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Speaking as a Lesbian: Correcting the Heterosexist Presumption

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In this article, we explore lesbian lives "beyond the closet" (Seidman, Meeks, & Traschen, 2002) through an empirical analysis of conversational data in which lesbian speakers make their sexual identities apparent. We analyze when and how lesbian identities become interactionally relevant and in particular, the ways in which lesbian speakers challenge—or (sometimes) fail to challenge—the heterosexist presumption of their coconversationalists. Drawing on a data set of 150 tape-recorded telephone calls from 5 lesbian households in England, we show how, in calls to family and friends, lesbian speakers index their (already-known) lesbianism in the same ways as heterosexuals index their heterosexuality (Kitzinger, 2005c): via joking and sexual innuendo, topic talk, and person reference practices. By contrast, in institutional calls, lesbian speakers frequently have to manage the presumption that they are heterosexual—and we examine the ways in which they do this: through electing *not* to come out (passing up the opportunity for repair), through coming out explicitly (exposed correction), and through coming out discreetly (embedded correction). Our analysis contributes to conversation analysis work on membership categorization, person reference, repair and correction; and to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered work on being closeted, passing, and coming out. Coming out disrupts tacit assumptions about the taken-for-granted world, showing that unlike heterosexuality, homosexuality is not (yet) a "routinized" or "normalized" sexual identity.

Heterosexism—the privileging of heterosexuality as the only "normal," "natural," and taken-for-granted sexuality—underpins legislation

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and social policy across the world. In many countries, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) people are imprisoned, tortured, raped, forced to undergo so-called medical or psychiatric treatment in state institutions, and executed because of their sexual identities (Amnesty International, 1999, 2001). Heterosexism includes hate crimes against LGBT people—bullying, gay bashing, murder (Herek, 1998), antilesbian and antigay legislation, attempts at conversion "therapies" (King, Smith, & Bartlet, 2004; Smith, Bartlett, & King, 2004), and the expression of blatantly homophobic attitudes. However, as other researchers have observed, the problem of heterosexism goes deeper than this: It is woven into the warp and weft of social interaction—affecting where we go, whom we touch, how we talk, what we say in our everyday lives. "Heterosexuality is sustained not only at the institutional level, but through our everyday sexual and social practices" (Jackson, 2003, p. 80). Heterosexism is implicated both in the oppression of LGBT people and, by the same token, confers privileges on heterosexuals (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1993). The research we report here contributes to recent studies of "subtle (hetero)sexism" and "micro-inequalities" (Benokraitis, 1997; Haslett & Lipman, 1997; Peel, 2001) by using conversation analysis (CA) of naturalistic data to document mundane heterosexism in action.

In previous analyses, Kitzinger (2005b, 2005c) showed how heterosexuality is deployed as a taken-for-granted resource in ordinary interactions. Coconversationalists routinely produce themselves, and each other, as heterosexual, thereby coconstituting a normative taken-for-granted heterosexual world. In the research we report here, we further develop our analysis of the production of heteronormativity as an ongoing, situated, practical accomplishment. Based on a corpus of calls collected from lesbian[1] households, we analyze how lesbian speakers and their coconversationalists negotiate the heteronormative social world.

In this article, we contribute both to LGBT studies and to the field of CA. To LGBT studies, we offer a contribution to "rethinking the sociology of the closet" (Seidman, Meeks, & Traschen, 2002, p. 429) based on an empirical analysis of conversational data in which lesbians make their sexual identities apparent. Research on LGBT identities, like research on others with "discreditable" stigmatized identities (Goffman, 1963), has focused on issues of secrecy and identity management: Concepts of exposure and disclosure, the closet, passing, coming out, and outing are all "foundational to accounts of modern homosexuality" (Seidman et al., 2002, p. 427). However, researchers recently commented on "the declining significance

of the closet" (Seidman et al., 2002, p. 440) in contemporary lesbian and gay lives and pointed to the increasing "normalization" and "routinization" of homosexuality and suggested that many lesbian and gay people today live "beyond the closet" (Seidman et al., 2002). However, the research on which such claims are based rests (like most LGBT sociological work) on interviews with lesbians and gay men about when, where, why, how, and to whom they reveal (or conceal) their gay identities. In the research we present here, we show data in which instead of talking *about* identity management issues to an interviewer, lesbians are actively engaged in managing their identities "live" as part of the ongoing business of their interactions. We use our analysis of these data to reflect on the extent to which lesbianism has been normalized and routinized at least in the everyday lives of the speakers in our data set and to consider the role of the closet in contemporary lesbian lives.

In this article, we also make three key contributions to the field of CA. First, through our exploration of when and how lesbian identities become interactionally relevant, we build on previous analysis (Kitzinger, 2005b) of the deployment of membership categories (e.g., Sacks, 1995, Lecture 6) and person reference forms (e.g., Sacks & Schegloff, 1979; Schegloff, 1996) in ordinary conversation. Second (as an outcome of the analysis rather than as an a priori research aim), we contribute to the development of conversation analytic knowledge about the operation and management of correction in conversation (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977)—most especially embedded correction (Jefferson, 1987) because it so happens that lesbian speakers in our data set recurrently correct their coconversationalists' taken-for-granted presumption that they are heterosexual, and in doing so, they routinely deploy an embedded correction format. Our analysis of the correction sequences in our data explores some of the interactional contingencies that drive embedded (vs. exposed) correction and embedded (vs. exposed) receipts of those corrections. Finally, and most fundamentally, in this research, we contribute to and further develop the ethnomethodological preoccupation with how the commonsense knowledge that constitutes the mundane reality of social members is displayed and deployed in interaction (Garfinkel, 1967). We show a variety of ways in which heteronormativity is displayed in talk in interaction and how this is managed by the interactants. Our analysis focuses particularly on how lesbian interactants manage their deviation from the (displayed as) taken-for-granted heterosexual reality of coconversationalists who are strangers to them, how they correct (or pass up the opportunity to correct) the heterosexist pre-

sumption of their coconversationalist, and how both they and those coconversationalists whose heterosexist presumption has been corrected manage the ongoing interaction.

In contributing to CA, we are building especially on Jefferson's (1987) important analysis of exposed versus embedded correction, and we begin by summarizing that analysis here. According to Jefferson, instead of doing correction as the main business of the talk (i.e., through other-initiated repair), people can embed correction in the continuing interaction. Whereas exposed correction is a form of other-initiated repair, embedded correction is a method for doing correction without doing repair at all, "as a by-the-way occurrence in some ongoing course of talk" (Jefferson, 1987, p. 95). Whereas exposed correction halts the ongoing progressivity of the sequence to do the correction (as in Fragment 1 following), in embedded correction, the correction is incorporated into a sequentially relevant next turn (as in Fragment 2 following) and does not rise to the conversational surface:

Fragment 1 ENGINE (from Jefferson 1987, p. 87)
Example of Exposed Correction
[GTS:II:2:54]

01	Mum:	And they told me how I could stick a th-uh::
02		Thunderbird motor? (0.5) in my Jeep? And I
03		bought a fifty five [Thunderbird motor.
04	Rog:	[Not motor, engine. You
05		speak of [electric motor and a gasoline engine
06	Ken:	[Okay
07	Ken:	Engine. [Okay-
08	Rog:	[Internal combus:tion.
09	Ken:	Alright, So [lookit, I moved this thing in the
10		Jeep

Here, Ken's telling is halted by the exposed correction sequence that extends from line 4 to line 9, and the whole of Roger's turn at lines 4 through 5 is devoted to correcting Ken's error and to instructing him as to the correct terminology. By contrast, in the embedded correction displayed in Fragment 2 following, the speaker, in the course of producing the relevant next action, uses a form of reference alternative to that selected by a prior speaker, thereby making available to the prior speaker that a possible correction is being done but without suspending the ongoing progressivity of the talk to do correction:

Fragment 2 COPS (from Jefferson, 1987, p. 93)
Example of Embedded Correction (correction accepted)
[GTS:II:60:ST]

01	Ken:	Well- if you're gonna race, the police have
02		said this to us.
03	Rog:	That makes it even better. The challenge of
04		running from the cops!
05	Ken:	The cops say if you wanna race, uh go out at
06		four or five in the morning on the freeway …

Here, Ken's use of "police" is corrected in an embedded format when Roger, in the course of assessing the information given by Ken in his prior turn, offers a candidate correction by selecting a term ("cops," line 4) alternative to that used by Ken ("police," line 1)—and when Ken speaks again he accepts the correction, using "cops" in his subsequent talk (line 6). The hallmark of an embedded correction, then, is the use of a different referent by next speaker in a turn implementing a sequentially relevant action.

