cinema, screen translation was not an issue, as all the films were silent and the small amount of the text that might have appeared on the screen could easily be replaced by target language text. However, with the emergence of sound films, the need for translation began to rise, and after a while, subtitling and dubbing became the most prominent methods of audio-visual translation.

Today the translator’s role in the exchange of audio-visual material is increasingly important. There are several types of different audio-visual translation methods, of which subtitling and dubbing are the most well-known. In addition to these techniques, voice-over technique, which is non-synchronous revoicing where the translation is superimposed on the original dialogue which can also be heard, is used for example in Russia and certain Eastern European countries (Bogucki: 2004: 71). According to Luyken et al. (1991: 31-32), in Europe dubbing is preferred in the countries with a language that is spoken by a large number of people, such as France and Italy, whereas the smaller linguistics communities, such as the ones in Nordic countries, usually choose to use subtitling instead. Nowadays the world can be divided into four blocks according to which forms of audio-visual translation are being used in different countries: 1) the so called source-language countries, such as the United Kingdom, where only few foreign films are imported and thus the need for audio-visual translation is not as great as in some other countries, 2) the dubbing countries where a target language soundtrack
replaces the original soundtrack of the film, 3) the voice-over countries where a voice-over narrator speaks over the original soundtrack and the original soundtrack can sometimes be heard, 4) the subtitling countries where the original soundtrack of the film remains and is translated into textual form on-screen. In subtitling countries subtitles account for a considerable amount of people’s daily reading, and according to certain studies, sometimes people can read more subtitles than any other kind of text (e.g. Gottlieb 1994). This emphasises the translator’s role and the importance of the quality of subtitles.

The most utilised of the aforementioned modes of audio-visual translation in Finland is subtitling, which is used for most television series and films. The exception to this are many children’s shows and films, which are usually dubbed, as well as certain documentaries that use the mode of voice-over narration instead. There have been certain experiments in the field of audio-visual translation, however. In 2001, the Finnish television channel MTV3 broadcasted six episodes of the programme *The Bold and the Beautiful* that were dubbed instead of subtitled. The audience reactions were, according to MTV3 websites, either amused or appalled, and the Finnish broadcast of the show quickly returned to its usual subtitling routine. It is relatively certain that subtitling will not be replaced by dubbing in Finland in the near, or even more distant, future.

Subtitling has been in use in Finland for over 40 years now, and has always been the most preferred form of audio-visual translation in Finland. According to Vertanen, over 80% of the programmes on the channels owned by Yleisradio are being subtitled, and the number of the subtitled programmes on other television channels is ever larger (Vertanen 2007: 149). Vertanen also mentions that subtitles and their quality is especially important because Finns watch television quite a lot and, in effect, read a lot of subtitles (ibid.). Vertanen mentions that the translator should always be loyal to the source text and the original way of expressing something, and he also states that as little changes as possible should be made (Vertanen 2007: 150). This, he says, is also true for subtitling, even though sometimes the translator will have to make quite radical changes when subtitling due to space and time restrictions. Because of this, subtitles can sometimes be lacking in original information. In addition, most of all because of the restrictions on time, subtitles should be comprehensible in one reading and consist of logical entities. According to Elomaa (2010: 58), subtitles are a representation of spoken dialogue, and therefore they can be seen as a mixture of speech and writing. She furthermore states that although subtitles are in written format and have features of written
language, they often also try to create the image of spoken language. However, spoken and written texts can differ greatly both stylistically and structurally, and the shift from spoken to written language can also affect text cohesion. This can potentially be problematic because the cohesive elements play an important role in the comprehension of the text, but in subtitling they often have to be omitted due to the need for reduction and because they might be considered to be unimportant for the general understanding of the plot. According to Marttunen (2006: 8), another specialty in subtitling is the audio-visual nature of the medium: language is not the sole carrier of meaning, but there are other equally or even more important elements. Something that has to be taken into account when it comes to subtitling is the fact that while the viewers are reading the subtitles, they can also hear the original dialogue and see the events on the screen at the same time. Therefore, the subtitles should be seen as something that supports the other semiotic elements on-screen: as additional information that provides something but does not take anything away. Mason (1989) sums this up thus: subtitles “interact with 1) the moving image, 2) the continuous ST soundtrack, and 3) the preceding and following subtitles. Coherence is upheld when this three-fold interaction is successfully preserved” (Mason 1989: 15).

Vertanen also mentions that when the subtitles are timed according to the speech of the people or characters on the screen, and are in harmony with the impression given by the image and the sound, they will create an illusion that the viewer understands the speech on the screen (Vertanen 2007: 150). Ideally, subtitles should be able to create an illusion to the viewers that they are not necessarily reading the subtitles at all but instead comprehend the spoken language of the screen without the interference of the subtitles. It is a perception adopted by many subtitlers and scholars that good subtitles should be able to create this illusion and be ‘invisible’.

3.2 Constraints of Subtitling

Subtitling has two main technical constraints: time and space. The space of the subtitles is restricted because of the size of the screen. On one hand the font of the text should be big enough for the viewers to read effortlessly, but on the other hand, the text should not cover up too much of the screen. In addition, the number of characters per line is restricted in subtitles, and the number of characters used can vary by the subtitling company and the channel. For
example, Vertanen mentions (2007: 151), that one line of text made for Yleisradio may contain 33 characters, while the subtitles made for the channels MTV3 and Nelonen can contain approximately 34 characters. It should be noted that the type and appearance of the character can have an effect on how many characters there can be per line: for example such characters as ‘A’ or ‘o’ take up more space than ‘i’ or ‘l’. The time available for subtitles to appear on the screen is limited due to the estimated reading speed of the target audience. Luyken et al. (1991: 43-44) estimate that the average reading speed is 150 to 180 words per minute, and according to Ivarsson and Carroll (1998: 65), subtitles should remain on the screen between a minimum of one and a half seconds and a maximum of six seconds. In his article, Vertanen gives more accurate approximations to the conventions of Finnish subtitling and states that a full-length two-line subtitle should be on the screen for four to five seconds, and a full-length one-line subtitle should be on the screen for two to three seconds. Vertanen also states that the minimum duration of a line is one second and the maximum length is thirty seconds, but that over ten seconds is too long a time for a subtitle to remain on the screen (Vertanen 2007: 151).

The two main factors to do with the length of the subtitles are, then, time and space, which together create a third factor: the reading speed (Vertanen 2007: 152). Out of these two main factors the most essential one is the time, as subtitles should be loyal to the rhythm of the speech and, as such, remain on the screen the correct amount of time. Vertanen also mentions that the stress of the words in the subtitle should also be in accordance to what is being stressed in the utterance on the soundtrack (ibid). Because of the restrictions posed on both space and time in subtitling, everything cannot be translated, and therefore condensations of the source text are necessary (ibid; Marttunen 2006: 8). The translator will have to deduce what is the most important and essential for the understanding of the utterance and include that in the subtitle, and leave out the parts that are not necessary for the understanding or what the viewer already knows. There are certain conventions as to what should be left out from a subtitle. Those conventions will be discussed below, as they are some of the important factors in analysing lesbian speech in subtitles.

Vertanen lists some of the subtitling conventions in his article (2007: 153-154). He mentions, among other things, that it is not necessary to mention the characters’ names and titles in the subtitles if the viewers are already familiar with the characters. In addition to this, place names and words denoting time can be left out if needed. The exclusion of names in
subtitles, however, is not completely relevant when discussing lesbian language features in subtitles. The use of slang or dialect, as well as the use of taboo words, however, has quite a lot to do with the topic at hand. As Vertanen states, there can be certain difficulties in translating slang or dialect for subtitles. The message in a subtitle should be conveyed to the viewer in one viewing. Because of this, the use of slang or dialect should only be implied in a subtitle in order to make the line readable without diverting the viewer’s attention to individual slang or dialect words. Vertanen mentions, however, that when slang or dialect words are used in subtitles, they should be used throughout the programme. The translation of taboo words, such as swear words, has certain conventions as well. As Vertanen states in his article, taboo words have much more power when they are written down, as opposed to being uttered out loud. Vertanen also notes that in different cultures the meanings of taboo words can be based on a variety of subjects, and therefore their translations can seem outlandish and their power be needlessly amplified. Because of the reasons mentioned here, subtitlers are often advised to either omit the swearwords from the translation altogether or to change the original swearwords into a milder, less offensive form. For example, instead of translating the word shit as its literal equivalent paska, the translator can choose to translate it as the milder hitto (‘darn’) instead.
4. MATERIAL AND METHOD

This chapter introduces the material and method used for the research. The first section of this chapter will provide an overview of the portrayal of gay men and lesbians on television on film, both in North America and Finland. This aims at describing the background of gay men and lesbians in western popular culture to the reader in order to explain what their traditional stereotypes are. After this overview, the chapter will introduce *The L Word*, also discussing how the show has been received by viewers and critics, and an overview of the recurring characters appearing in episodes 02-01 and 02-02 will also be provided. Finally, the chapter will describe the methods used in the course of analysis in the present paper.

4.1 Portrayal of Gays and Lesbians on Television and Film

The question of the visibility of homosexuals plays a central role in many theoretical debates in queer studies today (Keenaghan 1998: 275). Today much of the homosexual visibility takes place in popular cinema and television shows, as well as some non-mainstream productions. Because so much of the population build their perception on what “homosexuals are like” on television and cinema, it is important to dedicate a moment to examine exactly how homosexuals have gained more visibility through these means, and how they have been portrayed to the audience.

The origin of the ways in which homosexuality has been presented on television and film can be traced all the way to the classic Hollywood cinema. Today, there exists a myriad of shows on television with a gay or lesbian character, such as *Will and Grace*, or shows in which gays and lesbians are the main characters, such as *The L Word* and *Queer as Folk*. In this section I shall discuss how portraying homosexuality on television and film has evolved over time, and how it is portrayed on television today. The focal point of this history of portrayal of homosexuality shall lie mainly in North American television and film, as *The L Word* was produced in the USA, after which the paper will discuss homosexuality on Finnish television and film.

During the 1960s, many social changes began to dramatically alter the ways sexuality was depicted on film: people began to see sexuality as both a personal right as well as a political
tool to combat the repressive doctrines of the previous decades (Benshoff and Griffin 2004: 329). During this time, homosexuality also began to gain new visibility in popular culture and it became framed as a civil rights issue, rather than a medical or criminal one. The term ‘sexual revolution’ is sometimes used to describe the social and cultural changes regarding sex, gender, and sexuality that took place in the Western Culture during the 1960s and the 1970s. In the 1980s, the AIDS crisis impacted the way people thought of sexuality and sexual freedom, and also affected the way in which homosexual people were depicted on film, and now, in the early twenty-first century, Hollywood cinema is slowly becoming more inclusive of different sexual cultures. However, despite the happenings during the previous decades and the evolution of the portrayal of sexuality, Hollywood filmmaking still upholds the hegemonic dominance of white patriarchal heterosexuality, or heteronormativity (ibid.).

The increase in gay and lesbian visibility on television and film is also tied to the birth of the modern gay and lesbian civil rights movement, which is often associated with the Stonewall Riots in 1969. The riots were a series of spontaneous demonstrations against a police raid that took place at the Stonewall Inn, in the Greenwich Village Neighbourhood of New York City. Stonewall Riots are often cited as the first instance in American history when the people in the homosexual community fought back against the system that persecuted sexual minorities, and they have become the defining even that marked that beginning of the gay rights movement around the world (www.princeton.edu, last accessed 22 March 2014). A major victory of the early gay and lesbian civil rights movement occurred when the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders in 1974. This went well with the movement’s agenda that stressed the importance of coming out of the closet, which is a notable way of demonstrating the fact that homosexual people are everywhere (Benshoff and Griffin 2004: 331) and closely tied to the emergence of homosexual characters on-screen. Perhaps because of the gay and lesbian civil rights movement, the representations of gay and lesbian people in mainstream cinema were on the rise at the end of the 1960s. According to Benshoff and Griffin (2004), however, the attempts to provide more realistic images of gay life were interspersed with the typical negative gay stereotypes (Benshoff and Griffin 2004: 332) that many people had become familiar with. Hollywood’s new freedom regarding representation did not necessarily translate to better images of gays and lesbians, and throughout the 1970s Hollywood used its new license to denote more clearly the same homosexual stereotypes that it had employed in the past: gay men were thought to dress only in flamboyant or excessively feminine outfits, and lesbians
were still figured only as tough, butch type women (Benshoff and Griffin 2004: 333). Hollywood films also continued to hide or cover the queer sexuality of both historically queer characters and gay cultural innovations. Eventually there was some change in attitudes, and in the 1980s there were a handful of films that featured sympathetic gay and lesbian characters.

As mentioned before, the AIDS crisis of the 1980s affected the way in which homosexuals were portrayed on-screen. The crisis created a certain amount of civil disobedience that made it necessary for the Western popular culture, including Hollywood film, to acknowledge the existence of homosexuality (Benshoff and Griffin 2004: 339). It was during this time that certain activists began using the word ‘queer’ with the intention of acknowledging the diversity of sexualities. In the early 1990s, a cinematic movement called New Queer Cinema emerged, focusing on social constructions such as gender, class and sexuality and depicting these themes on film with more courage than its cinematic predecessors. However, New Queer Cinema was often considered to be less “audience pleasing” than Hollywood style cinema, and therefore did not reach the public with full impact.