Embedded corrections include instances when the corrected speaker accepts correction and instances when they reject it. In Fragment 2, the first speaker accepts correction by deploying the corrected term in his own subsequent talk (line 5). In Fragment 3 following, Milly's use of "tomorrow eve" (line 6) is corrected in an embedded format when Adele, in the course of agreeing with or confirming Milly's attempt to establish when New Years falls, offers a candidate correction by selecting a term "tomorrow night" (line 8) alternative to that used by Milly ("tomorrow eve," line 6). Here, the first speaker rejects the embedded correction by continuing to use her original term in her next turn (line 10):

Fragment 3 NEW YEARS EVE (from Jefferson, 1987, p. 94)
Example of Embedded Correction (correction rejected)
[SBL:3:6:4]

01	Ade:	Do you think they might go tomorrow,
02	Mil:	Oh I don't think so,
03	Ade:	Oh dear. They're ([ )
04	Mil:	[No I don't think until
05		after uh (0.2) after New Years now cause uh
06		New Y- New Years is tomorrow eve [isn't it.
07	Ade:	[It's
08		tomorrow night
09		uh huh,

10 Mil: Yeah tomorrow eve,
11 (1.5)

Finally, irrespective of whether the correction (more precisely, the initiation of the correction) is exposed or embedded, the subsequent acceptance or rejection of the correction can be done in either exposed or embedded format. So, an exposed correction can be accepted in an exposed format (Fragment 1, ENGINE; also our Fragment 22, SECOND CAR INSURANCE), rejected in an exposed format (see Jefferson, 1987, p. 90, Example 10), accepted in an embedded format (see Jefferson, 1987, p. 98, Example 24) or (presumably—although we have no instances of this) rejected in an embedded format. Likewise, an embedded correction can be accepted in an embedded format (Fragment 2, COPS; also our Fragment 20a, CAR INSURANCE), rejected in an embedded format (see Fragment 3, NEW YEARS EVE), accepted in an exposed format (our Fragment 24, DENTIST), or (although again we have no instances) rejected in an exposed format. In other words, the form of the correction initiation (embedded vs. exposed) does not *determine* the form of the recipient's acceptance/rejection of it (although it surely shapes it).

Researchers have barely begun to explore the interactional contingencies that guide the selection of one or other form of correction or of one or other form of acceptance/rejection of it. Although Jefferson (1987, p. 100, footnote 4) offers some intriguing speculations about instances when a correction is initiated using one format and accepted/rejected using another, she displayed only one instance of an exposed correction followed by an embedded acceptance (Jefferson, 1987, p. 98, Example 24) and reported not having yet captured an instance of an embedded correction followed by an exposed acceptance/rejection. In the data analyses that follow, we show instances of a range of different correction initiations and acceptances (some embedded, some exposed), and our analyses of these sequences contribute to CA an exploration of some of the interactional contingencies at stake.

DATA

The Land data corpus (collected by V. Land as part of her doctoral research under the supervision of C. Kitzinger) consists of (so far) 150 telephone conversations ranging in length from about 10 sec to over 40 min,

comprising the ingoing and outgoing calls of five lesbian households in England.[2] Participants were recruited through advertisements placed in LGBT publications and meeting places. Each of the five volunteers completed an informed consent form for herself and undertook to obtain informed consent from everyone she recorded. The recording equipment was set up and operated by the volunteers who were free to choose which of their conversations to record and also which, if any, to delete before mailing the tapes to V. Land. All identifying names (of people and of places) and other personal details have been changed. The resulting data corpus includes conversations between these five volunteers (and, in three cases, their coresidential partners) and their friends, family members, and institutional contacts (e.g., doctors' and dentists' receptionists, plumbers, insurance salespeople, employers, phone companies, etc.).

INDEXING LESBIANISM WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS: INVOKING AN ALREADY KNOWN IDENTITY

In many ways, these lesbians exemplify what Seidman et al. (2002) called "lives beyond the closet" (p. 11). They are open about their lesbianism to an extent that would have been unthinkable to most lesbians in Britain only a few decades ago when we were routinely characterized as an "invisible minority" inhabiting a shady twilight world characterised by secrecy, shame, and concealment (Lee, 1977; Potter & Darty, 1981; Pillard, 1982). All of the lesbian volunteers were open about their lesbianism to their families, friends, and (as far as we could tell) colleagues. Same-sex partners were regularly mentioned in the course of mundane conversations about holidays, travel plans, and social events, and LGBT issues and activities were mentioned in conversations with heterosexual family members as when Rebecca told her Dad that she'd "entered a gay talent contest" (SW34) or when Chloe asked whether her Mum had watched a television programme called "Making Babies the Gay Way" (YU24). The parents of the three volunteers with partners routinely asked after the partner's well-being—and in some cases had extended conversations with their daughter's partner (e.g., about the pros and cons of accepting a job offer [YU01] or about experiences with a spirit medium [YU04]). All five were involved (at least intermittently) in LGBT groups and in lesbian and gay friendship networks. Clearly, the five lesbians who happened to volunteer for this re-

search project cannot be taken as typical representatives of any constituency, but we emphasize the extent to which they are already out with friends and family because this provides the backdrop against which to understand their identity management in interactions with strangers in the institutional calls on which the major part of this article focuses.

When lesbians talk to coconversationalists who already know they are lesbian, they index their lesbianism in exactly the same ways as heterosexuals make available their heterosexuality, with one significant exception. Discriminatory marriage laws mean that same-sex couples are excluded from the institution of civil marriage in the United Kingdom—and although British couples may legally marry in those countries that *do* permit it, these marriages are not currently accepted as legal in the United Kingdom (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2005). This means that same-sex couples in the United Kingdom do not normally use the person reference terms *husband* and *wife* (the most common alternative in our data is the term *partner;* see Fragments 6, 23, and 24) or refer to their partner's relatives as *in-laws* (Land & Kitzinger, 2005a). By contrast, these person reference terms are one of the main ways in which heterosexuals signal their heterosexuality (Kitzinger, 2005c). The Anglo American heterosexual convention that a wife takes her husband's name on marriage makes possible another reference form indexing heterosexual coupledom: reference to persons as *the Havershams* or *the Browns* (Kitzinger, 2005c). Unlike heterosexuals, however, same-sex couples do not usually[3] have the same surname and cannot be so referenced. With this exception, lesbians make available hearings of themselves and others as lesbians in pretty much the same ways in which heterosexuals make available hearings of themselves as heterosexuals. Each of the following maps on to a method of heterosexual display previously analyzed in Kitzinger (2005c).

Explicit Sexual References, Joking, and Innuendo

In the classic data sets, the most explicit heterosexual references are in the form of sexual joking, banter, reports of (hetero)sexual activity, and innuendo (see Kitzinger, 2005c). By comparison with this heterosexual talk, there is relatively little explicitly sexual talk in our data, and the following are the only two instances (note that the first also includes heterosexual innuendo). In Fragment 4, two friends are discussing Janet's health problems, and at line 2, Janet (who is heterosexual) alludes to sexual activity

with her male partner, leading Julie (whom Janet knows to be lesbian and to live with her female partner) to launch a telling about her own sexual activities:

Fragment 4 RAMPANT STAGE
[Land: SW15]

01	Jan:	Well I 'aven't checked my boobs
02		[or nothing] but Rick had a good feel=
03	Jul:	[((sniff))]
03	Jan:	= last night an' 'e didn't no(h)tice
04		an(h)ythi(h)ng.
05	Jul:	No well- Yeah we 'ad a good rampant
06		stage thee other night as well.

In Fragment 5, Karen (who has only recently become a lesbian), reports to one friend the reaction of another to her new haircut:

Fragment 5 KNOCKING KNEES
[Land: NE06]

01	Kar:	.hhh an' uh sh(h)e sa(h)id she's ever so
02		wry .hhh she sez she sez she can't wait to
03		see what kind of reaction I get tonight
04		meaning huh how many people are going to
05		come on to you huh huh huh huh huh uh I
06		said "I don't know about that Veronica" I
07		sez "I'm still- my knees are still
08		knocking in some ways" huh huh huh huh huh
09		huhuh

Topic Talk

Kitzinger's (2005) earlier study found that one of the most common ways in which heterosexuality—either the speaker's or a third party's—was displayed in the classic CA data sets was through topic talk about heterosexual relationships, typically marriage or marriage-related topics such as engagements, weddings, marital troubles, divorces, and so on. So, in the course of the activities in which they are otherwise engaged, Shelley displays her heterosexuality with talk about plans for her forthcoming wedding (SN-4) and Kevin displays his heterosexuality in telling a friend about

plans for his wedding anniversary (Holt: U.88-2-2). Likewise, the heterosexuality of third parties is made apparent when Lesley reports to her mother the news of Janet's engagement (Holt 1.8) or when Ron (Lesley's vicar) tells her his family news:

Fragment 6 FAMILY UPDATE
[Holt SO88(II)–2–2]

01	Ron:	.hhh Just to bring you up to date with our
02		family uh:m: .t.hh our eldest son u: Shawn
03		u-who lives with iz wife in Taunton, ih he
04		now practices in Bridgewa↑ter?
05		(.)
//		((nine lines omitted))
14	Ron:	Uh:m: Michael is still: soldiering on very
15		happily as uh::um (.) policeman (.) in:
16		ee [Yeovil.]
17	Les:	[Yeo↑vil?]
18		(0.2)
		19
	Les:	Good,?
20		(.)
21	Ron:	And has: uhm: uh seems to be quite happy
22		[an-n(.)d he Ginny e just been married=
23	Les:	[.p.t.khhhhh
24	Ron:	twelve ↑months =

In the Land data corpus, there are likewise multiple displays of heterosexual identities from the families of the lesbian volunteers including Dad's dramatic announcement to his (lesbian) daughter, Rebecca, that he is "gettin' married on September the nineteenth" to his long-term female partner (SW74) and Mum's discussion (also with Rebecca) of the social services implications of her second marriage to an Austrian man (SW39). The lesbian (and gay) speakers also make apparent the heterosexuality of third parties—as when Chloe and her gay friend Paul discuss his sister's pregnancy and its implications in relation to her forthcoming wedding to Martin ("she'll be preggers in her dress!"; YU09) or when Chloe complains to her brother, Tom, about their father's extra-marital affair when she was 8 years old ("I think that Dad and Pam don't realise we know they had an affair …"; YU25).

There is also, of course, talk displaying speakers' lesbian identities—including Sarah's impassioned and detailed response to her friend Chloe's

topic proffer, "how's things with you and lady love" (YU15) and Karen's postmortem on her recently ended relationship with Lucy (NE04). Lesbian conversationalists also talk about social and political activities in which they or others are involved including election to the committee of an LGBT organization (NE05) and attending lesbian and gay social events (NE03, NE21, SW34)—labelling them as *lesbian* (or *gay* or *LGBT,* etc.) in a way no heterosexual speaker ever labels an event as *heterosexual.*

Topic talk displaying the lesbian (or gay) identities of third parties is common—and sometimes explicit, for example, "they're a gay couple" (NE04)—a form that has no parallel in heterosexuals' talk (no one ever says "they're a heterosexual couple"). More commonly, and as with heterosexual talk, topic talk about third parties and their relationships reveals them to be lesbian or gay without this being explicitly stated. In Fragment 7, Karen talks about Mel, Jan, and Barbara such as to make their lesbianism apparent (Cheryl clearly already knows it): The news is not the lesbianism of the three women involved but the history of their relationships with one another, with the fact that this indexes their lesbianism simply taken for granted:

Fragment 7 MEL and JAN
[Land:NE04]

01	Kar:	I di'n't realise well I mean I knew Mel
02		an' Jan 'ad been an item years back. W[ell-]=
03	Che:	[mm]
04	Kar:	bit- but not years but a few- bit back. .hhh
05		An' I di'n't realise but apparently Jan 'ad
06		ended that. .hhhhh Bar- Mel's also been out
07		wi' Barbara.
08		(.)
09	Che:	Oh aye.
10	Kar:	An' she said that Barbara (.) uhm (.)
11		Barbara felt that (.) one- one of t'reasons
12		their stuff di'n't work is because Mel still
13		held a light ou(h)t fer Ja(h)n.

In Fragment 8, Paul and Chloe talk about Tim and Dave (clearly already known by both of them to be a gay couple) such as to make their homosexuality apparent. The use of conjoined first names indexing two same-sex persons ("Tim an' Dave"; line 2) as amongst the guests invited to a "little party" is (in nonheterosexist contexts as in this conversation between a gay man and a lesbian) hearable as possibly indexing a couple, just as conjoined differ-

ent-sex first names in heterosexual contexts routinely do (Kitzinger, 2005c). The topic here is not Tim and Dave's homosexuality—which is simply taken for granted—but the couple's plans for their relationship.

Fragment 8 REGISTERED PARTNERSHIP
[Land:YU09]

01	Pau:	[So sh]e's- (0.2) having- gonna have a like
02		little party just uhm Tim an' Dave
03	Chl:	Yeah.
04	Pau:	Uh y'know Martin's brother [Rick]
05	Chl:	[.hhh] How are
06		they? = Are they getting married?
07		(0.5)
08	Pau:	Who.
09	Chl:	Tim an' Dave.
10	Pau:	They've bought a house together now.
11	Chl:	Oh right.
12	Pau:	Uh:m but I don't kno:w what else they're
13		gonna do. I think they wanna get their
14		thing legali:s [ed.]
15	Chl:	['Cau]se you were saying (.)
16		y'know that they were (gonna) register their
18		partnership or summ [in'.]
19	Pau:	[Yeah.]

Same-sex couples are still excluded from the civil institution of marriage in the United Kingdom, but with effect from December 2005 (some months into the future for these coconversationalists), same-sex couples have been allocated a separate category of legal relationship recognition (conferring rights and responsibilities virtually identical to those of marriage) labelled "civil partnership"—a name deliberately selected because it lacks many of the social and symbolic connotations of marriage. This new category is still an unfamiliar one, and the (social, legal, symbolic) distinction between marriage and civil partnership is unclear to many people (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2005). In designing her question, Chloe treats civil partnership as marriage ("Are they getting married"; Fragment 8, line 6). Paul displays some problem with Chloe's question: It is somewhat delayed, leading to a possible ambiguity with the reference term "they" (as possibly targetting Rick and a partner). When Chloe's repair solution makes apparent that her question indeed targets the gay couple, Paul answers her neither with a *yes* (which would accept her term "married" as accurate) nor with a *no* (which would perhaps imply Tim and Dave's lack of commitment to one another)

but with a piece of information about Tim and Dave that although not addressing the issue of a putative marriage, is nonetheless an indication of the kind of commitment marriage is commonly understood to involve. He follows this up with the information that Tim and Dave "wanna get their thing legalized," thereby recognizably addressing a second feature of what Chloe had formulated as marriage—legal recognition of a relationship—although still treating it as not marriage itself. His repetition of Chloe's verb "get" ("get their thing legalised"; line 13–14 echoes her "getting married," line 6, where some alternative such as "legalize their relationship" was possible) displays it as an alternative formulation of what Tim and Dave might do. In selecting cohabitation and (possible future) legal recognition as two of the features of Tim and Dave's relationship appropriate to responding to a question about their possible plans to be "married," Paul shows us what he understands the relevant attributes of marriage to be. Although Tim and Dave may cohabit and seek legal recognition, they are not, for Paul (as for the British government), "married." Chloe subsequently accounts (lines 15–18) for her interest in the future of Tim and Dave's relationship using the formulation "register their partnership or summin'" (rather than "getting married"), thereby showing herself to have heard Paul's embedded correction of "married"—although (as terms such as "thing" and "or summin" display) neither of them is able confidently to formulate a satisfactory alternative ("Are they getting civilly partnered?" is not in common use). Unequal marriage legislation means, then, that even between a lesbian and gay male speaker, topic talk about same-sex couples may not run off as smoothly and unproblematically as topic talk about different-sex couples does for heterosexuals.

Person Reference Forms

In parallel with findings about the production of heterosexual couples (Kitzinger, 2005c), lesbians are also produced as such by referring to one member of a couple as the partner or ex-partner of the other:

Fragment 9 JENNY'S VAL
[Land: NE24]

01	Che:	The only time Val ever comes out is
02		when [it's: bloody [( )]
03	Kar:	[hhhh .hhh [O:H] THA:T VA:L!
04		(0.2)
05	Che:	Jenny's Val.

06 Kar: [OH:: RI::ight. hhhh]
// ((4 lines omitted))
10 Kar: I get yer now. It's uh- It's uh Val-
11 .hhh Val ex partner'v Jenny's.