The public’s response to same-sex couples on-screen has varied, and in certain ways also tied to the gender of the viewers, as well as to the gender of the people depicted on screen. According to Benshoff and Griffin, the viewers in the USA have expressed more discomfort in seeing two men in sexual situations on-screen, as opposed to two women. Furthermore, Benshoff and Griffin add that “the visual culture in America often “expects” women to be objectified for the pleasure of a male gaze”, and therefore certain films depicting so called “girl-on-girl” action are often classified as pornographic material for straight men. However, these types of films can usually be distinguished from actual lesbian films, as the “girl-on-girl” films are usually made by straight men for the consumption of straight men, whereas actual lesbian films do not have this aim and are not concerned with pleasing the objectifying male gaze (Benshoff and Griffin: 2004: 335).

Much in the same way as certain other media of the time, early network television practised methods of censorship that forbade the representation of homosexuality. In spite of this, traces of homosexual themes could be found in early television and performers, and queer subtext can still be seen in certain contemporary shows that otherwise do not have openly homosexual themes or characters. In the 1990s, network and cable television began to feature
openly queer characters more and more frequently, either as recurring characters or as one-time appearances. According to Benshoff and Griffin, the breakthrough television event of the 1990s occurred with Ellen DeGeneres and her character in the sitcom Ellen came out of the closet in 1997 (2004: 340). While the newly openly gay sitcom was quickly cancelled, it was undoubtedly paving the way for more homosexually themed television. For example, in 1998, NBC began to air the sitcom Will & Grace, in which the two main characters are the male homosexual Will and his straight female friend Grace. During the 21st century, the number of television programmes with openly homosexual or otherwise queer characters has grown considerably, especially on subscription channels that are free of network regulations and the demands of sponsorship, such as HBO and Showtime. These programmes include, for example, Angels in America (2003), Queer as Folk (2000-2005), as well as The L Word (2004-2009), which is being discussed in this paper and introduced in the following chapter. As Benshoff and Griffin (2004: 341) state, “the rise of queer TV has been important in bringing queer lives and queer issues to mainstream America, especially to people who would never go out to see a Hollywood film about queers”.

Finnish films and television did not feature openly homosexual characters until the 1990s, when the character of homosexual waiter Håkan was introduced in the political satire series Hyvät herrat that ran on Finnish television in 1990s (Santala 2007: 16). However, it should be noted that before the appearance of Håkan, there have been implications about several Finnish film characters’ homosexuality. For example, it is implied in Matti Kassila’s film Kaasua, komisario Palmu (1961), which is based on Mika Waltari’s novel Kuka murhasi rouva Skrofin? (1939, ‘Who Murdered Mrs Skrofin?’), that the character of Kurt Kuurna has homosexual tendencies (Juvonen 2002: 131). There are several other similar implications in earlier Finnish films, but it was not until later that Finnish television and films have featured outright open homosexuality, especially in the positive or neutral sense. Some of the earlier representations of homosexual characters were more or less joke characters that were used to make fun of, or slander, homosexuality itself. Santala, for example, mentions the sketch comedy Kiitos ja hyvästi (1993) that made fun of the real-life weather reporter Juha Föhr’s homosexuality (Santala 2007: 16).

Since 1990s, there has been a number of Finnish television series with homosexual characters, such as Samppanjaa ja vaahkokarkeja (1995-1997), Tuliponta (1998) and Salatut elämät (1999 - ). As Santala mentions, the character of the homosexual Kalle Laitela
in *Salatut elämät* is especially important, as he is portrayed as a perfectly ordinary and pleasant young man who happens to be homosexual (Santala 2007: 17). It could be said that Kalle is a generally positive homosexual character without stereotypical features (Kekki 2001: 274). Santala also mentions reality shows that feature or star homosexual people, such as the North American *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* (2003-2007) and its Finnish version *Sillä silmällä*, which helped to bring forth awareness and acceptance of homosexuality.

According to Santala, several 30-40-year-old Finns today have been subjected to a variety of different representations of gay people throughout their lives (Santala 2007: 17). During the last few decades, there have been significant changes to how the homosexual characters have been portrayed on television and film, Finnish or otherwise. However, it appears that homosexual characters are still mostly supporting characters on Finnish television series and films. With the exception of the reality show *Sillä silmällä*, there do not seem to be Finnish series or films in which homosexuals are the main characters, and there are no Finnish equivalents for such programmes as the originally British *Queer as Folk* and its later American version, or *The L Word*. However, the importance of foreign series with homosexual characters on Finnish television should not be dismissed, as they have been an important tool in raising awareness of homosexuality and, as Santala states, the old sketch comedies that made fun of gay people would not be acceptable anymore (Santala 2007: 17).

### 4.2 About *The L Word*

*The L Word* is an American television drama series that was originally broadcasted on the American subscription channel Showtime. *The L Word* portrays the lives of a group of lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people and their friends, family and lovers in Greater Los Angeles, California city of West Hollywood. The programme was created by executive producer Ilene Chaiken and ran from 2004 to 2009. Chaiken is also the original creator of *The L Word*: she came up with the idea, as well as the characters and the storyline. According to Bolonik (2005), Chaiken created the show because she herself is a lesbian identified woman who wanted to create a show that represented the world in which she lived. This idea was revolutionary because before *The L Word*, there had never been a mainstream television show that attempted to represent lesbian community as a whole (Fiscus 2011: 32). Before *The
Lesbian characters in certain shows were token characters that were limited in their display of their sexuality.

The idea for The L Word was born before such queer programmes as Queer as Folk, Will and Grace and Queer Eye for the Straight Guy were on television (Fiscus 2011: 33). Chaiken first presented her proposal for the show to certain colleagues at Showtime, to which they replied that even though they thought that the show had potential, it would never be accepted by their superiors. However, after other queer television shows had become more common on television, Chaiken decided to propose her idea more formally, and, at the Golden Globes in 2000, Showtime accepted Chaiken’s pitch for The L Word right before she won the award for Best Television Movie for her movie Dirty Pictures (ibid.). The show premiered on 18 January 2004 when “nearly a million viewers tuned in to the pilot, making it one of Showtime’s most successful programmes ever” (Bolonik 2005: 1).

The L Word was originally marketed as a successor to HBO’s drama comedy Sex and the City, and it was hinted that Showtime’s series about a group of lesbians living in Los Angeles would be equally risqué, sexy and smart as its predecessor (McCabe and Akass 2006: xxv). Much like Sex and the City, The L Word is essentially an ensemble drama that centres on a close-knit group of female friends who enjoy gossiping amongst each other about both romantic and sexual relationship, with the only main difference being that of the sexual orientation of the characters, and as Fiscus (2011: 33) states, all themes discussed in The L Word are relatable to most audiences. As Graham states, “Whilst The L Word is overt about its lesbian content and clearly foreground specifically lesbian issues as well as more general feminist ones, the drama revolves primarily around emotional dilemmas which most ‘pomo’ [post-modern] folk of any orientation can easily identify with” (Graham 2006: 29). Therefore, most viewers, regardless of their sexuality, can empathise and connect with the storylines of the show. Making The L Word easily relatable to most audiences, however, is not without drawbacks and has affected the show’s reception, which will be discussed in section 4.2.1 below.

In my research I shall focus on Season 2 of the series, which began airing on 20 February 2005 and featured thirteen episodes altogether, each of them hour-long. The following subsections shall provide an overview of the programme and its reception, biographies of the
recurring characters of the show, as well as short summaries of the episodes discussed in this paper.

4.2.1 Reception

According to McCabe and Akass (2006: xxv), *The L Word* debuted at a moment when homosexual representation was gaining more foothold on American television. During this time, male homosexuality was enjoying more visibility than ever. To quote Andrews (2003: 30): ‘[in] the mainstream eye, the new gay male stereotype has proven highly viewable. They’re cute, they’re smart, they’re funny, they’re sexy, and they’ve got great aesthetics’. However, homosexual representation was mostly centred amongst gay men, and the few lesbian characters that did exist had to settle for supporting roles, such as the sweet but somewhat invisible couple Melanie and Lindsey in the US version of *Queer as Folk*, a show that centred on the lives of homosexual male characters. *The L Word* was a highly significant television drama from the start, and as an article in The New York City Times pointed out:

Before "The L Word," lesbian characters barely existed in television. Interested viewers had to search and second-guess, playing parlor games to suss out a character's sexuality. ... Showtime's decision in January 2004 to air *The L Word*, which follows the lives of a group of fashionable Los Angeles lesbians, was akin to ending a drought with a monsoon. Women who had rarely seen themselves on the small screen were suddenly able to watch lesbian characters not only living complex, exciting lives, but also making love in restaurant bathrooms and in swimming pools. There was no tentative audience courtship. Instead there was sex, raw and unbridled in that my-goodness way that only cable allows. (Alison Glock (6 February 2005). "She Likes to Watch")

Ilene Chaiken was inspired to create *The L Word* to challenge stereotypes and to fill a representational void (McCroy 2004: 20; for lesbian stereotypes on television and film, see Section 4.1 in this thesis). The show provides a relatively large number of different types of characters, and while the majority of the characters are white, feminine, and lesbian, some of the characters bring more diversity: Bette, as well as her heterosexual sister Kit, has African-American heritage, Shane is more butch than the other recurring characters, and Alice and Jenny represent bisexuality. Chaiken hoped that the characters and their relationships would create an accurate representation of the lesbian community because, as Bolonik states, the
“thesis of the show… is that there’s not just one point of view, there is not just one lesbian” (Bolonik 2005: 76).

However, critics have been divided over the show’s portrayal of lesbians. It is viewed by some that while the characters of The L Word may work to dismiss the image of lesbians ‘as not cute, not funny, asexual, unfashionable, way too pious, totally uncool’ (Andrews 2003: 34), ‘they are all so exquisite … that [they play] into another stereotype – and male fantasy – of the lipstick lesbian’ (Stanley 2004: E30). The L Word has created highly ambivalent and hotly debated responses among its lesbian viewers, revealing certain anxieties regarding lesbian identity and representation (Wolfe and Roripaugh, 2006: 43). As stated by Fiscus (2011: 36), Chaiken recognises that she did not create an ideally diverse group of characters, and she believed that 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 group of friends is rare. In Bolonik (2005) Chaiken further claims that:

“At the same time as I wanted there to be some diversity within the ensemble, I wanted 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)

As pointed by Lowry (2004: 52), it is also possible that the reason for portraying the characters in the above manner might be due to economic factors: the show must be able to attract straight viewers as well as well in order to ensure economic survival for the cable network. McCroy furthermore states that

[a]s the first lesbian drama series on American television, The L Word bears a rather heavy burden for representing the lesbian community. The show is under pressure to meet the expectations of an audience who feel, to quote D’Erasmo, ‘not only unrepresented but somehow unrepresentable in ordinary terms’ (2004: 26). Of this matter, Chaiken, the producer and writer for the show states: ‘I’m not intending to represent everyone. The characters reflect a community of women I know well – it just happens to be a largely affluent, attractive and well-acquainted women’ (McCroy 2004: 20).

The L Word has, then, been under quite a lot of pressure to please a variety of viewers which include both the homosexual and especially lesbian viewer base, as well the overall larger heterosexual audience.
Much of the criticism on *The L Word* is compiled in *Reading The L Word: Outing Contemporary Television* (McCabe and Akass 2006), which investigates a number of matters such as the reactions of the public about the show and the visual representations of the show. The editors and authors of the compilation state that *The L Word* has been both praised for a favourable portrayal of lesbians on mainstream media and criticised for being hyper-feminine and heteronormative (Fiscus 2011: 37). It should be noted that these claims have been made only on visual and contextual basis, and there is no linguistic analysis on *The L Word* in the compilation. Fiscus (ibid.) states that visually, the claim that the show is hyper-feminine is valid, but argues that the heteronormative critique is more complicated. She states that, visually, it appears that most relationships in the show seem to generally be between two femme characters, with the exception of the relationships where Shane provides the butch half to the butch/femme contrast. Fiscus states that because the relationships in the show are mainly between two feminine characters, the show is not always heteronormative in that it does not only supply relationships where butch women are only attracted to feminine women and vice versa. Fiscus continues, however, that contextually, the claim that the show is heteronormative appears valid, as one of the central relationships of the show, which is that of Bette and Tina, is between two femme characters that pay the roles of a typical, heterosexual man/woman relationship. Fiscus claims that the critiques based on visual and contextual information are not sufficient, however, because “[l]anguage is a large part of identity performance” and “must be taken into account to validate or refute these claims” (ibid.).

### 4.2.2 Characters

There are seven lesbian characters and two bisexual characters that are prominent in episodes 02-01 and 02-02: Bette, Carmen, Dana, Robin, Shane, Tina, and Tonya being the lesbian characters, and Alice and Jenny being the bisexual characters. The reason for including bisexual characters in the study lies in the fact that while they are not lesbian, they both are still part of the female queer community. They are also in continuous contact with lesbian-identified women, and therefore it is quite likely that they will have adopted lesbian language elements in their own speech, thus making them viable research objects. Episode 2 also briefly features a LGBTQ attorney Joyce, but her role is not included in the discussion due to the fact that her appearances are very brief in the series. It should be noted that while the
recurring characters listed above also vary in the amount of talking time, they are all considered to be the main characters of Season 2 of the show, all of them with distinct characteristics. The characters will be introduced below in an order that compliments their relationships with each other in order to create as logical entities as possible.