Two female names can be joined to produce a lesbian couple (or two male names to produce a gay couple; see Fragment 8, line 2), especially in contexts in which the activities in which the parties are engaged (living together, shared social activities) are such as to lend themselves to hearing of the pair as a couple. In Fragment 10 (as in Fragments 8 and 9), cojoined same-sex names are expected or taken for granted:

Fragment 10 COUPLES
[Land: NE21]

01 Kar: Anyway Jane- Jane an- Jane an' Shell's
02 going tomorrow night. Uh they live in
03 Potherington actually
04 Bec: Oh ri:ght
///
05 Kar: So I'm going with three bloody couples

Fragment 11 RACHEL & MEL
[Land: NE04]

01 Che: She's saying who's going so I'm telling
02 her who I know who's going. I said "well
03 Lisa and Kate's going. This Rachel and
04 Mel who I kno:w." So I've
05 expl [ained ( )]
06 Kar: [Rachel and M]el? [Oh-]
07 Che: [Rach]el
08 and Melinda fr[om Women Only (Walk)]

Finally (and just like heterosexuals; Kitzinger, 2005c), lesbians can invoke their partners with a locally subsequent reference form (such as *we*) in locally initial position. In Fragment 12, Mum knows Chloe to be a lesbian living with her partner such that she surely understands the locally initial "we" at line 5 to mean the lesbian couple:

Fragment 12 GAMMON
[Land: YU02]

01 -ring, ring-ring
02 Mum: Hello:¿

03 Chl: Hello.
04 Mum: [Hi!]
05 Chl: [Ju-] just a quickie. .hhh uhm we're
06 do:ing- >a- an' then we'll call you back
07 later about the spirit guide< uhm .hhh
08 °huh° We're doing some gammon,[4] (.) would
09 you: put a glaze on it or not¿
10 Mum: I- It doesn't matter either way. Rea:lly.

In Fragment 13, Dad knows Rebecca to be a lesbian living with her partner such that he surely understands the locally initial "we" at line 11 to mean the lesbian couple:

Fragment 13 POTTERING
[Land: SW05]

01 ring-ring
02 Reb: Hello:¿ hh
03 Dad: Hello [:.
04 Reb: [Hello Dad.
05 Dad: Now how are you:.
06 Reb: Alright yeah.
07 (0.5)
08 Dad: 're you su:re?
09 Reb: Yeah I'm alright. Yeah. .hhh Yeah I'm fine.
10 Dad: ( ) that's good.
11 Reb: hhhh Yeah it's- we've just 'ad a .hhhh well
12 we've- (.) been potterin' around today an'
13 I:'m (.) feelin' a li'l bit better toda:y.
14 Dad: Ye:s.
15 Reb: So uh:: (.) you: alright¿
16 Dad: Yeah I'm okay yeah.

In Fragment 14, Cheryl is recounting a conversation with Jane (the Jane of "Jane an' Shell" in Fragment 10) about difficulties getting a child to go to bed. She describes how her own daughter would climb into "our flaming bed" (lines 6 and 8). Karen knows Cheryl to be a lesbian who lives with and has raised children with her partner such that she surely understands the locally initial "our" at line 6 to refer to the bed of the lesbian couple.

Fragment 14 OUR FLAMING BED
[Land: NE04]

01 Che: An' uh >of course< Jane's saying "did you
02 have that with your kids" I said "oh God

03 Allison was terrible."
04 Kar: Mmm=
05 Che: =I said "right from being able to climb out of the
06 co [t she'd climb out of her cot and into our fl]aming =
07 Kar: [Huh huh huh huh huh huh huh]
08 Che: = bed."
09 Kar: U↑rrr °oh dear°

In each of Fragments 4 and 12 through 14, a locally initial and unspecified collective proterm is treated unproblematically by cointeractants who already know the speaker to be a lesbian, with such proterms (presumably) understood as referring to the lesbian couple. This is facilitated in part by the kinds of activities in which the collectivity indexed as *we* is reportedly engaged: having sex (Fragment 4), cooking a meal together (Fragment 12), "potterin'" together (Fragment 13), and sharing a bed and raising a child together (Fragment 14). This parallels the finding that locally initial *we*s in heterosexual talk are typically understood as referring to the married couple:

> [T]he combination of an unspecified *we* engaged in activities culturally understood as "the sorts of things couples do together" makes available—indeed, may in some circumstances mandate—the hearing of *we* as "the couple of which I am a part." (Kitzinger, 2005c, p. 247)

We are pointing to what may be a routine (rather than exceptional) use of a locally subsequent reference forms in a locally initial positions (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979; Schegloff, 1996): their use as a device for displaying both lesbian and heterosexual coupledom (see Kitzinger, 2005a). For lesbians, this usage is based on a recipient design consideration of what the recipient specifically knows about the speaker—that is, knows her to be in a lesbian relationship. For heterosexuals, however, no such recipient design consideration is relevant. Indeed, lesbians using a locally subsequent reference form in locally initial position to index their lesbian coupledom to strangers are likely to be heard as referring to themselves and a *male* partner (see our discussion of Fragments 18 and 19).

In sum, when interacting with speakers who are already aware of their sexuality and accepting or being supportive of it (as these families and friends appear to be), then it is possible for the lesbians in this data set to index their partners and to give off their lesbianism without this being treated as the main action in which they are engaged and without their lesbianism

becoming the most salient feature of the interaction. In referencing their lesbianism in the course of seeking advice about how to cook gammon or recounting a child's bedtime behavior, these speakers are invoking their lesbianism without foregrounding it—treating it, in practice, just as heterosexuals treat their heterosexuality.

INDEXING LESBIANISM WITH STRANGERS: MANAGING A NON-NORMATIVE IDENTITY IN INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS

However out of the closet a lesbian may be with family, friends, and colleagues, she is always going to encounter new people who do not know she is a lesbian: many of these in institutional contexts (e.g., the new dentist's receptionist, the plumber, the new students at the beginning of term) and others not (e.g., the new neighbors, fellow passengers on public transport, guests at parties, the parents of her child's friends). Coming out is "an ongoing never ending process" (Rhoads, 1994, p. 86) and "in every new situation where there are people that do not know we are lesbian, the closet is reproduced and we must come out again" (Maher & Pusch, 1995, p. 27). Although coming out to intimates is now generally accepted to be a good thing, coming out beyond the circle of friends and family (and perhaps one's primary health care team) is often (still) considered to be flaunting it.

The notion that gay people—specifically, presumably, those living beyond the closet—flaunt their sexuality is widespread among heterosexuals: In one study (Howard-Hassmann, 2001), more than a third of respondents spontaneously volunteered some concern about flaunting. When the British Member of Parliament Alan Duncan allowed people to know he was gay, a series of letters was published in a national newspaper under the heading "Time to drop this puerile ceremony of 'coming out'" (2002, p. 15), complaining that "it isn't our business to know who people go to bed with" and that "I, as far as I am aware, am under no pressure to state that I am heterosexual!" (p. 15). The implication of this complaint is that in exchange for social acceptance, lesbians and gay men should be discreet and not insist on revealing their non-normative sexualities to all and sundry. However, what this complaint overlooks is that heteronormativity enables heterosexuals to take for granted their right to refer to their heterosexual re-

lationships without this being treated as conveying information about who they go to bed with or as stating that they are heterosexual.

As Kitzinger (2005b) showed elsewhere, heterosexuals frequently make their heterosexuality apparent early on in interactions—especially when they are engaged in institutional calls on behalf of a different-sex partner as in Fragments 15 through 17 taken from a corpus of "out of hours" calls to a doctor's office (see Drew, 2006). (The callers and their families are unknown to this doctor who is a locum standing in for the regular doctors.):

Fragment 15 PAIN
[DEC: 2–1–4]

01	Doc:	hello:?
02		(0.4)
03	Clr:	u::h hello.
04		(.)
05	Clr:	This is Misses W((deleted))
06		(0.9)
07	Doc:	mm hm?
08	Clr:	Um::. (.) My husban::d, (0.2) isn't very
09		we:ll.

Fragment 16 BREATHLESS
[DEC: 1–2–12]

01	Doc:	Hel:lo:,
02	Clr:	Hel:lo, is that' th' doctor¿
03	Doc:	<Yes, Doctor ((deleted)) speaki::ng,
04	Clr:	i:i: Yeah couldja's come an' see my wife
05		please, .h [h
06	Doc:	[Yes:.
07	Clr:	She's breathless.<She can't .hh get 'er
09		breath.hh! .h [hhh
10	Doc:	[What's: her ↑name.

Fragment 17 STOMACH
[DEC: 2–1–16]

01	Doc:	Hello:, 'octor ((deleted)) speaking¿
02		((sniff))
03	Clr:	Hello:, I'm: tu- I was wonderin' if you
04		could help me, ((some deleted material here))
05	Clr:	Um my boyfriend's uhm: really ill at the moment.
02		<'E's got really bad stomach pains. An' fever.

In each of the preceding fragments, the callers display their heterosexuality: The voice quality of the speaker in Fragment 15 makes her hearably female,[5] and she self-identifies both as female and as married by using the courtesy title "Misses" (line 5) as well as by referring to her "husband" (a person reference term that is gendered male). In Fragment 16, the hearably male caller refers to his "wife" (a person reference term gendered female) and also uses the proterm "she" (twice on line 7): The doctor shows that he understands the patient to be female in using "her" (at line 10). In Fragment 17, a hearably female caller refers to her "boyfriend" and uses a masculine proterm ("he," line 2). By producing themselves as members of one sex and their spouse/partner as members of a different sex, these people act in accord with the tacit heterosexist presumption and thereby make available an understanding that they are heterosexual.

We have no parallel data in which lesbian speakers display the gender of their partner and hence their lesbianism within the opening moments of a call. When the lesbians in the Land corpus made institutional calls to unknown persons on behalf of their same-sex partners or when they found it necessary to refer to such persons during the course of their interactions, they routinely selected gender-neutral terms ("partner," "spouse") rather than the gender-specific ones selected by heterosexuals. This is hardly surprising given lesbians' (and gay men's) reported experiences and expectations of heterosexism: For example, asked to state their expectations when interacting with an unfamiliar person who has just found out that they are lesbian/gay/bisexual, 36% of respondents mentioned fear of physical or verbal abuse (Conley, Devine, Rabow, & Evett, 2002).

On the whole, then, the lesbians in our corpus do *not* make their lesbianism available in institutional contexts with people who do not already know of it: In calls to telephone and water companies, employment agencies, veterinarians' and doctors' receptionists, interactants who do not already know that they are talking with lesbians never find out. For example, although Rebecca routinely produces herself as unmarried via her use of the courtesy title "Miss" (see Note 10), she does not make her lesbianism apparent to the call takers she has contacted to clarify arrangements for paying her bills to the water board (SW21) and to the telephone company (SW26). Equally, however, there is no reason for her to do so; that is, there is no interactional slot in which it might be relevant for her to come out as lesbian but in which she does not. However, like heterosexuals, lesbians in interactions with strangers *do* routinely use collective proterms that (they know) refer to themselves and their female partners but without ever specifying (or being interrogated about) the nature of the collectivity so invoked:

Fragment 18 DRAINBUSTER
[Land: SC06]

01		ring-ring ring-ring
02	Clt:	>Good evening. Drainbuster Gareth
03		speaking.<
04	Jan:	Oh good evening. We've got a: (.) blocked
05		kitchen drai:n and wondered if you could
06		do anything abou:t it.

Fragment 19 PRICEWISE
[Land: SC04]

01	Clt:	Pricewise Services Matthew spea:king.
02	Syl:	Hello:. You were s'posed to have
03		s'mbody out to our house t'day for a
04		drai:n. Nobody's come yet.

The locally initial reference terms "we" (Fragment 18, line 4) and "our" (Fragment 19, line 3) are used by the speakers to index Janice and Sylvia as a lesbian couple. However, the fact that they do so is never made available to the call takers—indeed there is evidence that recipients of these locally initial proterms presume the collectivity so indexed to be a heterosexual marital unit, as when one call taker (following a locally initial "we") asks "And may I take your title=is it Missus¿" (SC07). ("It's Doctor," she replies.)

Almost without exception, in those interactions in which lesbians *do* make their lesbianism available to people who do not already know of it, they do so as a correction of those conversationalists' displayed presumption that they are heterosexual. It is a routine experience in most lesbians' lives to confront what Sedgwick (1993) called "the deadly elasticity of heterosexist presumption" (p. 46): It "means simply that parties to any interaction in straight settings are presumed to be heterosexual unless demonstrated to be otherwise" (Ponse, 1978, p. 317). The data we present in this section show how lesbians manage the heterosexist presumption in action: for example, the inference, displayed via the deployment of masculine proterms, that the person a female speaker refers to as her "partner" must be male (Fragments 23 and 24); or that a female speaker's "spouse" can accurately be referred to as a "husband" (Fragments 20 and 22). We show three different ways in which lesbians manage the ongoing interaction following talk that manifests the heterosexist presumption: by not coming out, by

coming out with an exposed correction, and by coming out with an embedded correction.

Not Coming Out: Passing Up the Opportunity to Repair the Heterosexist Presumption

The alternative to coming out when the heterosexist presumption has made coming out relevant is to be complicit with it—and sometimes one chooses complicity, concealing one's lesbianism to avoid other people's anxiety, distress, or condemnation and to collude with their notions of normality and reality (cf. French, 2000, on denying her disability for parallel reasons). Even among the relatively out lesbians in the Land corpus engaging in the relatively safe context of telephone (as opposed to face-to-face) interactions, there are occasions in these conversations when they do not come out, that is, an interactional slot opens up in which correcting the heterosexist presumption is relevant and they do not correct it (see also the example of not coming out analyzed in Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2003).

In analyzing our data here, we focus on the structural features of conversation that actively militate against coming out as lesbian when confronting the heterosexist presumption. Preeminent is the general preference for progressivity. For example, in Fragment 20a, Janice has called an insurance company to enquire about car insurance for "self and spouse" (lines 2–3). Although "spouse" is a gender-neutral term (presumably selected by Janice in part for that reason—although it is also the term used on printed insurance forms), her "spouse" is assumed to be male as displayed by the call taker's use of the term "husband" at line 39, and there is *no* correction in the next turn (line 40)—the canonical place for other-initiated repair to be done (Schegloff et al., 1977):

Fragment 20a CAR INSURANCE
[Land: SC02]

01	Clt:	Okay. And will you be the main driver
02	Jan:	>.hh< Yes I will but #I:# uhm want self
03		and spouse insurance. Please.=
04	Clt:	=Yeah of course yeah. .hhh 'kay.=Uhm
05		'Ave you been driving for longer than
06		three years.
07	Jan:	Yes I have¿

08 Clt: Was your licence issued in the U-K¿
09 Jan: Yes it was.
10 Clt: And are you a permanent resident?
11 Jan: Yes I am.
12 Clt: #Oka:y.#
13 (1.5)
14 Clt: And your occupation is
// ((17 lines dealing with Janice's occupation, employer, part-time work, etc. omitted))
31 Clt: 'Kay.=Wuh .hhh I've got two questions
32 for yih. These questions are legally
33 binding.
34 Jan: Mm hm
35 Clt: (So I need to finish them) fully before
36 you give me your answer.
37 Jan: Mm hm
38 Clt: And they're applying to yourself and your
39 husband.= Okay?
40 Jan: Okay.
41 Clt: .hhh The first question is have either of
42 you had any motoring convictions fixed
43 penalty endorsements including li:cence
44 disqualifications.hh in the last five
46 years.
47 (0.2)
48 Jan: N:o.
49 (0.8)
50 Clt: .hh The second question (0.2) have either
51 of you had any accidents claims or losses
52 in the three years regardless of fault.
53 Jan: Ri:ght. Yes: I have.
// ((Two minutes omitted here during which Janice deals with questions about a prior claim for the theft of her car. The sequence is protracted, as she is unable to remember—or to find—the date on which the theft occurred. There is a clearly audible offline consultation with her (hearably female) spouse, Sylvia, about the date of the theft—and it is she who eventually produces a letter
// verifying the date.))[6]
108 Jan: [The theft date was the] twenty eighth of August
109 two thousand and three:
110 Clt: Okay that's fi:ne.
111 Jan: And the claim was settled in November finally.
112 Clt: Yeah that's fi:ne. .hhhh Oka:y uhm (.) are
113 you going to be using the car for social
114 domestic and pleasure and to commute to one
115 permanent place of wo:rk.

The operation of the heterosexist presumption here is not surprising because (as we have said) same-sex couples in Britain are excluded from the institution of civil marriage,[7] and—as yet—very few such couples have married abroad. The call taker's production of "husband" as an alternative to Janice's "spouse" is designed to offer a more colloquial term,[8] and his selection of "husband" rather than "wife" is recipient designed for Janice as someone who sounds female and has given a female name. The requirements of taking out car insurance are such that eventually (as we show) the presumption that Janice is married to a man *is* corrected in this call—but not for nearly 3 min after the end of interaction displayed in Fragment 20a. Instead, Janice finds herself allowing the heterosexist presumption to pass unchallenged and forwarding, without disruption, the action in which the sequence is engaged.