Alice (Leisha Hailey) is a journalist who writes journals for LA magazine. Sedgwick describes her in the following manner: “Alice uses fatuously knowing Valley-girl syntax; her body has the easy expressiveness of a five-year-old’s; her dark eyes are deep holes in the surface of her blonde, oddly ravaged face” (2006: xxiii), and, as stated by Fiscus, “[h]er bisexuality, gossipy nature …, tattoo, and smoking habit make her a complex character with both overtly feminine and somewhat masculine characteristics” (2011: 34).

Dana (Erin Daniels) is one of the main characters in The L Word from Seasons 1 through 3. She is a famous tennis player who is becoming more open about her homosexuality in the beginning of Season 2. During the early Season 2 she is engaged to Tonya who she met in Season 1. However, she is also extremely attracted to Alice, a feeling which is reciprocated.

Tonya (Meredith McGeachie) is introduced in Season 1 as Dana’s new manager who quickly becomes infatuated and, eventually, engaged with her. Tonya is a brash and self-confident character, but does not appear to be aware of the tension between Alice and Dana in episodes 02-01 and 02-02.

Shane (Katherine Moennig) is described by Sedgwick as ”a fetching baby butch” and ”equally unexpected mix of innocence and experience, with a bachelor insouciance, squalid history of sex work, and resonant low voice of reason and amusement” (2004: xxiii). Shane is portrayed as a highly promiscuous person who does not become involved in relationships, but instead prefers to engage in sexual activity with other women “with no ties attached”.

Carmen (Sarah Shahi) is a part-time DJ, part-time production assistant, and one of the main characters during Seasons 2 and 3 of The L Word. When she is introduced in episode 02-01, she is immediately attracted to Shane, and during Season 2, has some one night stands with her.
Bette (Jennifer Beals) is of African-American and Caucasian heritage and self-identifies as black. During the early Season 2 of *The L Word*, she is the Director of the California Arts Centre, a position that, according to Fiscus, “puts Bette in a more stereotypically masculine role, especially in comparison to her partner, Tina, who quit her job so she could have Bette’s and her baby” (2011: 34-35). Bette is highly educated, sophisticated and outspoken, which can often reflect in her speech style.

Tina (Laurel Holloman) is an honest, compassionate and, occasionally, strong-minded character. During the six seasons of *The L Word*, very little is revealed about Tina’s background, and in Season 1, it appears that much of Tina’s character is defined by her long-term relationship with Bette.

Jenny (Mia Kirshner) is a young fiction writer who moved next door to Bette and Tina in the beginning of Season 1. Jenny is eccentric, complex, and emotionally fragile, and during the series, she also becomes quite ruthless and manipulative. In Season 2, however, Jenny is still unsure of what she wants, which creates frustration in her personal relationships.

Robin (Anne Ramsay) is introduced as a potential love interest to Jenny in Season 1. It is revealed in episode 02-02 that in her past, she discovered on the day of her wedding that her fiancé was non-monogamous, which led to the termination of that particular relationship. In Season 2, Robin is willing to enter a serious relationship with Jenny, but Jenny’s confusion about her own desires and needs reminds Robin of her previous bad experience, and the relationship is ended.

4.3 Research Methodology

The research material for this study consists of two full episodes of *The L Word* and their Finnish subtitles. The episodes used in this research are the first two episodes of Season 2 of the show, both of them one hour long. The material comprises the original soundtrack and written on-screen translations of the series, as well as prewritten transcripts of the show. Both of the episodes examined in this study were translated for the DVD release of Season 2 of the show by Hanna Toivanen from Broadcast Text International. The transcripts of the show are fan made and can be found online at The L Word Transcripts (http://lesfan.com/transcripts,
last accessed 21 March 2014). Appropriate permissions were requested for using the transcripts for research material. For easier examination of the Finnish subtitles of *The L Word*, a program called SubRip was used to extract the subtitles of the show directly from the DVD into a text file.

The reasons for choosing *The L Word* in particular as my material were mostly practical. First of all, most characters in *The L Word* are lesbian, which provided me with plenty of material to analyse and examine during the course of my research. As mentioned in the chapter introducing *The L Word* to the reader, lesbian characters on television and film were quite sparse and somewhat unnotable before the emergence of *The L Word*, and therefore examining them might not produce enough results. Secondly, unlike some of the more non-mainstream shows or films with lesbian characters, the episodes of *The L Word* are easily obtainable in DVD form with Finnish subtitles. It is still my opinion that examining, for example, a film with lesbian main characters, with possible positive influence on lesbian and gay community, might have provided fruitful and perhaps even more interesting results. However, acquiring material and especially the Finnish subtitles the film or films might have proven too difficult.

Since the aim of this paper is to analyse specific characters’ ways of speaking in the show, the episodes were selected with the criteria that they have plenty of scenes with speech situations where there is interaction between lesbian characters. Another reason for choosing these episodes lies in the fact that they were all subtitled by the same person. However, this factor was a relatively minor one and might not actually reflect in the actual research itself or the research results. Nevertheless, it is my belief that examining episodes that have been translated by the same person will bring more consistency for my research as the translator’s personal choices can be assumed to remain constant.

When conducting the research, I counted all instances with lesbian language features discussed in this study, noting all the language features used by the recurring lesbian-identified characters in the show, as well as the language features used by the bisexual Alice and Jenny. I worked with both the pre-written transcripts and the translations of the episodes at the same time, constantly comparing them to each other. In addition, I watched the episodes several times to verify the accuracy of the transcripts. In order to achieve as accurate results as possible, both the transcripts and the translations of the show were examined
several times to make sure that no speech features were missed from the analysis. In addition, I recorded each feature-specific word used per character. In order to achieve as accurate results as possible, I worked in a similar fashion as Fiscus did in her study: I created a normalised list of lesbian language features used per character in order that represents how many times each linguistic feature appeared per 1000 words for every character. To do this, I counted the total number of words that each character spoke in episodes 02-01 and 02-02. This was done by working on the prewritten transcripts, separating each character’s speech into separate documents and removing all the additional features that appear in the transcripts. These additional features include the names of the characters uttering their lines, as well as their physical actions that are mentioned in brackets. In the following example, the words ‘Shane’ and ‘(nodding)’ are considered to be additional features that should be removed from the overall word count of the document:

Shane: (nodding) Yeah, go for it, they'll love it.

The total number of words for every character was calculated by using the word count feature on Microsoft Word. After this, I solved the ratio of \( \frac{x}{1000} = \frac{\text{total # of feature}}{\text{total # of words}} \). For example, the number of Alice’s hedge words were solved by \( \frac{x}{1000} = \frac{26}{1096} \). See Appendices 1, 2 and 3 for non-normalised numbers of each feature and the total number of words per character.

For Chapter 6, I listed the lesbian language features according to their translation strategies. When doing this, I divided the language features into three separate sections based on if they had been 1) retained in the translation, 2) re-created in the translation in some way, or 3) omitted from the translation altogether. Chapter 6 will provide more information on the use of retention and re-creation as translation strategies.
5. LESBIAN LANGUAGE FEATURES IN THE L WORD

This chapter describes how the different lesbian language features are presented in The L Word. The discussion will be both quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative analysis will examine the total number and frequency of lesbian language features in order to determine whether lesbian language features are present in the characters’ speech. This chapter will also take a broad look at which individual lesbian language features are the most prominent in specific characters’ speech. Secondly, the qualitative discussion aims at uncovering exactly how the lesbian language features are present in The L Word: what purpose different language features have, how they affect the way the characters are perceived, and so on. The qualitative and quantitative analyses are not presented separately from each other but instead, they are included in the discussion at the same time in all of the sections of this chapter.

This chapter is divided into two main sections: Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features. As mentioned before, the language features listed under Women’s Language are Tag Questions, Hedges, Like, and Intensifiers, and the language features listed under Men’s Language are Taboo Language, Contracted Forms, and Man/Guys. Excerpts from The L Word will be provided as a way of example for all language features in both sections. An overview of the main findings in the subsections on Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features will be presented in a subsection at the end of this chapter.

5.1 Women’s Language Features

Table 1 below presents the amount of each Women’s Language Feature per 1000 words, thus providing a clear way of comparing the frequency in which different characters use certain language features. This way it possible to tell how often certain language features appear in characters’ speech, regardless of the possible variation between the individual characters’ overall word count.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tag Questions</th>
<th>Hedges</th>
<th>Like</th>
<th>Intensifiers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>23.72</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>29.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bette</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>9.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31.74</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>38.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>11.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>22.04</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>7.01</td>
<td>33.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>20.87</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shane</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>17.03</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.86</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9.63</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>11.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonya</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>13.44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>16.85</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>23.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at the quantitative data, it is interesting to note that there appears to be great variation between the frequencies of the different language features. For example, Carmen’s speech contains 31.74 hedges while Tina’s total number of hedges is 9.63. It is evident that there is a great deal of differences between individual characters’ language use, with some of the characters using specific Women’s Language Features considerably more than the others, and certain characters speaking in overall more feminine manner than some other characters. Some of the information presented in the table is quite surprising. For instance, Bette and Tina, who Fiscus classifies as femme lesbians (Fiscus 2011: 43), have the lowest numbers of Women’s Language Features used in general. Meanwhile Shane who is the most masculine, or butch, of the recurring characters in *The L Word*, appears to use Women’s Language Features quite frequently. Some of the results, however, are much as expected. The feminine Jenny, for instance, has a high count of Women’s Language Features in her speech, only second to Carmen. The subsections below will discuss each Women’s Language Feature individually and aim at providing insight on their use, frequency in the show, and which characters are prone to using specific language features. The subsections will also provide examples directly from *The L Word* episodes 02-01 and 02-02. In each of the examples, the language features in question will be underlined for the purpose of making the discussion on them easier.

**Tag Questions**

As Fiscus (2011: 20) states in her study, a tag question differs from a regular question in that a tag question assumes an answer. For example, if the tag question is, “You will be home by
8, right?”, the speaker thinks that the listener will be home by 8 but allows the listener a possibility for renegotiation because the speaker is not entirely confident with the knowledge.

According to Lakoff (1975), tag questions demonstrate a lack of confidence on the part of the speaker. However, not all researchers agree with this sentiment. Holmes (1984) argues that tag questions can express either modal or affective meanings depending on the situation. She claims that the role of modal tags is to confirm information of which the speaker is uncertain, for example by stating “You were missing yesterday, weren’t you?” Affective tags, on the other hand, have two roles: to work as a softening tag that is used to indicate concern for the addressee to mitigate a face-threatening act, for example by stating “Shut the window, could you?”, or to work as a facilitative tag which is used to offer the addressee a chance to take part in the conversation, for example by stating “This is a nice car, isn’t it?” Holmes furthermore reports that it appears that both men and women use tag questions in their speech, but that men are more likely to use modal tags whereas women use more facilitative tags. She also mentions that people in facilitative roles, such as leaders and teachers, are more likely to use tag questions. This could mean that the use of tag questions is not always dependent on the speaker’s sex, but the speaker’s role in the conversation.

As can be seen in Table 1, tag questions do not appear to be very prominent in The L Word, with their average number for all characters remaining at 1.57. They are still, however, used by five out of nine recurring characters of the show. Out of these five characters, Tonya’s number of tag questions is the highest. Some examples of Tonya’s use of a tag question can be seen below in an excerpt from her conversation with Dana:

1) Tonya: Honey, they know that we’re getting married. Don’t they?
2) Dana: Yes.
3) Tonya: And they haven’t disowned us yet, have they?
4) Tonya: Pookie, the worst they can do…
5) Tonya: …is to refuse to acknowledge us. Which is pretty much what they’re doing already, right?

The tag questions used here are don’t they, have they, and right. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Lakoff (1975) claims that tag questions demonstrate a lack of confidence or assertiveness in the speaker. However, it could be argued that Tonya does not appear unconfident in any of
the example sentences above. Instead, the tag questions are being used to stress the sentences preceding them. It should be noted that while Lakoff argues that tag questions demonstrate a lack of confidence on the part of the speaker, according to Fiscus certain other scholars argue that a tag question can be a powerful utterance (Fiscus 2011: 21). This can be seen, for example, in the following excerpt:

1) Alice: It was a mistake, right?
2) Dana: If you say so.

It could be argued that instead of signalling lack of confidence, Alice’s tag question right is used here to coerce Dana into agreeing with Alice’s statement. Interestingly, nearly all of the tag questions in The L Word are used in the manner described above: not to signal lack of confidence, but instead to emphasise the speaker’s utterance to bring more impact to it. It is therefore apparent that while there are tag questions present in The L Word, they are not necessarily used in the stereotypically feminine manner as proposed by Lakoff (1975). This might imply that while lesbian language, and through this, Women’s Language, contain tag questions, they do not necessarily work to portray women as lacking in confidence but instead operate in a rather opposite manner.

**Hedges**

As can be seen in Table 1, hedges are by far the most common Women’s Language Feature in The L Word, with their average number for all characters as high as 16.85. However, there appears to be great variety in the frequency in which hedges are used by different characters. For example, Carmen uses hedges considerably more than the other characters, her overall number of hedges being 31.74. Her numbers are followed by Alice’s 23.72 hedges, and Jenny’s 22.04 hedges. Out of all the characters discussed in this paper, Bette has the lowest total number of hedges. According to Lakoff (1975), hedges are used to soften the speaker’s response, or to make it more polite. As Bette works as the Director of California Arts Centre, it is possible that her professional position is reflected in her way of speaking, thus making it more commanding and self-confident in tone, with no specific interest in softening her sentences.
Hedges include words and phrases signalling some amount of hesitation, such as well, I think and kind of, but also less verbal utterances such as um and uh. Hedges signalling hesitation can be seen in the following excerpt from a conversation between Bette and Alice:

1) Bette: You know… what I did, Alice… I couldn’t help myself.
2) Alice: How does that work? Because… it’s kind of an act of free will.
3) Bette: You know, I - I exhausted every ounce of free will that I had and I still couldn’t stop myself.

Here, the hedges are both of Bette’s uses of you know, as well as Alice’s kind of. As stated before, Bette has the lowest number of hedges in her speech out of all the queer female characters in The L Word, possibly due to her professional position. However, in this context, Bette and Alice’s conversation is more personal in nature, and especially Bette’s lines contain a certain amount of hesitation.

It is interesting to note that while hedges are considered to be features of stereotypical Women’s Language, the butch character Shane has a relatively high amount of hedges in her speech. One of Shane’s hedges can be seen in the following excerpt in which she cautiously expresses her concerns about Tina hiring a lawyer to aid her with her situation with Bette:

1) Shane: I know, but… you know, getting a lawyer means that things will get ugly. Couldn’t… couldn’t you just try to… work it out together?

Here the hedge you know, as well as the pauses indicating hesitation in Shane’s line, signal a certain amount of cautiousness that works to soften the overall sentence, thus making it more polite than it might otherwise be. It is important to note that in this excerpt, as well as in the excerpt from the conversation between Bette and Alice, the hesitation in the characters’ speech is not present only in the form of a hedge word: the pauses in the utterance (here indicated by “…”), as well as the repeating of words (Bette’s “I – I exhausted…” and Shane’s “Couldn’t… couldn’t you…” ) are demonstrations of hesitance and uncertainty in the characters’ speech.

It is apparent that hedge words are very common in The L Word, and in most cases, they work in the ways proposed by Lakoff (1975): they operate as softening factors in a sentence
to indicate politeness and sometimes even hesitation. In addition, while there is some variation between the frequencies in which the different characters use hedges, hedges are used by every lesbian and bisexual character of the show. Therefore, it could be stated that hedges are constituents of lesbian language in *The L Word*.

**Like**

There are many contradicting attitudes about the use of the word *like*. According to Fiscus, *like* is a linguistic feature that indexes that the speaker is overtly feminine and perhaps even downplays her intelligence (Fiscus 2011: 12). Fiscus mentions a study conducted by Daily-O’Cain (2000) which showed that there is a strong stereotype that women use *like* more often than men, and that the users of *like* are thought of as uneducated, using bad grammar, and having a poor use of English. Daily-O’Cain argues that the negative stereotypes of *like* are more powerful than the positive attitudes (cheerful, friendly, attractive, and successful) associated with *like* usage. However, there are also arguments against the negative aspect of *like*. In his article in Vanity Fair Hitchens (2010) quotes Eckert and Mendoza-Denton’s thoughts on the use of *like* thus:

> “One of the innovative developments in the white English of Californians is the use of the discourse-marker ‘I’m like’ or ‘she’s like’ to introduce quoted speech, as in ‘I’m like, where have you been?’ This quotative is particularly useful because it does not require the quote to be of actual speech (as ‘she said’ would, for instance). A shrug, a sigh, or any of a number of expressive sounds as well as speech can follow it.”

In addition to *like*’s function as a quotative to signal speech, thought or action, as mentioned in the quote above, *like* can also be used as a focuser to signal new information or introduce new ideas (Fiscus 2011: 39). As a focuser, *like* can be used in, for example, the following manner: “She’s, like, the best cheerleader we ever had”.

As can be seen in Table 1, *like* is the least common Women’s Language Feature in *The L Word*. It is most often used by Carmen and Jenny, the characters with the largest number of Women’s Language Features in total, and it is not used at all by Bette, Shane, Tina and Tonya. In Bette and Shane’s case this is somewhat expected due to Bette’s already mentioned professional background and Shane’s generally masculine characteristics. It should be noted that, interestingly, *like* is not used at all in episode 02-02, and instead, every instance of *like*
mentioned in this paper occurs in episode 02-01. Two examples of Jenny’s use of *like* can be seen in the following excerpt:

1) Jenny: So shitty. For practically, *like*, one thousand dollars, I could live in a hovel, underneath the freeway, you know, then Tim was *like*, “You can take over the lease”, but there’s no way that I could afford it, so…

Here, the first of Jenny’s uses of *like* operates as a focuser for ‘one thousand dollars’. The second *like* acts as a quotative that Jenny uses to present her quotation of Tim. Another example of the use of *like* can be seen below in the line uttered by Alice, who Sedgwick claims to use valley girl syntax (2006: xxiii), with which Fiscus associates the use of *like*:

1) Alice: We need, *like*… rules of un-attraction.

In this excerpt, *like* is used in the same manner as the first *like* in the example with Jenny. While it could be argued that the word *like* signals Jenny’s and Alice’s femininity, it is difficult to state whether or not it downplays their intelligence, as claimed by Fiscus (2011: 12). It is possible that instead of downplaying their intelligence, Jenny and Alice are using *like* to replace some other filler word, such as the hedge *um* or even *you know*. This, however, does not necessarily mean that *like* could be classified as a hedge word, as hedge words are used most of all to soften an utterance, whereas *like* can be used for other purposes as well, for example as indicators of quotations.

It could be argued that the low number of the use of the word *like* indicates that it is not a very prominent feature of lesbian language in *The L Word*. It is used by a relatively low number of characters and even in the speech of those characters, *like* is uncommon. Therefore, while there is a small amount of the use of the word *like* in *The L Word*, it is likely a feature of those characters’ individual speech styles rather than a considerable lesbian language feature.

**Intensifiers**

Fiscus defines an intensifier as a word that “boosts the meaning of an utterance, i.e. *really, so, very*” (Fiscus 2011: 39). For example, if a person says “I was *so* happy”, they are emphasising how happy they were at the time. Fiscus also mentions that Lakoff (1975) lists
intensifiers as linguistic devices that are central to Women’s Language Features, and that other linguists who have tested Lakoff’s assertion have found that it is generally the case that women use intensifiers more than men. While intensifiers are the second largest Women’s Language Feature group, their numbers are not very high when compared to the number of hedges, the largest Women’s Language Feature group. It should be noted, however, that like hedges, intensifiers are used by every character discussed in the present paper.

Interestingly, the character using the most intensifiers is Shane who is the most masculine of all the queer female characters in *The L Word*. The second largest user of intensifiers is the bisexual Jenny, whose average number of Women’s Language Features is 33.05. The character with the least intensifiers in her speech is Tonya, who has only 1.34 intensifiers in her speech.

Such intensifiers as *really* and *very* are very prominent in *The L Word*. However, certain other intensifiers such as *totally* also make appearances throughout the episodes. Examples of the use of intensifiers can be seen in the following excerpt from a conversation between Bette and Alice:

1) Alice: No, you behaved *really* badly.

2) Bette: I know that it sounds like an excuse, but you know what? The fact is she disappeared on me. She was depressed and she was *completely* wrapped up in herself, and I tried to talk to her about it but she – she *completely* shut me out.

The excerpt above contains three separate instances of the use of an intensifier: Alice’s *really*, and Bette’s two uses of the word *completely*. It is worth noting that while Bette otherwise uses Women’s Language Features less than the other characters, excluding Tina, she has a relatively high count of intensifiers in her speech when compared to the other characters. The total number of intensifiers in Bette’s speech is 4.37. There is a possibility that Bette is using intensifiers not to signal femininity but to otherwise stress certain elements in her speech to highlight their apparent importance. Here, for example, Bette is attempting to justify her reasons for cheating on Tina by enhancing Tina’s negative actions through the use of intensifiers.
As noted before, Shane interestingly has the highest number of intensifiers in her speech. Most of the time Shane uses the intensifiers *really* and *very*, but there are some exceptions. In the following example Shane uses a somewhat unusual intensifier in her conversation with Alice:

1) Alice: Dammit… why did I get this assignment? I’m so not a knitter.

2) Shane: Well, it’s *crazy* popular and all the fags I know are doing it. Even some straight boys too.

The intensifier in Shane’s line is the word *crazy* preceding the word *popular*. Shane’s line is especially interesting because it is a mix of Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features: it has Women’s Language Features in the forms of the hedge *well* and the intensifier *crazy*, and Men’s Language Features in the taboo word *fags* which will be discussed in more detail in section 5.2. This is a good indicator of the fact that lesbian language does not always consist exclusively of only Women’s Language Features or only Men’s Language Features, but instead it is built upon features from both of the gendered language groups.

As intensifiers are used by all queer female characters in *The L Word*, it is apparent that they are important constituents of lesbian language of the show, regardless of the fact that their number is not as high as that of hedges, for example.

### 5.2 Men’s Language Features

As with Women’s Language Features, this section presents the quantitative and qualitative results of the analysis of Men’s Language Features in *The L Word*. The quantitative results will be presented in Table 2 below, and the discussion will be based on these results as well as individual examples from the show.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Taboo Language</th>
<th>Contracted Forms</th>
<th>Man/guys</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>6.38</td>
<td>8.21</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bette</td>
<td>11.36</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmen</td>
<td>19.04</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>17.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shane</td>
<td>17.03</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>11.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonya</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>10.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.76</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.56</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When comparing Table 2 to Table 1, it can be seen that the average number of Men’s Language Features is smaller than that of Women’s Language Features. However, there is not as great variety between the frequencies of individual Men’s Language Features as there is amongst Women’s Language Features: the average numbers between individual Women’s Language Features vary from 1.24 to 16.85, whereas the Men’s Language Features vary from 1.56 to 8.76. It is also noteworthy that only three characters out of nine have all of the Women’s Language Features in their speech, but five out of nine characters have all Men’s Language Features in their speech. The characters with the most Men’s Language Features in their speech are Shane and Carmen. Especially Carmen’s high number of Men’s Language Features is interesting because, as mentioned in the previous section, she also has the highest amount of Women’s Language Features in her speech.

**Taboo Language**

Taboo language is the most common Men’s Language Feature in *The L Word*. Taboo language includes the lexical items that are not socially acceptable, such as swear words or words that are deemed inappropriate by societal norms (Fiscus 2011: 21). According to Mercury (1995: 3) all obscene language is taboo language because such expressions are restricted in some way for their use in public. She states that these restrictions exist explicitly (e.g., television networks that govern language on television) or implicitly (parents who use euphemisms to describe sexual body parts or processes when talking to their children). Jay (1992: 3) describes profanities as using “religions terminology in a profane secular or indifferent manner”. In such cases, there is no intention on the speaker to denigrate anything to do with religion, but instead the speaker might be expressing his or her emotional reaction.
to a certain stimulus. Examples of this could be the use of such expletives as “Oh my god”. In the following excerpt, *Jesus* is used as an expletive in this manner:

1) Alice: She had to do something, so I hooked her up.
2) Shane: With a lawyer?
3) Alice: Joyce Wischnia is the leading gay civil rights attorney in L.A.
4) Shane: Ah, *Jesus*, Al, you and your *fucking* “best of” lists. Bette and Tina don’t need that.

In the example above, Shane uses *Jesus* as an expletive and therefore in this context, it can be considered to be a taboo word. However, if *Jesus* had been used as a non-expletive, for example in religious context, it would not have counted as a taboo word. An added presence of taboo language in the excerpt above is the use of the word *fucking*, which works to make the sentence more forceful.

Like Fiscus’s study (2011), the present paper includes the words to do with sexual orientation in the discussion of taboo language. Queen (1997) lists words of this type under the heading of Stereotyped Gay Male Language. This includes such words as *lez*, *dyke* and *fag*, for example. It is important to note, however, that while these words have been used in episodes 02-01 and 02-02 of *The L Word*, none of them aims to be specifically insulting. It is furthermore important to note that while these words are often used in an offensive manner with the intention of insulting someone, their effect can be different if used by homosexuals themselves. An example of this can be seen in the following excerpt:

1) Dana: How could she tell just by seeing them touch hands?
2) Shane: Women can do that.
3) Alice: Yeah, especially *dykes*.

According to The Free Dictionary, the word *dyke* can be used as a disparaging term for a lesbian (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/dyke, last accessed 21 March 2014), and it has often been used as a derogatory term especially for masculine women. However, today *dyke* does not necessarily always have as negative connotations as it used to have, and many lesbians can actually have positive associations with the word. This can be seen from, for example, the name of one of the earliest lesbian comic strips *Dykes to Watch Out For*, the
author of which, Alison Bechdel, is lesbian herself. It should be noted, however, that *dyke*, like other slang words used to describe sexuality or sexual orientation, can have entirely differing connotations depending on, for example, the context in which it is used, the sexual orientation of the speaker, and the speaker’s attitude towards sexual minorities.

Taboo words in *The L Word* are used in both negative and positive speech situations. Negative speech situations would consist of, for example, conversations in which expletives are used to enhance a negative situation or to attack someone verbally. However, the negativity or positivity of a speech situation is often defined by the speech context, as well as by the characters’ mannerisms and tones of their voice. The excerpt below is an example of a positive speech situation in which there is no actual hostility between the characters despite the use of taboo words:

1) Dana: Alright, well then you can’t wear those shirts anymore.
2) Alice: What shirts?
3) Dana: You know, the ones where… they cling to you in some places and fall off you in others?
4) Alice: (grins)
5) Dana: *Fuck you*.