The difficulty for Janice in launching a correction in next-turn position (at line 40 in Fragment 20a) has a more proximate and immediate cause than that embodied by an abstract concept such as "societal heterosexism": The difficulty is that a larger discourse unit is in progress. This larger unit is the sequence launched by the call taker at lines 31 through 32 with a pre-pre (Schegloff, 1980) such that what follows (lines 32–39) is heard as preliminary to the "two questions" (line 31). This all amounts to a very strong locally constituted sequential environment for passing an opportunity to correct—one that is built on the formal constraints of the pre-pre. At line 39, the call taker's "okay" is seeking confirmation that Janice has understood the material he has presented by way of preliminary to the "two questions" (i.e., the auspices under which these two questions are to be asked and answered), and line 40 is the first place where Janice could, but does not, correct his heterosexist presumption. Instead, she confirms her understanding of the preliminary material ("okay," line 40), thereby making the first of the call taker's two questions now relevant. In declining the opportunity to initiate repair and providing only confirmation of her understanding of the preliminary material, Janice is treating "husband" as an adequate reference term (at least for the present) for the other person to be insured and displaying her presumption that her spouse's gender and the couple's sexual identity are irrelevant for the practical purposes (of taking out car insurance) being pursued here. If it *should* turn out to be relevant, "there is, after all, always a next-turn position after the larger unit has been brought to possible completion" (Schegloff, 2000, p. 214)—that is, after the "two questions" have been asked and answered. However, there is one additional consequence of passing a first opportunity to correct—especially one this

explicit (i.e., the use of "husband"). If it becomes necessary to correct it later on, then that correction will make visible that the first opportunity had been passed over—that is, that the call taker had been allowed to proceed after voicing a misconception. Moreover, this could be understood as an attempt (now failed) to conceal; that is, the very passing of a first opportunity no matter how strong the sequential basis for doing so may turn lesbianism into having been a concealable matter.[9]

As it turns out, this second opportunity for repairing the heterosexist presumption is seriously delayed and does not arise until some 2½ min later. Although the first question (about motoring convictions etc.; lines 41–46) is quickly dealt with (a one word answer on line 48), the second question (about insurance losses; lines 50–52) involves Janice in a protracted search for the date on which her car was stolen. By the time this answer has been provided (lines 108–109 and 111) and receipted (lines 110 and 112), an inordinate length of time has gone by since the trouble source in line 39: To initiate repair on it at this point runs the risk of being heard as gratuitous insistence on her lesbianism—especially because it would appear to have no possible bearing on the answers she has given. By not initiating repair or correction at what is analyzably the end of the sequence (at lines 111 or 112), Janice displays her understanding that the sex of her spouse is not relevant to the matters of licence disqualifications or accident claims and losses with which the call taker's questions have been concerned. Correction is by now no longer in point.

In a rather different instance, Rebecca in Fragment 21 does not correct the implication that she is heterosexual (and married to a man) conveyed through use of the courtesy title "Mrs" preceding her surname. In fact, Rebecca is not and never has been married: She lives with her female partner and uses the courtesy title "Miss" in identifying herself in other calls in the corpus.[10] Nonetheless, after a delay (a ½-sec gap) displaying some problem with the prior turn, she treats it as adequate for purposes of self-identification (there is no "Mrs" Craggs in her household, and her surname is Craggs such that it is likely that she is the person being summoned):

Fragment 21 REMOVALS
[Land: SW80]

01	Reb:	hhh Hello:hh
02	RCR:	Mrs Craggs?
03		(0.5)

04 Reb: Ye:s:¿
05 RCR: Harrison Faraday Removals it is.
06 Reb: Oh hi:!

In Fragment 21, Rebecca displays some orientation (through the ½-sec gap and the voicing of her response at line 4) to the heterosexual/marital status misidentification: Her response is less than correcting but more than just passing. In both Fragments 20a and 21, then, the (independently establishable) error, the heterosexist presumption, is allowed to stand because the one person in each of the interactions who could correct it (the lesbian speaker) instead produces the sequentially relevant next turn, giving precedence to the ongoing interactional business of the call.

An alternative to allowing the heterosexist presumption to pass unchallenged in these instances would have been to perform an other-initiated repair doing correction.[11] For Janice (at line 40, Fragment 20a), this could have been something like "not my husband my wife"; or (at line 111, Fragment 20a) something like "And, by the way, the spouse I want insurance for is not my husband—she's my wife." For Rebecca (at line 3, Fragment 21), an other-initiated repair doing correction would have been something like "it's Miss not Mrs" (an actual instance of a repair performing correction in this way is given as Fragment 22). However, this on its own would correct only the assumption about marital status and not the heterosexist presumption. By suspending the ongoing progressivity of the talk to deal with some trouble in speaking, hearing, or understanding, repairs "replace or defer whatever else was due next" (Schegloff, 1997a, p. 504). In effect, speakers initiating repair on a prior turn are claiming that the business of the talk cannot be pursued without first addressing the trouble in that prior turn. However, one can see from Fragments 20a and 21 previously that (at least on some occasions) the business of the talk *can* be pursued without the error having been corrected. The misidentifications of Janice's spouse and Rebecca's marital status are not, as it turns out, consequential (in these calls) for the calculation of insurance risks or for the ordering of storage space from a removals company. In both interactions, it is only the lesbian conversationalist who is aware of the error (and therefore only she who can correct it), and in both, she passes up the opportunity to do so, apparently judging (correctly, as it turns out) that the error is not relevant to the business in hand. Passing up on the opportunity to correct such errors is not specific to corrections of the heterosexist presumption: The "empirical paucity of other-corrections" (Schegloff et al., 1977, p. 380) is due in part to the fact

that those who could do them can also do a sequentially appropriate next turn instead—and here that is precisely what they do. In sum, then, these instances of not coming out as lesbian and of allowing the heterosexist presumption to continue uncorrected are the product of lesbians' orientation to the structural organization of conversation and to their prioritizing of the otherwise ongoing business of the talk.

Coming Out Explicitly: Exposed Correction of the Heterosexist Presumption

One alternative to allowing the heterosexist presumption to pass unchallenged is explicitly to correct it. The only exposed correction in our corpus, in Fragment 22, is taken from a call to another insurance salesman (representing a different insurance company) from whom Janice is again requesting a quotation for car insurance for "self and spouse" (line 15). Janice has already given her known-to-be-female name at the outset of the call, and through his use of the term "husband" (line 24), the salesman displays an assumption that Janice's spouse is male (lines 25–26), thereby presuming her heterosexuality. Janice explicitly corrects him at lines 25 through 26—making of the correction a piece of interactional business in its own right.

Fragment 22a SECOND CAR INSURANCE
[Land: SC03]

13		(10.5)
14	Jan:	.hhh I'm wanting insurance fo:r uhm: (.) ,
15		two named drivers self and spous:e.=
16	Clt:	=>Yeah< 'v cou:rse.
17		(13.0)
18	Clt:	(Right) I've got you down as a doctor. Do
19		you have the use of any other vehicle
20		within the household.
21	Jan:	Yes I do.
22		(0.8)
23	Clt:	An: (.) you said you'd like to insure your
24		husband to drive the car.
25	Jan:	mcht Uh:::m It's not my husband it's my
26		wi:fe and yes I would l[ike t-]
27	Clt:	[Oh I do] beg your
28		pardon.

29 Jan: I would like to insure her.
30 Clt: Yep >thank you<
31 (11.5)
32 Clt: ('Kay) Could I take your wife's name
33 please.

With Janice's repair initiation ("mcht Uh:::m It's not my husband it's my wi:fe"; lines 25–26), the sequence of questions and answers about drivers and cars is temporarily suspended, and the sequence becomes occupied instead with the doing and receiving of correction. The call taker's question (done in the form of a confirmation check) is designed as prefatory to launching a series of questions (eventually launched at line 32) about the second driver to be covered by the insurance: A simple *yes* answer would have worked as a go-ahead to forward that activity. Instead, Janice begins with a turn-initial delay ("mcht Uh::m"; line 25), thereby displaying some problem with the prior turn, followed by an other-initiated repair naming the repairable ("husband") and correcting it with "wife" before confirming that insurance for a second driver is needed (line 26). By going on (without stopping even for a beat) to answer the now corrected question, she aims to end her turn with both a correction that can be understood as a complaint and the next step in the information-taking process as relevant next actions. The turn-constructional tack Janice takes seems designed to minimize the exposure of the correction. However, she finds herself in overlap with the call taker who explicitly registers the correction: He receipts it as new information ("oh"; line 27), apologizes ("I do beg your pardon"; lines 27–28), and subsequently uses the reference term "wife" in formulating his next question (lines 32–33)—thereby displaying his acceptance of the correction. In Fragment 22a, then, both conversationalists deal with the correction explicitly; they suspend the otherwise ongoing business of the call to deal with correcting the heterosexist presumption (Janice) and apologizing for it (the call taker).