Here, despite Dana’s use of *fuck you*, the situation is light-hearted and Dana is not intending to insult Alice by her use of taboo language. Therefore, the speech situation in the excerpt above could be considered to be a positive speech situation. However, while there are a few non-negative speech situations in *The L Word* in which taboo language is used, they are far less common than the negative speech situations. In certain negative speech situations taboo words are used as fillers, whereas in others they can be used to attack the other person. Examples of both of these cases can be seen in the following exchange between Bette and Alice:

1) Alice: She was just going to get some advice. I thought she needed it, you know, to feel like she had some options.
2) Bette: You thought...?
3) Alice: Bette, you know what? She doesn't have any money. She doesn't have anything of her own anymore.
4) Bette: You sent her to fucking Joyce Wischnia?
5) Alice: I just suggested she see a lawyer!
6) Bette: Fuck you!
7) Alice: Fuck me?!
8) Bette: Yeah, fuck you! Weren't you my friend?

In this excerpt, Bette’s use of the word fucking in 4) is used to enhance a negative situation, whereas in 6) and 8) Bette is using fuck you to verbally assault Alice. Alice’s fuck me in 7) is nothing more than a reaction to Bette’s line in 6). It is clear that all of the uses of taboo language in the excerpt above have to do with the negativity of the speech situation.

When looking at the number of taboo words used in The L Word, it is clear that taboo language is an ever present constituent of lesbian language of the show. There is variety between the different types of taboo language features used, and every single female queer character in The L Word episodes 02-01 and 02-02 uses some form of taboo language. Especially Shane is notable in her prominent use of taboo language which enhances her butch characteristics even further.

**Contracted Forms**
Contracted forms are essentially features of colloquial spoken language: they are shortened versions of such phrases as, for example, going to and don’t know. The contracted forms of these specific examples are gonna and dunno, respectively. In her study, Fiscus (2011) examines the use of the contracted form gonna without the presence of other contracted forms, which is different from Queen’s (1997) analysis which also includes discussion on contracted forms in general, including such forms as dunno and oughta, for example. According to Fiscus, gonna is associated with masculinity because it is considered to be informal and colloquial, and therefore more likely to be used by men (Fiscus 2011: 41). As gonna is only one of the many possible contracted forms, Fiscus’s statement can be applied to all contracted forms in general.

As can be seen in Table 2, contracted forms are the second most common Men’s Language Feature in The L Word. Like taboo words, contracted forms are also used by all female queer characters of the show, and there is less variety between their numbers: the character with the most contracted forms in her speech is Alice, with 8.21 instances, and the character with the
least contracted forms in her speech, Robin, has 2.08 instances. It can therefore be deduced that contracted forms are used throughout *The L Word* with no great differences between individual characters’ contracted form usage.

Alice’s high number of contracted forms is somewhat unexpected since, as Fiscus states: “Alice is relatively feminine” (Fiscus 2011: 46-47). However, Fiscus continues by stating that “[a]t the same time, [Alice] is also known as kind of masculine because she has shorter hair, a tattoo, and smokes” (ibid.). There is also the possibility that while contracted forms are considered to be elements of Men’s Language, the characters of *The L Word* might not always use them consciously in order to appear more masculine. As contracted forms are part of colloquial speech that do not require actual creation of new words but instead tie two or more words together, they are prone to appearing in speech without the character having to think about their inclusion. On the contrary, if the characters are used to having contracted forms in their speech and use them frequently, it may take some of them conscious effort to use regular, non-contracted forms in their speech in more formal situations. An example of a typical informal speech situation can be seen in the following excerpt from a conversation in a café:

1) Alice: Ariana Huffington is fifty. She’s not really your type. She’s *kinda* fancy.  
2) Shane: I’m doing her hair, Al, I’m not *gonna* fuck her.

The contracted forms in the example above are *kinda* and *gonna*. Not only are they used in an informal speech situation, they are also used by characters that are known for their prominent use of colloquialisms in their speech (Alice) and for their butch characteristics (Shane). However, contracted forms are also used by characters with less informal speech styles in general, and in situations where they are not surrounded by their friends. For example, in the following excerpt Bette uses contracted forms in her work environment:

1) Man: An illicit exterior installation, uh, just below the Sawtelle-405 freeway overpass  
2) Bette: You know I saw Noble’s performance piece where he crawled naked across a table, ranting about his weakness and perfidy. Who do you think is *gonna* fund that?  
3) Man: Oh, I applied to the Ahmanson foundation.  
4) Bette: Never *gonna* happen, they’re way too conservative.
Above, Bette’s two uses of *gonna* are contracted forms. As was noted in Chapter 4, Bette is one of the more sophisticated characters of *The L Word*, which, as well as the work setting of the excerpt above, could make one expect her to restrict the amount of colloquialisms in her speech. However, it is possible that Bette’s use of contracted forms in the excerpt above is due to the fact that she is the professional superior to the man she is talking to, and therefore does not need to make her speech less colloquial. The situation might be different if Bette was talking to, for example, someone who is her superior or a potential fundraiser. It is therefore possible that the speaker’s social position, as well as the speech setting, has an effect on the use of contracted forms.

As contracted forms are used by every *The L Word* character throughout episodes 02-01 and 02-02 without great differences in the individual characters’ usage of them, it can be argued that contracted forms are an essential part of lesbian language in *The L Word*.

**Man/guys**

The words *guys* and *man*, as well as other similar masculine words such as *dude*, when used to address someone, can denote masculinity. According to Fiscus, the use of these words “creates a sort of solidarity between groups of people and has masculine, brotherly overtones” (Fiscus 2011: 40). Kiesling analyses the use of the word *dude* and argues that it creates a “cool solidarity” between men (Kiesling 2004). This argument can be extended to the words *man* and *guys* as well because of their similar use to the word *dude*. It should be noted that in the episodes 02-01 and 02-02 of *The L Word*, while the word *guys* is used by certain lesbian characters to address each other, the form of address *man* is not used in the episodes at all. Therefore, this subsection will focus solely on the inspection of the word *guys*.

Even though all the recurring female queer characters in *The L Word* are women, some of them can use *guys* to address other women to enhance either their own masculine qualities or the masculine qualities of their addressees. There are five recurring characters that use this form of address in *The L Word* episodes 02-01 and 02-02: Alice, Dana, Shane, Tina, and Tonya. The character using the word *guys* the most is Shane, who, as discussed before, uses Men’s Language Features more than the other characters of the show. It is interesting to note
that in many instances, Shane’s use of *guys* seems to be intended to either signal authority or to work as a pacifying element, as in the excerpt below:

1) Tonya: Well, I don’t know what Bette was thinking. I mean, you don’t step out on a woman like Tina for somebody who hammers planks for a living.
2) Alice: Oh my…! What are you saying, Tonya, that it would’ve been okay if Candace had a better job?
3) Shane: *Guys*, it’s not our business.

Following these lines, the other women’s argumentation continues while Shane attempts to end it with the repetition of the line “Guys”, which eventually succeeds when the rise in her tone of voice directs the other speakers’ attention to the newly arrived Tina, whose relationship with Bette is the topic of the conversation. In this case, while both Fiscus (2011) and Kiesling (2004) argue that the word *guys* has brotherly overtones, it could be argued that Shane is attempting to control or redirect the conversation.

In addition to Shane, some of the more feminine characters use the word *guys* on occasion. While *guys* can be used to signal masculinity, it is unlikely that every single instance of the word is used in such a manner. The following excerpt is an example of Tonya’s use of *guys*, which appears to be less masculine than Shane’s use of the word:

1) Tonya: *Guys*, you *guys*!
2) Tonya: This place is falling apart! Did you *guys* hear what happened to Marina?

While the use of the words *guys* is not quite as prominent as the use of certain other Men’s Language Features, such as taboo language, it is still part of certain characters’ speech. Therefore it can be argued that while the usage of the words that create brotherhood are not used by all female queer characters in *The L Word*, they can still be constituents of the language used by individual lesbians.
5.3 Main Findings: Lesbian Language Features

It has been revealed during the discussion of different lesbian language features that there is great variety in the numbers of individual features. Certain features, such as hedges and taboo words, are very common in *The L Word* whereas some other features, such as the use of the word *like*, are not used very often. It has also become apparent that overall, Women’s Language Features are, in general, more prominent in lesbian language in *The L Word* than Men’s Language Features, as portrayed in the graph below:

![Women's Language Features and Men's Language Features](image)

**Figure 1.** Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features

As can be seen in Figure 1, there is an almost exact 60/40 ratio between Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features in *The L Word*. However, it should be noted that the presence of certain common individual language features affects the size of one language group. In this case, such a language feature would be the hedges listed under Women’s Language Features, as they are far more common than any other language feature. The two graphs below present the overall percentages of Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features separately from each other:
As can be seen in the graphs above, both of the main language groups are very much dominated by a certain language feature. In the case of Women’s Language Features, such a feature group is the hedges, which constitutes over 70% of all Women’s Language Features. The most common Men’s Language Feature is taboo language with a percentage of 56.12%. While the percentage of taboo language features is not as high as that of hedges, their numbers are still quite considerable. However, presenting Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features separately does not necessarily provide a clear comparison between the numbers of all lesbian language features. In the graph below, all of the lesbian language features are portrayed next to each other in order to provide a clear overview of their prevalence:
Figure 4 makes it even clearer that hedges are, without a question, the most common lesbian language feature in *The L Word*. The second most common language feature group is taboo language, and the third most common group is contracted forms. The least common language feature groups are *like* (2.82%), tag questions (4.03%) and *man/guys* (4.03%).

In addition to the quantitative data on the use of lesbian language features in *The L Word*, the discussion included analysis on their specific use. As the discussion revealed, certain language features are used by all of the female queer characters of the show, and therefore it can be argued that they are important constituents of lesbian language in *The L Word*. These language features are hedges, intensifiers, taboo language, and contracted forms. Some other language features were not used by all characters but were nevertheless somewhat prominent in the speech of certain individual characters. For example, Tonya’s speech contains a relatively high number of tag questions, and Shane uses the word *guys* quite often in her speech. It can be argued that while not part of the language of all lesbians in *The L Word*, certain less common language features can be an essential part of an individual’s lesbian language use in the show.

It is interesting to note that Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features are not always divided according to whether the queer woman using them is masculine or feminine. The graphs below provide information on how much individual characters use Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features:
While several feminine characters a high number of Women’s Language Features in their speech, certain characters that could be classified as femme lesbians use them quite rarely. For example the outwardly femme lesbian Tina is amongst the characters with the least Women’s Language Features in her speech, with the total amount of 11.55. It should also be noted that, interestingly, the butch character Shane also uses a relatively high number of Women’s Language Features. However, Shane also has the highest number of Men’s Language Features in her speech. It could be argued that Shane is a prime example of a
lesbian using a mixture of both Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features in her speech.

All in all it could be stated that while every lesbian language feature examined in this paper is present to a certain extent in *The L Word*, not all of them are necessarily important constituents of lesbian language in the show. It can be argued, for example, that since the word *like* is the least common lesbian language features in the show, it might not be an essential part of lesbian language in *The L Word*.
6. TRANSLATION OF LESBIAN LANGUAGE FEATURES IN THE L WORD

This chapter discusses how the lesbian language features present in The L Word have been transmitted to the Finnish-speaking audience in the subtitles of the show. The aim of this chapter is to see if the language features inherent to lesbian language are present in the Finnish subtitles of The L Word.

The discussion on the translation of lesbian language in The L Word will have its focus on the translation strategies used in the subtitles. This chapter will analyse if the individual lesbian language features have been transmitted to the viewers in the Finnish subtitles and if they have, in what manner. It will be examined if lesbian language features have been 1) retained with the same meaning and form as the original line, 2) re-created with the same overall meaning but in different form than the original line, or 3) completely omitted from the translation. According to Holmes (1988: 47-48) the choices of the translator fall on two different axes: the axis of exoticising versus naturalising, and the axis of historicising and modernising. When a translation is mainly exoticising and historicising, the emphasis is on retention, whereas when a translation is mainly naturalising and modernising, the emphasis is on re-creation. In other words, a translation that is close to the form of the source text is retentive, whereas a translation that moves further away from the source text uses re-creation. In this study the translations in which the examined lesbian language features are retained in the same form as they are in the source text are considered retentions, whereas the translations that contain lesbian language features in a form that is in some way different from the source are considered re-creations. For example, if the source text contained the English swearword shit and it was translated into Finnish as paska, which is the literal Finnish equivalent for shit, the translation would have been retained. On the other hand, if shit was translated as hitto, which is Finnish for darn or dang, the translation would be considered to be a re-creation. If the word shit is completely absent from the translation, it will be considered an omission. See Appendices 6 and 7 for complete lists of re-created Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features in The L Word.

My initial expectation is that quite a few lesbian language features that have to do with especially colloquial spoken language will have been omitted from the translation. The reasons for this lie, most of all, in the time and space restrictions placed on subtitles, as well as the subtitling conventions discussed in Chapter 3.
Like Chapter 5, this chapter is also divided into two main sections: Translation of Women’s Language and Translation of Men’s Language. As in Chapter 5, both of the main sections will also be divided into several subsections according to the language feature discussed. Each section will provide examples that will present the original line uttered in *The L Word*, its Finnish subtitle, and my English back-translation of the subtitle in order to make the original-translation comparison more understandable for non-Finnish speakers. I aim at keeping my English back-translation as faithful to the Finnish subtitle as possible. The examples will be presented in the following manner:

1) Original line
   - Subtitle
   (Back-translation of the subtitle)

Much like in the examples presented in Chapter 5, the lesbian language features presented in the examples will be underlined. In addition, the Finnish translations of the language features will also be underlined, as well as the back-translations of the subtitles if possible. It should be noted, however, that underlining the language features presented in Finnish subtitles or in their English back-translations is not always possible due to differences in syntax and grammar, for example. The lines preceding or following the line discussed will not be included in the example, as was done in Chapter 5, given that the main focus of the discussion in this Chapter is the subtitling of the show, and therefore the setting of the conversation is not necessarily vital for the analysis. The individual characters and their language use are also not included in the discussion in this chapter.

### 6.1 Translation of Women’s Language Features

It became apparent in Chapter 5 that Women’s Language Features are, on average, quite prominent in the speech of the lesbian characters of *The L Word*. However, there is a certain amount of inconsistency in the frequency of the individual Women’s Language Features in the show: hedges dominate in frequency with their considerably high numbers, while the other Women’s Language Features are less common. However, it is quite expected that the numbers of individual language features will not be reflected in the translation of the show.
Table 3 below presents how Women’s Language Features that appear in *The L Word* have been translated into Finnish, and the graph below it provides the percentages of the different translation strategies:

**Table 3** Translation Strategies in Subtitling Women’s Language in *The L Word*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Retained</th>
<th>Re-created</th>
<th>Omitted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tag questions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedges</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Like’</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensifiers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>127</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 7.** Translated Women’s Language

As can be seen in both Table 3 and Figure 7, the vast majority of all Women’s Language Features have been omitted from the Finnish subtitles. This is most likely due to specific subtitling conventions according to which unnecessary information should be omitted from the subtitles. This stems, most of all, from the time and space conventions placed on subtitles, and provides a good explanation for the absence of several language features, especially the ones that operate as filler words. The subsections below will discuss the translation of individual Women’s Language Features in more detail.

**Translation of Tag Questions**

As can be seen in Table 3, the overall number of tag questions is not very high in *The L Word*, with only ten instances. Out of these ten instances, a surprisingly large number of the
tag questions have been translated in some way, with five of the tag questions transmitted to the Finnish-speaking audience. Figure 8 presents the percentage of translation strategies used for tag questions:

![Translation of Tag Questions](image)

**Figure 8.** Translation of Tag Questions

The translation of half of all tag questions is surprising because they act, as their name indicates, as tags, or filler words at the end of a sentence or a phrase. As Vertanen states in his article, subtitles should contain only what is essential to the plot and cut out the extra material (Vertanen 2007: 152). Quite often, this extra material would also include tag questions.

As can be seen in Figure 8, 30% of the tag questions uttered in the show have been retained in the subtitles in their original form: as tag questions without much alteration. An example of such retention can be seen in the example below:

1) No, but she likes what I like. She always wants what I want more than what she wants. **Right?**
   - Hän tahtoo aina samaa kuin minä, *eikö vain*?
   (She always wants what I want, **right**?)

While the original tag question is presented separately from the sentences preceding it, it can still be considered to be a tag question, as in this context, it is tied to the previous sentences. The translation, while considerably shorter than the original line, possesses the same meaning, as well as the same tag question. It should be noted that while identical in meaning,
the Finnish tag question *eikö vain* and the English *right* are not complete equivalents of each other. The reason for this might lie in the fact that there is no clear Finnish translation equivalent for the English tag question *right*. A possible literal English translation for *eikö vain* would be *is that not so?*

20% of the tag questions in *The L Word* have been re-created in the subtitles of the show and transmitted to the audience in a form that is not quite similar to their original form. An example of this can be seen below:

2) You don’t mind, *right*? Since we’re here?  
   - Sopiiko kaikille?  
   (Does that suit everyone?)

Here, the tag question is transmitted to the audience in the form of the clitic particle -kO in the word *sopiiko*, which could be translated as the phrase *does that suit (someone)*. Therefore, while the original tag question *right* is not present in its original form in the subtitle, it is still transmitted in some form to the Finnish-speaking audience. Because of the overall presence of tag questions in the subtitles, it can be argued that tag questions are translatable into Finnish, even though they are not always present in the actual tag question form in the same way as in English.

**Translation of Hedges**

Even more so than tag questions, hedges are very much part of spoken language. Therefore, it can be expected that they are not very much present in the subtitles of *The L Word*. This is confirmed by Table 3 that shows that out of 106 individual hedges that appear in the show, 100 have been omitted in the translation. Figure 9 below presents the percentage of translation strategies used on hedges:
As can be seen in Figure 9, a vast majority of hedges has been completely omitted from the subtitles. However, there are a small number of hedges that have been either re-created in the subtitles or retained as-is. Two examples of hedge words can be seen in the excerpt below:

3) Oh. You know. Oh… Alice will know.
   - No, kyllähän te tiedätte…
   (Well, you do know…)

The hedge in the original line here is *you know* that, while a hedge, also stands alone as its own sentence. It is interesting to note that the Finnish translation actually contains two hedges. The first hedge is *no*, which is a Finnish equivalent of *well*. The second hedge in the Finnish subtitle is the clitic particle -hAn at the end of the word *kyllähän*. The clitic particle as a translation of a hedge could be considered to be an equivalent of a re-created hedge word. A similar use of the use of -hAn as re-creation of hedge can be seen in the following example:

4) Too late. Her mother put on a plane, she’s back in Milan. She’s a contessa, you know.
   - Äiti laittoi hänet Milanon koneeseen. Hänhän on kreivitär.
   (The mother put her on a plane to Milan. She’s a contessa, after all.)

The full effect of the clitic particle -hAn in the word *hänhän* (*she/he* + -hAn) cannot be truly seen in the English back-translation of the Finnish subtitle. This is due to the fact that -hAn can have several uses depending on the context or the word to which it is attached. According
to Iso suomen kielipäi (scripta.kotus.fi, last accessed 21 March 2014), the purpose of the clitic particle -hAn is to add an implication to a statement, and this implication can vary according to the function of the statement: -hAn can for example imply that something in the statement is already known, express wonderment or sudden realisation, express agreement, or seek agreement when paired with a question. Therefore, the clitic particle -hAn can work to soften the sentence depending on its function, and thus it can be regarded as a feature of Women’s Language in such cases. It should be noted, however, that the use of clitic particles in subtitles can differ from their use in actual speech. In their study, Sonja Tirkkonen-Condit and Jukka Mäkisalo reveal that cohesive elements like clitic particles are used quite frequently in subtitles due to their shortness and multifunctionality (2007: 222). Tirkkonen-Condit and Mäkisalo also state that:

(1) If a cohesive element is short, dialogical and unique, it is likely to appear in Subtitled Language more frequently than in other varieties of Translated Language. (2) If a cohesive element is short, dialogical and unique, it may appear in subtitles even more frequently than in Original Language. (3) If a cohesive element is short, dialogical, and not unique … , it is likely to appear in Subtitled Language more frequently than in other varies of Translated Language and more frequently than in Original Language (Tirkkonen-Condit and Mäkisalo 2007: 229, italics in the original).

Therefore, it is possible that due to the time and space restrictions, clitic particles such as -hAn can appear in subtitles more frequently than in other texts, and possibly more than in actual speech. In translation of The L Word, this point is confirmed with a closer inspection of the re-created hedges (see Appendix 6): out of the five re-created hedges, four contain a clitic particle, and out of these clitic particles, -hAn is the most common.

While most of the hedges present in The L Word have been omitted from the subtitles of the show, possibly due to time and space constraints as well as subtitling conventions, they are not completely absent from the Finnish translation of the show. Most of the hedges transmitted to the Finnish-speaking audience have been re-created, and most of the re-created hedges are presented in the clitic particle form -hAn. However, it has now become evident that it is impossible to provide a fully accurate analysis on hedges through the analysis of the subtitles of the show due to subtitling constraints and conventions.
Translation of like

As can be seen in Table 3, all of the instances of the focuser/quotative like have been completely omitted from the Finnish subtitles of The L Word. This is probably due to the fact that, even more so than tag questions, like operates a filler word and rarely provides anything new to the sentence. Like is, as mentioned in Chapter 5, also the least common Women’s Language Feature in the show.

In Finnish, the closest translation equivalent of like in the Women’s Language context would be the colloquial word niinku, the use of which is, according to the Institute for Language in Finland, generally frowned upon by certain people (www.kotus.fi, last accessed 21 March 2014). Niinku, sometimes written niing or in a similar manner, is especially considered to be part of youth culture, and according to Institute for Language in Finland, some people view it as an unnecessary addition that should be removed from language use. In the same manner as like, niinku is a feature of unplanned colloquial speech and never used in written text unless the writer wants to highlight some fictional character’s use of colloquial speech, for example.

It might be partially due to the reasons mentioned above that like has not been transmitted to the Finnish-speaking audience even though it has a clear equivalent in Finnish spoken language. As niinku is strictly a feature of spoken language, it might attract the viewers’ attention too much in the written subtitles, thus destroying the illusion of the invisibility of subtitles. In addition, niinku is most of all a filler word in the same way as like is, and therefore it would be considered to be extra, unnecessary material in subtitling.

Translation of Intensifiers

As can be seen in Table 3, a relatively high number of intensifiers have been transmitted to the Finnish-speaking audience of The L Word. Figure 10 shows more details about the translation of intensifiers in the show:
As shown in Figure 10, roughly over 55% of the intensifiers in *The L Word* have been omitted from the subtitles, and the rest have been translated in some manner. The percentage of the translated intensifiers is smaller than that of translated tag questions, out of which 50% are translated, but the fact that there are more instances of the use of intensifiers in *The L Word* in general makes their percentage no less significant.

Out of the translated intensifiers, two thirds have been retained with their content and meaning more or less the same as in the source language. An example of this can be seen in the following excerpt:

5) **So nice. So lesbian.**
   - **Miten herttaista. Miten lepakomaista.**
   (How sweet. How lesbian.)

While there are certain differences between the wordings of the original utterance and its translation, they are, in essence, nearly identical in meaning. If the translator had aimed for a precisely word-for-word translation, the translation for *so* would have been *niin* instead of *miten*. However, in this context, the slight change in wording has no effect on the transmission of the original line, and therefore the translation can be considered to be retaining the original message instead of re-creating it.
14.81% of the intensifiers in *The L Word* have been re-created in the translations of the show. In these re-creations, the original intensifier words are not present as such in the subtitles, but instead, the intensifying factor is transmitted to the viewer in some other way. Sometimes the change can be relatively small, such as the use of another intensifier that does not fully correspond to the original line. An example of this can be seen in the following excerpt:

6) Well, it’s *crazy* popular and all the fags I know are doing it.
   - Se on *todella* suosittua, kaikki homot kutovat.
   (It’s *really* popular, all the gays knit.)

Here, the translation of the intensifier *crazy* does not contain retention of the original line because while both the original line and its translation are intensifiers, they are somewhat different in content. A fully retained translation of the original *crazy popular* could be, for example, *hullun suosittua*. Despite the changes in the translation, however, the differences between the original line and its re-creation are relatively minor, as they both present the intensifiers as separate words. The case is different, however, in the following excerpt:

7) You know, I’m still your friend! I’m *totally* your friend, but you can be a little cruel.
   (Of course I am. Sometimes you’re just really mean.)

In the excerpt above, the translation of the intensifier *totally* is dissimilar to the original line. Instead of using a more similar word in the translation, such as *varmasti* (‘certainly’, ‘sure’), the Finnish subtitle resorts to the use of the phrase *totta kai* (‘of course’). However, despite the differences between the choices of wording, the initial message of the intensifier is transmitted to both the English-speaking and the Finnish-speaking audience. Therefore, the intensifier has not been omitted in the Finnish translation, but instead it has been re-created in a new form.

While over half of the intensifiers appearing in *The L Word* have been omitted from the Finnish subtitles, on average the percentage of the translated intensifiers is quite high. Therefore it could be argued that intensifiers are important constituents of lesbian language in both *The L Word* as well as its Finnish translations.
6.2 Translation of Men’s Language Features

As it was stated in Chapter 5, while there are fewer Men’s Language Features than Women’s Language Features present in The L Word on average, there is more consistency between the numbers of Men’s Language Features. For example, the largest Men’s Language Feature group is taboo language with 55 instances, whereas the largest Women’s Language Feature group is hedges with the astounding 106 instances. It should be noted that the large number of hedges affects the overall percentage values of all Women’s Language Features.

The table and graph below present the translation strategies used for Men’s Language Features in The L Word:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translation Strategies in Subtitling Men’s Language in The L Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taboo language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracted forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man/guys/etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11. Translation of Men’s Language

As can be seen in both Table 4 and Figure 11, Men’s Language Features have a much higher translation percentage than Women’s Language Features. Out of Women’s Language Features, 84.67% had been omitted in the Finnish subtitles of the show, whereas only 63.27% of Men’s Language Features have been omitted. It is interesting to note, however, that as
Table 4 shows, the most translated Men’s Language Feature, taboo language, has been translated considerably more times than any other Men’s Language Feature, which in turn may affect the overall translation percentage of Men’s Language Features in *The L Word*. However, it should be noted that all of the Men’s Language Features have been translated in some manner at least once, unlike the Women’s Language Feature *like* which has not been translated at all in the subtitles of *The L Word*. Translation strategies of individual Men’s Language Features will be discussed in subsections below.