Despite doing an exposed correction, Janice picks up on the otherwise ongoing business of the talk as quickly as possible thereafter (using the connective "and" on line 26, Fragment 22a) and provides a sequentially appropriate second pair part to the call taker's initiating question. Therefore, the correction and the complaint it implements would not have been left as the only relevant matter for the call taker to take up next except for the overlap occasioned cutoff before completion. After the call taker's turn (lines 27–28, Fragment 22a), Janice picks up the business of the talk immediately and sequentially deletes the call-taker's apology in so doing. However,

finding that his computer will not enter two women as a married couple (with the reduced insurance premium that marriage may entail), the call taker subsequently sends off an enquiry (or "search") about how to handle the situation, and while waiting for a response, he topicalizes Janice's same-sex marriage (lines 80–94, Fragment 22b), and issues a second apology (lines 101–103, Fragment 22b), which Janice accepts (Fragment 22b, line 104):

Fragment 22b SECOND CAR INSURANCE CONTINUED

80	Clt:	D'you know I w- (0.5) I don't wanna sound
81		nai:ve or nothing like that but I just
82		think 't th'end of the day (.) 'f you're
83		married you're married
84		(.)
85	Jan:	Yeahp. That's what w [e think]
86	Clt:	[I- I- I-] I honestly
87		honestly do mean that as well B'cause >at
88		th'end of the< day (0.8) marriage is if
89		you- if you- wed to: (.) male or female
90		you're married you're married.
91	Jan:	That's right.
92		(2.0)
93	Clt:	So twenty- t- d- (.) twenty first century
94		and people (so/still) negative.
95	Jan:	Yeah. I know.
96		(3.5)
97	Clt:	Right the search will come back any
98		second now for you okay¿
99	Jan:	O↑kay
100		(0.5)
101	Clt:	I do beg your pardon f- (0.2) for
102		presuming it was your: your husband so
103		(.) I apologise for that.
104	Clt:	That's okay.
105		(13.5)
106	Clt:	It looks like it's coming back saying
107		that that you aren't classed as legally
108		married so: (.) it's the system that's
109		not me saying that.

This call continues for another 28 min during which the call taker contacts the manager and the manager agrees to contact head office for guidance. Clearly Janice's lesbianism is neither "normalized" nor "routinized" in this

call, and the heterosexist presumption displayed involves Janice in managing both the revelation of her own lesbian identity and the subsequent apologies and concerns of the call taker (all in addition to the business of trying to get an insurance quotation).

Coming Out Discreetly: Embedded Correction of the Heterosexist Presumption

Another alternative to allowing the heterosexist presumption to pass unchallenged—and the strategy most commonly exemplified by lesbians in the Land corpus—is to perform an embedded correction[12] (Jefferson, 1987). In Fragment 23, for example, Nicola has called the National Health Service help line, NHS Direct, to locate a dentist. She uses the (gender-neutral) term "partner" to refer to the person in need of emergency treatment (line 33) and avoids using a proterm in describing her partner's dental problem (e.g., "Her tooth's come out"), instead designing an increment to her prior turn ("whose tooth's come out"; line 35). The heterosexist presumption is displayed in the health information adviser's selection of the masculine pronoun ("he"; line 53) in her question designed to assess the urgency of the problem. Although Nicola's utterance in line 55 is hearable as correcting the adviser's assumption that her partner is male, she does not suspend the ongoing progressivity of the sequence to do correction as the sole business of her turn (as would an exposed correction such as "it's not 'he,' it's 'she'"). Instead, the correction is built into the design of a sequentially relevant next turn answering the prior question. The correction does not displace or defer her answer (and is therefore not an instance of repair).

Fragment 23 NHS DIRECT
[Land: OC02]

28	HIA:	.hhhh Was it just for purely registration
29		you're ringing today or is there
30		any emer [gency] dental prob [lems.]=
31	Nic:	[.hhh] [hhh]
32		=Well (0.2) it is: (.) not for me but for
33		my partner. hhh
34		(.)
35	Nic:	Whose tooth's: (0.2) come ou:t:. h
36	HIA:	O [h
37	Nic:	[Front tooth
38	HIA:	Ri::ght.

39 (0.8)
40 HIA: (°Let me see°)
41 Nic: But I need to make a- (0.2)
42 HIA: [mm]
43 Nic: [to] find a dentist as well just fer
44 (.) routine.
45 (0.8)
46 HIA: Righ' Well I've put Westnorton in
47 [an'] nothi:ng is coming up at a:ll.=
48 Nic: [Mm hm]
49 HIA: =Uh:m that's regist'ring. .hhhh There's
50 only o:ne dentist there that says they:
51 offer occasional treatment to non registered
52 patients but that would only be on
53 avai:lability. .hhhh Uhm: (1.0) is 'e in
54 pai:n.
55 Nic: Mcht uhm hhhhh (0.2) .hh (.) she's: (.)
56 lost (0.2) th- the front tooth an [d in]=
57 HIA: [Right.]
58 Nic: quite considerable pai:n.
59 (.)
60 HIA: Righ' .hhh Uhm: I just know there are
61 eme:rgency dentists: available but they
62 usually deal with people in pain and only
63 do temporary work = I'm just wondering
64 what they can do:=uhm (0.8) And the
65 tooth's actually come ou:t.
66 (0.2)
67 Nic: mcht Comple:tely.= [Yeah]
68 HIA: [°yeah°] Right.
69 (2.0)
70 HIA: Just bea:r with me a moment I'll see 'f
71 there are- .hhh (1.0) what's available fer
72 thee uh: Westnorton area.
73 (11.5)
// ((6 lines of HIA considering different areas that Westnorton could be is omitted))
80 HIA: tcht It's:- I'm just wonderin' (.) what
81 about Frimberly. I know they don't have a
82 problem with dentists. Is that easily
83 accessible °for 'er°.
84 Nic: How far is it. hhhh

In Fragment 23, then, the series of three consecutive proterm references to the partner is "he" (from the adviser; line 53), "she" (from Nicola; line 55)

and then "her" (from the adviser; line 83). Although the turn-initial delay at lines 55 through 56 displays that Nicola has some problem with the adviser's question at lines 53 through 54, there is no repair or exposed correction in this interaction. However, the adviser hears Nicola's embedded correction at line 55, accepts it, and embeds it into her own ongoing talk that uses the corrected (female) proterm (line 83).

In Fragment 20c, the embedded correction is a self-correction initiated not by the lesbian caller but by her coconversationalist, the car insurance salesman encountered in Fragment 20a. Nearly 3 min after the interaction quoted in Fragment 20a and after a further series of questions and answers dealing with the type of insurance cover required,[13] the call taker who had used the term "husband" to refer to the person Janice had referred to as her "spouse" selects Janice's initial term (and not his own prior term) in formulating a next question:

Fragment 20c CAR INSURANCE, CONTINUED
[Land: SC02]

500	Clt:	Has your spouse got the same surname as
501		yourself
502	Jan:	Uh: no.
503	Clt:	O-kay. Could I take the surname.
504	Jan:	Yeah. Her surname is Andersen. A-N-D-E-R-
505		S-E-N
506	Clt:	Yeah. And the first name?
507	Jan:	Sylvia = S-Y-L-V-I-A.
508	Clt:	O-kay.= An' how old's Sylvia.
509	Jan:	She: i:s (0.5) f:orty three.
510	Clt:	O-kay. An' has Sylvia been driving for
511		longer than three years
512	Jan:	Yes:.
513	Clt:	'Kay.= Was the licence issued in the UK
514	Jan:	Yes.
515	Clt:	An' is she a permanent resident
516	Jan:	Yes she is.

Across the CAR INSURANCE call (in the talk that spans Fragments 20a and 20c) then, the series of three consecutive person reference terms runs off as "spouse" (from Janice; Fragment 20a, line 3), "husband" (from the call taker; Fragment 20a, line 39), and then "spouse" (from the call taker; Fragment 20c, line 500). The call taker's use of "spouse" at line 500 (Fragment 20c) is embedded in the next sequentially relevant question as he pur-

sues the business of collecting information pertinent to the insurance quotation he is preparing. As in the call to NHS DIRECT (Fragment 23), there is no repair or exposed correction of the person reference term in this interaction—but in selecting the (gender-neutral) term "spouse" as an alternative to his own prior (gendered-masculine) "husband," a slightly odd, noncolloquial, lexical choice at this point in the call, the call taker is displaying an orientation to a possible problem with "husband" (although no such problem has been displayed by Janice) and is initiating correction on his own previous talk. This correction is endorsed by Janice's subsequent use of a female proterm (initially at line 504, Fragment 20c), which is the first definite evidence in this call that her spouse is female.

In Fragment 20c, then, embedded self-correction is performed by the call taker who cannot have known in advance of making the correction that he was talking to a lesbian. (This contrasts with the embedded other correction performed by the lesbian in the NHS DIRECT call [Fragment 23] who—obviously!—knew herself to be in a relationship with a woman and who knew, therefore, that the advisor's "he" was an error.) Given that Janice had displayed no problem with the call taker's use of "husband" (in Fragment 20a), the basis on which he self-corrects is likely to have been the offline but clearly audible discussion between Janice and Sylvia about the theft date of Janice's car.[14] Apparently, the fact that Janice consults not with the husband the call taker has invoked but with a person in her home who is clearly adult and female, who has intimate knowledge of her insurance claim, and for consultation with whom no account is given nor any alternative designation (such as *daughter* or *mother*) offered, is sufficient for the call taker to retract his heterosexist presumption. So "husband" is treated as possibly wrong, and Janice's alternate form, "spouse," is deployed in its place, such that "husband" is treated as possibly correct while also allowing for other (unspecified) possibilities. Only in a thoroughly nonheterosexist culture could *wife* have been deployed here without the risk of offending a heterosexual recipient.