**Translation of Taboo Language**

Not only is taboo language the most common Men’s Language Feature in *The L Word*, it is also, as mentioned in the previous section, the most translated Men’s Language Feature of the show. In fact, no other language feature in *The L Word*, either Men’s Language Feature or Women’s Language Feature, has a higher translation percentage than taboo language. The graph below presents the percentage of taboo language translation in *The L Word*:

![Translation of Taboo Language](image)

**Figure 12.** Translation of Taboo Language

As can be seen in Figure 12, a considerably large number of taboo language instances have been translated in some manner, with a total percentage of 58.18%. The number is higher than the translation percentage of any other translated lesbian language feature in *The L Word*. In most translations of taboo language, the original meaning has been retained. It should be noted that retaining the original message in a translation, taboo language or otherwise, does not necessarily mean that the translation is a word-for-word translation. Instead, a retained message in a translation delivers the viewers of the subtitles a message that
is identical in meaning to the original line. An example of such a translation can be seen in the excerpt below:

8) **Fuck you!**
   - **Haista paska.**
   *(Fuck you. (literally: ‘Smell shit’, imperative))*

As can be seen on the literal translation of the Finnish subtitle, *haista paska* is not a word-for-word translation of the original *fuck you*. However, both the original line and its translation operate with the same purpose: to act as an insult or verbal assault. In effect, these uses of taboo language are quite identical in meaning and therefore it can be argued that the Finnish translation acts to retain the message of the original line. Another interesting example of the translation retaining the message of the original line can be seen in the translation of the slang word *dyke* in the excerpt below:

9) **Yeah, especially dykes.**
   - **Ainakin lepakot.**
   *(At least dykes. (literally: ‘At least bats’))*

As mentioned in in Chapter 5, *dyke* is a disparaging term for a lesbian but has lost some of its original negative connotations over the years depending on who uses it and in what situations. In Finnish, the word *lepakko* literally means ‘bat’ (the animal), but in this context it is derived from the word *lesbo* (‘lesbian’), and is used as a slang word that is the rough equivalent of the word *dyke*. An example of a similar use of *dyke* and *lepakko* can be seen in the translated name of the lesbian comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For*. The Finnish name of the comic is *Lepakkoelämää* (the first Finnish translation by Stina Gröneroos in 2000, followed by the sequel *Lepakkoelämää II* translated by Tarja Sahlstén in 2010), which, in this context, means ‘Dyke Life’. Therefore, due to the similar statuses of *dyke* and *lepakko* as slang words, it can be stated that the Finnish subtitles in Example 9 retain the original message of the English line.

While the number of re-created translations of taboo language in *The L Word* is smaller than the number of retained or omitted taboo language features, their percentage is still quite considerable, especially given the large amount of overall taboo language use in the show.
Re-creation in translation of taboo language can contain, for example, a transmission of the message of the original line in a form that is altered so much that it cannot be considered to be a retained message. In some cases, the re-creation can even be considered to be somewhat euphemistic. An example of this can be seen in the excerpt below:

10) I was an asshole.
   - Olin tosi tyly.
   (I was really rude.)

In the example above, the re-creation of the original line is so drastic that the translation cannot be considered to contain a taboo word anymore. Regardless of this, however, the translation succeeds in transmitting the original message to the viewer and therefore the Finnish translation tyly (‘rude’) can be argued to be a re-creation of the original taboo word asshole.

A re-creation of taboo language does not necessarily need to be euphemistic, but the message of the original line can simply be transmitted in a form that is different from the original, grammatically or otherwise. An example of this can be seen in the excerpt below:

11) Aw, quit bein’ such a lez.
   - Lopeta tuo lesbolässytys.
   (Stop that lesbian babbling.)

In the excerpt above, the Finnish translation is in many ways different from the original line and yet retains essentially the same meaning: to instruct someone to stop acting in a manner that is somehow stereotypically lesbian.

As the taboo language used in The L Word is present in the subtitles of the show, even despite the subtitling conventions regarding the translation of swearwords, it can be argued taboo language is a constituent of both English lesbian language and Finnish lesbian language in The L Word.
Translation of Contracted Forms

Contracted forms are, as described in Chapter 5, shortened forms of longer phrases. Like hedges, contracted forms are most of all features of spoken language and, as mentioned in Chapter 5, they are also considered to be informal and colloquial. Therefore it is likely that while contracted forms are amongst the most prominent Men’s Language Features in *The L Word*, most of them have not been translated in the subtitles. This is evident when looking at Table 4 which shows that out of 33 individual instances of contracted forms, 30 have been omitted altogether in the translations. The graph below aims at providing more information on the translation percentage of contracted forms:

![Translation of Contracted Forms](image)

**Figure 13.** Translation of Contracted Forms

As Figure 13 shows, nearly 91% of the contracted forms have been omitted in the subtitles. This makes contracted forms the least translated Men’s Language Feature, and the second least translated lesbian language feature in general, with hedges being the least translated lesbian language feature with an omission percentage of 94.34%.

Like hedges, certain contracted forms have been transmitted to the Finnish-speaking audience through the use of clitic particles. An example of this can be seen in the excerpt below:

12) **Whaddya** think, huh?
    - **Mitäs** sanot?
    (What do you say?)
Here the contracted form *whaddya* has been translated as *mitäs*, a word which contains the clitic particle -s. According to Mizuno (2012: 31-32), the clitic particle -s is a so called tone particle that works to add a certain type of tone to a statement. Mizuno states that in spoken language, -s is often attached to interrogative pronouns kuka, mikä and kuinka (‘who’, ‘what’, ‘how’), regular question words such as oletko and tehdäänkö (‘are you’, ‘shall we do’), imperative verbs anna, sano, kuulkaa, älä, älkää (‘give’, ‘say’, ‘listen’ (plural), ‘do not’ (singular), ‘do not’ (plural)) and clitic particles -pA and -kO. Mizuno continues that the function of the clitic particle -s is to make a statement more colloquial or informal, much like the clitic particle -hAn can do when translating hedges. However, while the translations of hedges with the clitic particle -hAn are considered to be re-creations, this translation of a contracted form with -s is considered to be a retained translation instead. According to Virtuaalinen vanha kielisuomi (http://www.helsinki.fi/vvks/, last accessed 21 March 2014), the clitic particle -s functions as an equivalent for the pronoun sinä (‘you’ (singular)) in the present day Finnish. Therefore the Finnish word mitäs in excerpt 12 is a combination of both the word mitä (‘what’) and sinä (‘you’), and thus it can be considered to be a retained form of *whaddya*, which is a combination of the words ‘what’, ‘do’ and ‘you’.

While certain contracted forms have been translated in the Finnish subtitles, most of them have been omitted from the subtitles completely. Therefore it would appear that contracted forms are not an essential part of the translated lesbian language of the show. One must consider, however, that Finnish language has also its own versions of contracted forms that can be different from the English contracted forms. For example, the English contracted form dunno constitutes of several words (*do* + *not* + *know*) that have been merged into a single word. In Finnish, words are not often merged together like this, but instead, contracted forms are created by simply shortening individual words by removing letters from them. Examples of this are such word abbreviations as minä → mä (‘I’, ‘me’) and puhui → puhu (‘he/she/it spoke’). Like English contracted forms, Finnish contracted forms are essentially features of colloquial speech, which is one of the possible reasons as to why they are not present in the Finnish subtitles of *The L Word*.

**Translation of man/guys**

The words denoting brotherhood, such as man and guys, are not very common in *The L Word* when compared to the numbers of some other language features, and their translation percentage is even lower. Out of ten instances of the uses of *man/guys*, nine have been
omitted in the translations. This means that only 10% of *man/guys* instances have been translated, as demonstrated by Figure 14:

![Translation of man/guys](image)

**Figure 14.** Translation of *man/guys*

As with the word *like*, the translation of *man/guys* has been based solely on re-creation, and none of the instances of this language feature have been retained as-is. This has most likely to do with different language cultures and ways of addressing people. One of the possible Finnish translation equivalents for *guys* would be, for example, *jätkät*, which is most often used solely to address males. While Finnish has plenty of gender-neutral ways of addressing people, an all-female group is rarely addressed by a decidedly masculine word like *jätkät*. The excerpt below contains the only instance in episodes 02-01 and 02-02 of *The L Word* in which *guys* has been translated in some manner. In other instances, these words have not been translated in any manner or replaced with any word.

13) **Guys.**
   
   - **Mimmit, hei...**
   
   (Girls, hey...)

While *guys* has been translated in the example above, its translation is the feminine word *mimmit* (‘girls’). For the reasons given above, the use of a feminine word in the Finnish translation might be a better option than using a masculine word which might seem strange to the Finnish viewers. However, it should be noted that on some occasions, the translator might have the option of using a more gender-neutral form of address such as, for example, *kaverit* (‘pals’).
As most of the instances of the words *guys* and *man* have not been translated, and the sole translation of those words makes use of a feminine word instead, it could be argued that such forms of address denoting masculinity do not exist in the lesbian language in Finnish translations of *The L Word*. It is possible, however, that Finnish lesbians can use some other ways to create solidarity, for example through the use of such words as *lepakko* (as used in Excerpt 9). Nevertheless, it is evident that masculine forms of address are not part of Finnish lesbian language in *The L Word*.

### 6.3 Main Findings: Translation of Lesbian Language

The discussion on the translation of lesbian language features in *The L Word* has shown that most of the features analysed in this paper have been omitted from the Finnish subtitles of the show altogether. In theory, this could be an indicator that the Finnish lesbian language does not contain the same linguistic features as English lesbian language, or even that there is no Finnish lesbian language. However, as it has been stated in several subsections, one must take into consideration the conventions and constraints of subtitling, which were discussed in detail in Chapter 3. One of the subtitling conventions is to cut out all the unnecessary material and include only the information that is essential for the reader’s understanding. Therefore such language features as hedges and other filler words are not usually included in the subtitles. However, in some cases the colloquial aspects of certain language features can be re-created in the subtitles. In fact, certain language features in *The L Word* have not been translated using retention at all, and instead, all of their translations are re-creations. Figure 15 presents the overall percentage of the translation solutions for all lesbian language features in the show:
As can be seen in Figure 15, only a little less than 25% of the lesbian language features in *The L Word* have been translated, either with the use of retention or re-creation. Out of these two translation strategies, retention is slightly more common than re-creation. However, the number of individual lesbian language features that have been retained in the translations is quite small, as can be seen in the graph below:

**Figure 15.** Translated Lesbian Language

Only five out of the seven lesbian language features have been retained in the Finnish subtitles of *The L Word*. It should be noted that the percentage values shown in the graph portray how many instances of a specific language feature has been translated, not the
number of one retained language feature in comparison to the rest of the retained language
features. For example, the graph shows that out of all tag questions in *The L Word*, 30% have
been retained in the translation.

Out of the five retained lesbian language features, the number of hedges is the lowest. It is
actually surprising that the translation of hedges contains retention at all, as hedges are
mostly considered to be filler words and part of especially spoken language, and would not
usually be included in subtitles. The same applies to tag questions as well, though they are
not constituents of spoken language to the same degree as hedges. While intensifiers can also
be considered to be filler words to some extent, their translation percentage is not very
surprising as they are not tied solely to spoken language. Taboo language has the highest
percentage of the retained translations in *The L Word*. While there are subtitling conventions
regarding the translation of taboo language and especially swearwords, the high amount of
retained taboo language translations is not very surprising.

Re-created translations consist of a larger number of individual lesbian language features than
retained translations. While only five language features have been retained in the Finnish
subtitles of *The L Word*, six out of seven language features have been re-created. The only
language feature that has not been translated at all is the word *like*. However, most of the
translation percentages of individual re-created language features are not as high as those of
the retained language features.

![Comparison of Re-created Translation Percentage](image)

**Figure 17.** Comparison of Re-created Translation Percentage
The amount of re-created translation of certain features of spoken language, such as hedges and contracted forms, is higher than that of their retained translations. While the percentage of retained hedges is only 0.94%, the percentage of their re-created translations is 4.71%. It should still be noted, however, that even amongst the re-created translations, hedges are present the least. The re-creating translation of spoken language features in Finnish subtitles is possible because of certain linguistic devices such as clitic particles, and for example several of the re-created translations of hedges contain the clitic particle -hAn. In addition to the presence of clitic particles in some of the re-created translations, many of the re-creations have been created by changing the language features in the translations in some manner. Such is the case of, for example, substituting the original *guys* by the female word *mimmit* (‘girls’) in the translation. In such a case the translation cannot be considered to be an omission, as the original word has been translated in some manner; an omission would be the complete absence of any translation of the language feature.

Omission is by far the most utilised translation strategy in the subtitling of *The L Word*. This is the case especially for hedges and contracted forms, both of which are, as mentioned before, essentially features of spoken language. The most omitted lesbian language feature, however, is the word *like* which is completely omitted from the Finnish translation of the show. Figure 18 presents the overall percentage of the lesbian language features that have been omitted:

![Comparison of Omitted Translation Percentage](image)

**Figure 18.** Comparison of Omitted Translation Percentage
The lesbian language feature with the least omission is taboo language, with the omission percentage of 41.82%. This is likely due to the fact that unlike certain other lesbian language features, taboo language is not tied solely to spoken language. However, this is not the case for all such lesbian language features. The words *man* and *guys* have a high omission percentage of 90%, and the word *like* has been omitted completely from the translation.

All in all it can be stated that out of the lesbian language features examined in this paper, the ones that are the most present in the Finnish subtitles of *The L Word* are tag questions, intensifiers and taboo language, and all of these language features have been both retained and re-created in the subtitles of the show as well. It should be noted, however, that while certain lesbian language features have been mostly or entirely omitted from the Finnish subtitles of *The L Word*, they are not necessarily absent from Finnish lesbian language altogether. This is especially the case for the features associated with spoken language that are large in numbers in the English lesbian language of the show. For example, there are, in total 106 hedges appearing in the speech of the lesbian characters of the show, but out of them, only 5.66% have been translated in some manner. This is not necessarily an indicator of hedges being completely absent in Finnish lesbian language; there is a considerable possibility that most of them have not been transmitted to the Finnish-speaking audience because of subtitling constraints and conventions.
7. CONCLUSION

The language of homosexuals, and especially lesbian language, is still a relatively mystifying subject in the field of linguistic research. There are a number of studies that examine whether or not lesbian language exists, and few of them agree completely on the existence of lesbian language and its possible features. However, most of these studies have been conducted on the language of English-speaking lesbians, and the language of lesbians who speak some other language has not received as much attention. The translation of the speech of English-speaking lesbians into other languages has generally been left without analysis as well. This thesis was written in order to examine the possible features of lesbian language in *The L Word*, as well as the translation of English lesbian language features into Finnish.

This paper has had two aims: firstly, to analyse how the stereotyped lesbian language features are present in *The L Word*, and secondly, to study how these language features have been transmitted to the Finnish-speaking audience of the show. The underlying assumption of the study has been that at least some of the lesbian language features are present in *The L Word*, and that there is great variation between their numbers. It has also been assumed that a number of different translation strategies have been used in the translation of the lesbian language features. *The L Word* was selected as the research material because it has a vast number of different female queer characters and speech situations, and also because it is the only television series where most of the major recurring characters are lesbians. In addition, as *The L Word* is a fictional series portraying the lesbian life, it can be assumed that the characters possess somewhat stereotypical qualities often associated with lesbians. As Fiscus (2011) states,

“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 ... because *The L Word* has the power to shape norms” (Fiscus 2011: 100).

Because of the somewhat stereotyping way *The L Word* portrays lesbians, it provides excellent material for inspecting both the stereotyped lesbian language features, as well as their translation.
In order to analyse the presence and translation of lesbian language features, the features were divided into two broad main categories: Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features. These main categories were, in turn, divided into a number of subcategories: Women’s Language Features consisted of tag questions, hedges, intensifiers, and the use of the word *like*, whereas Men’s Language Features consisted of taboo language, contracted forms, and the use of the forms of address denoting brotherhood such as *man* and *guys*. This categorisation was based on the previous research conducted on lesbian language, namely that of Queen (1997) and Fiscus (2011), both of which examine lesbian language through an analysis on specific stereotyped language features rather than analysing, for example, the construction of lesbian community through conversation, as Morrish and Sauntson (2007) and Morrish and Leap (2007) do.

A certain amount of discoveries was made in regards both of the aims and the assumptions of the thesis. It was discovered that all of the examined lesbian language features are present in *The L Word* to some degree. However, because of the small number of certain language features, such as the word *like*, it can be argued that not all of these features are actually part of the lesbian language in *The L Word* as such. Some other language features, such as hedges and taboo language, are so prominent in the language use of the lesbian and bisexual characters that they can be considered to be constituents of lesbian language of the show. Because of the results made during the analysis, it can be stated that the female queer characters in *The L Word* speak in a somewhat stereotyped way and utilise both Women’s Language Features and Men’s Language Features in their speech. It should be noted that the stereotyped language features are not necessarily restricted to the ones examined in this paper, and therefore a more extensive analysis on lesbian language is possible.

During the analysis of the translation of the lesbian language features in *The L Word*, the translated language features were divided into three separate groups based on the translation strategies used on them: the retained language features, the re-created language features, and the omitted language features. It was discovered that most of the lesbian language features had been omitted in the Finnish subtitles, some of them to a greater degree than the others. Especially the language features associated with spoken language, such as hedges and contracted forms, were mostly absent from the translations. The large amounts of omission were most likely caused by the subtitling constraints and conventions which were discussed in Chapter 3, and do not necessarily indicate that the omitted lesbian language features would
be completely absent from Finnish lesbian language. Certain other language features, however, had relatively high translation percentages either through retention or re-creation. These language features were taboo language, tag questions and intensifiers.

The findings of the thesis could be summarised thus: most of the stereotyped lesbian language features selected for this study are present in the speech of the lesbian characters in *The L Word*. In addition, some of these lesbian language features are present in the Finnish translations of the show, which indicates that lesbian language as examined in this study is translatable from English to Finnish to a certain degree. However, while this paper has aimed at providing a good overview of both the features of lesbian language as well as their translation, the possible research on lesbian language is nowhere near finished. First of all, this paper has examined the lesbian language features in only two episodes of *The L Word*. The reason for this lies most of all in the fact that this paper did not focus its analysis only on the linguistic aspects of lesbian language, but their translation as well. For example Fiscus’s study (Fiscus 2011), which focused on the butch/femme binary of the characters’ speech in *The L Word*, examined the entire Season 1 of the show. Secondly, it is entirely possible that the total number of stereotyped lesbian language features is not restricted solely to the features inspected in this paper, which creates a possibility for more research on lesbian language. Some of the future research could also move past the analysis of specific language features in fictional series and focus on, for example, the interaction of real-life lesbians amongst each other or perhaps on their language with which they construct their lesbian identity. Fiscus (2011), for example, suggests that prominent lesbians in the media could be analysed to see how actual lesbians speak while in the context of media representation (Fiscus 2011: 102). From the translational point of view, there are even more possibilities for future research on the translation on lesbian language, as this kind of research is nearly non-existent. Possible study areas range from, for example, the translation of lesbian literature to the translation of the speech of real-life lesbian public media figures, such as, for example, Ellen DeGeneres. Some of the research could even examine the speech of both English-speaking lesbians and the lesbians from other language, and compare their features and other aspects with each other. All in all, there is a nearly a countless amount of opportunities for future research on how lesbians speak, how they construct their language, and express their lesbian identity through their language use, as well as for how a language of a sexual minority group can be and has been translated.
WORKS CITED

Primary Sources:

*The L Word*, Season 2 episodes 01 and 02, translated by Hanna Toivanen of Broadcast Text International

Secondary Sources:


LAKOFF, R. 1975. Language and a Woman’s Place. In Language and Society 2: 45-80.


**Electronic Sources**


### APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Non-normalised Total Number of Women’s Language Features per Character

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tag questions</th>
<th>Hedges</th>
<th>Use of ‘like’</th>
<th>Intensifiers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bette</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shane</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonya</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>106</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 2. Non-normalised Total Number of Men’s Language Features per Character

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Taboo words</th>
<th>Contracted forms</th>
<th>Man/guys/etc.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bette</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmen</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shane</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonya</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>98</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3. Total Number of Words per Character

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Alice</th>
<th>Bette</th>
<th>Carmen</th>
<th>Dana</th>
<th>Jenny</th>
<th>Robin</th>
<th>Shane</th>
<th>Tina</th>
<th>Tonya</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ep 01</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>3406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep 02</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>3155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1096</td>
<td>1144</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>6561</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 4. List of Tag Questions, Hedges, and Intensifiers Counted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tag Questions</th>
<th>Hedges</th>
<th>Intensifiers</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>don’t they</td>
<td>ah</td>
<td>absolutely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have they</td>
<td>I didn’t think</td>
<td>completely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>right</td>
<td>I don’t think</td>
<td>crazy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I guess</td>
<td>pretty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I mean</td>
<td>really</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think</td>
<td>so</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kind of</td>
<td>totally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kinda</td>
<td>way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>oh</td>
<td>very</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sort of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>uh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>um</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ya know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>you know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5. List of Contracted Forms and Taboo Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contracted Forms</th>
<th>Taboo Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c’mere</td>
<td>dammit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c’mon</td>
<td>dildo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dunno</td>
<td>dykes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gonna</td>
<td>fags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gotta</td>
<td>fuck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kinda</td>
<td>fuck me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outta</td>
<td>fuck you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wanna</td>
<td>fuck you up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whaddya</td>
<td>fucked up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kinda</td>
<td>fucking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fucking bullshit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fucks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>god</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pecker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>peckers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>poopie shit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>schtupping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shitty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6. List of Re-created Women’s Language Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Tag Questions</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You don’t mind, right?</td>
<td>Sopiiko kaikille?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey, they know that we’re getting married. Don’t they?</td>
<td>Eivätkö he tiedäkin häistä?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hedges</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She’s a contessa, you know.</td>
<td>Hänhän on kreivitär.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Smash Box, but, you know.</td>
<td>Ei Smashbox, mutta…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well, I knew it that it was your drink, Sharon.</td>
<td>Sehän on lempijuomasi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well, you know that we’ve set a date.</td>
<td>Meillähän on häät tulossa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ah, you’re welcome.</td>
<td>Olepa hyvä.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘So’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So how’s Tina?</td>
<td>Entäs Tina?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Intensifiers**

| Well, it’s crazy popular and all the fags I know are doing it. | Se on todella suosittua, kaikki homot kutovat. |
|It’s totally cool.                                                | Tietysti.                                        |
|I’m totally your friend, but you can be a little cruel!          | Totta kai olen. Sinä vain olet joskus tosi ilkeä. |

Appendix 7. List of Re-created Men’s Language Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Taboo Language</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Well, it’s crazy popular and all the fags I know are doing it.</td>
<td>Se on todella suosittua, kaikki homot kutovat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This coffee tastes like poopie shit!</td>
<td>Kahvi maistuu vauvankakalle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aw, quit bein’ such a lez!</td>
<td>Lopeta tuo lesbolässytyys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m doing her hair, Al, I’m not gonna fuck her.</td>
<td>Hoidan hänen tukkansa, en häntä.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you fuck all night before you told her I was the love of your life this morning?!</td>
<td>Naitteko koko yön ennen kuin kerroit, että olen elämäsi rakkaus?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What the fuck is he talking about with the flavoring?</td>
<td>Mitä hittoa, makusiirappia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was an asshole.</td>
<td>Olin tosi tyly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well, it doesn’t mean that… we can’t fuck.</td>
<td>Voimme silti naida.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You want to fuck me?</td>
<td>Haluatko naida minua?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Contracted forms**                    |                                                        |
|That’s what I’m gonna write for L.A. Magazine. | Siitä voinkin kirjoittaa lehteen. |
|You’re gonna love Ling-Ling.            | Tykästyt varmasti Ling Lingiin.                       |

| **Man/guys**                            |                                                        |
|Guys.                                    | Mimmit, hei…                                          |
FINNISH SUMMARY


Homojen ja lesbojen kieli


Fiscusin tutkimuksen lailla tämä tutkimus jaotteli lesbokielen piirteet naisten kielen piirteisiin ja miesten kielen piirteisiin. Tutkimuksessa käsitellyihin naisten kielen piirteisiin kuuluivat liitekysymykset, varauksellisuutta ilmaisevat sanat, sanan like käyttö sekä vahvistussanat. Tutkimuksen miesten kielen piirteisiin kuuluivat tabusanat, lyhennetyt sanamuodot sekä sanojen man ja guys käyttö.
Audiovisuaalinen kääntäminen

Audiovisuaalinen kääntäminen on yleistä Suomessa varsinkin televisiotekstitysten saralla, ja suuri osa suomalaisten päivittäin lukemasta tekstistä on peräisin tekstityksistä. Tekstittämisellä on kuitenkin tietyjä rajoitteita, jotka vaikuttavat siihen, mitä ohjelman tai elokuvan alkuperäisestä ääniraidasta voidaan välittää kohdekielisille katsojille.


Yllä mainitut tekstitysrajoitteet vaikuttavat myös siihen, miten tietyt lesbokielen piirteet on käännetty L-koodissa. Rajoitteiden vuoksi tietyjä lesbokielen piirteitä ei vältämättä esiinny lähes lainkaan sarjan tekstityksissä, ja tietyt piirteet kuten tabusanan saattavat esiintyä eri muodoissa.
Aineisto ja sen analyysi


14,11 % L-koodin lesbokielen piirteistä olivat käännetty sellaisenaan, ja näitä piirteitä oli viisi: liitekysymykset, varauksellisuutta ilmaisevat sanat, vahvistussanat, lyhennetyt sanamuodot ja tabusanat. Näistä piirteistä tabusanojen määrä oli suurin. Huomattavaa on kuitenkin se, että sellaisenaan käännettyt piirteet sisälsivät myös täyttesanoja kuten liitekysymys-sanoja, jotka yleensä jätetään kääntämättä tekstitysrajoitteiden vuoksi. 9,68 % L-koodin lesbokielen piirteistä olivat käännetty jotenkin muunnellussa muodossa. Näihin piirteisiin kuului liitekysymys-sanoja, varauksellisuutta ilmaisevia sanoja, vahvistussanoja, tabusanoja, lyhennetyjä sanamuotoja sekä *man-* ja *guys-*sanojen käyttöä. Kääntämättä jätettyjen lesbokielen piirteiden määrä oli 76,21 %, joten suurinta osaa L-koodin lesbokielen piirteistä ei ollut käännetty missään muodossa jaksojen suomenkielisissä tekstityksissä. 94,34 % varauksellisuutta ilmaisevista sanoiasta ei ollut käännetty lainkaan, ja sana *like* oli jätetty kokonaan kääntämättä. Myös suuri osa lyhennetyistä sanamuodoista oli jätetty kokonaan kääntämättä. Syyynä tähän saattavat olla tekstittämistä koskevat rajoitteet varsinkin varauksellisuutta ilmaisevien sanojen ja lyhennetyjen sanamuotojen kohdalla.