Embedded correction (whether self-initiated or other initiated) treats error with delicacy. In contrast with exposed correction, "embedded correction can be a way of doing correction-and-only-correction; of keeping such issues as incompetence and/or impropriety off the conversational surface. In effect, the embedded form provides the opportunity to correct with discretion" (Jefferson, 1987, p. 100, footnote 4). When one person does an embedded correction and the recipient subsequently uses the corrected version in their own talk but without drawing attention to the error in any way,

the coconversationalists collude to keep the correctable matter (here, the sex of the partner/spouse and hence the lesbianism of one of the coconversationalists) off the conversational surface.

In sum, in both Fragments 20c and 23, an error (the heterosexist presumption) is corrected. The cointeractants' capacity to bring off the job of identifying and correcting error without disrupting the smooth progressivity of the talk—without the business of error correction ever rising to the surface of the conversation—means that no account, explanation, or apology is made relevant from (nor is one offered by) either party. In effect, the lesbian and her coconversationalist collaboratively bring off a "nothing unusual is happening" stance (Emerson, 1970). The heterosexist presumption makes apparent the fact that the same-sex relationship is *not* normal or routine. In working together to correct the error without drawing attention either to the fact of its having happened or to its correction, the parties collude to produce the same-sex relationship (already displayed as counternormative) as the ordinary and taken-for-granted one they have shown themselves already to know it not to be. As Sacks (1984) put it, in describing how people come to see an *ordinary* world, "people take on the job of keeping everything utterly mundane; that no matter what happens, pretty much everybody is engaged in finding only how it is that what is going on is usual, with every effort possible" (p. 419).

The elaborate effort that may be involved in sustaining a "nothing unusual" definition is evident in Fragment 24 following. Nicola is talking with a receptionist at a dentists' surgery whose contact details she has just obtained from the NHS Direct helpline. She uses the gender-neutral term "partner" (line 13) to refer to the person she wants to register as a new patient. The heterosexist presumption is displayed through the receptionist's use of the masculine pronoun to refer to this person—first in the recycled question at line 23 ("what was his name") and then through her repair initiation at line 46 ("is it for him or for you"):

Fragment 24 DENTIST
[Land OC04]

01		((ring-ring ring-ring))
02	Rec:	Good afternoon Johnson Olivier and
03		Tilsley?
04	Nic:	Hello. >uhm< I was wondering if it would
05		be possible to find out if I could r-uhm
06		register as a new patie:nt.

07 Rec: Yes certainly.= Miss Boon's thee (.) only
08 patient taking NHS: .hh any- only dentist
09 taking N-H-S patient [s.
10 Nic: [Mm hm¿
11 Rec: mcht U:hm: I'll just take some
12 detail [s from you.]
13 Nic: [Well it's for my part]ner actually.
14 Rec: Ri:ght.
15 (0.5)
16 Rec: 'Scuse me a moment.
17 Nic: Okay than [k you
18 Rec: [Mr Leggett¿ ((off phone))
19 (.)
20 Rec: Would you like to go: up. hh ((off phone))
19 (0.8)
20 Rec: An' what was the na:me¿
21 (0.8)
22 Nic: >Sorry my name.<
23 Rec: What was his name.
24 Nic: Oh uhm it's S:andra Ferry
25 (0.5)
26 (([another phone [ringing))]
27 Rec: [Ferry¿]
28 Nic: [Yes::.]
29 (3.5)
30 Rec: Ye- Just hold the line a second.
31 Nic: >Okay< Thank you.
30 (10.5)
32 Rec: Sorry about that.= We've got (.) dentists
33 swapped surgeries 'n' .hh one's come
34 downstairs and one's gone upstairs an' the
35 patients don't know whether they're
36 co(h)ming [or go(h)ing.
37 Nic: [Huhuh huh huh
38 [No](h) prob(h)lem don't [worry about it
39 Rec: [So] [Ferry did you
40 say¿
41 Nic: .hh Yes. F double R Y.
42 (.)
43 Rec: A:n' the Christian n:ame¿
44 Nic: It's: Sandra. hh
45 (0.5)
46 Rec: F- Is it for him or for you:.
47 Nic: It's for her.
48 (.)
49 Rec: Oh for her- O:h °sor(h)ry° .hh [h]
50 Nic: [.hh £I]t's

51 oka:y£
52 Rec: Uh huh huh huh huh Sandra.
53 Nic: Yes:.
54 Rec: .hh Right. An::d date of birth¿

When she answers the receptionist's question about her (presumed male) partner's name, Nicola is providing a sequentially appropriate next turn that does not explicitly correct the presumption. However, in giving a culturally-known-as-exclusively-female name for her partner (at line 24), she is demonstrating that there was an error but without replacing the trouble source ("his"; line 23). (This is a somewhat different form of error correction from those discussed by Jefferson, 1987.)

The ½-sec gap that follows may indicate some problem with this—but it is the surname (both at Fragment 24, line 27, and again after an apology sequence following an interruption to the call while the receptionist deals with a patient at line 39) that is repeated for confirmation. Having apparently entered the surname into the computer, she returns to the problematic first name—and, unlike the surname, which she repeated for confirmation, her question (at line 43) is not designed to display any prior grasp of it. After Nicola repeats her partner's name (at line 44), this common English name pronounced—on both occasions—clearly and audibly with no interference on the line or overlapping talk is unequivocally treated as problematic. After one half of a second of silence, the receptionist's next question is a repair initiation displaying her orientation to solving the puzzle of why she has been given a female name rather than the male one she showed herself to expect. Instead of inferring that Nicola has a female partner (a possibility interdicted by the heterosexist presumption she has already displayed and one that would violate the "nothing unusual is happening" stance), the receptionist's question checks out the possibility that she has misunderstood which of the two presumed heterosexual, different-sex members of the couple is being registered.[15] Although Nicola has already made clear at line 13 ("well it's for my partner actually") that she is registering her partner and although the receptionist has already shown herself to have understood this (through the design of her question at line 23 that asks for the partner's name), she is searching for some explanation of the puzzle—the lesbianism of her coconversationalist apparently not being available to her as a solution. In response to this, Nicola does an embedded correction, answering the receptionist's question (about which of them is registering) but using an alternative proterm ("her," line 47 instead of "him," line 46).

It is clearly an instance of embedded correction in that Nicola's turn (line 47) is wholly engaged with producing the relevant next action (i.e., the answer to the receptionist's question) but in so doing uses a form of reference alternative to that selected by a prior speaker, thereby making available to the prior speaker that a possible correction is being done but without suspending the ongoing progressivity of the talk to do correction. Just as in Fragment 3 (NEW YEARS EVE), Adele confirms Milly's understanding of when New Years is but—in the course of so doing—replaces (with emphasis) Milly's term "eve" with her alternative term "night," so too in Fragment 24 (DENTIST), Nicola answers the receptionist's question about who the patient is to be (herself or her partner) but in the course of so doing replaces (with emphasis) the receptionist's pronoun "him" with her alternative pronoun "her." In neither of these turns (Fragment 3, line 8; Fragment 24, line 47) are there any components doing only correcting. An exposed correction here would have been something like "Not him, her" (compare Fragment 1, ENGINE; "not motor, engine")—that is, talk that would have deferred the relevant next action with an explicit rejection of the proterm selected by the receptionist.

Jefferson (1987) introduced the term *embedded correction* to characterize corrections embedded in some turn at talk that is doing an action other than correcting—actions such as assessing a component of a telling (Fragment 2, COPS), agreeing with or confirming a prior turn (Fragment 3, NEW YEARS EVE), or answering a diagnostic question (Fragment 23, NHS DIRECT). In Fragment 24 (DENTIST), the correction is embedded in talk that is doing repair. Moreover, the correction is embedded in the responsive turn of an adjacency pair repair sequence whose initiating turn is seeking a solution to the very problem to which the correction embedded in the second pair part provides a solution. The first pair part is a repair initiation that targets (as a way of solving the problem of reconciling "my partner" with "Sandra") a possible understanding problem as to whether the prospective patient is third person ("him") or second person ("you"). The responsive action is designed to provide a repair solution (third person)—and is thereby a fitted next action. Embedded within this repair solution—indeed, in the very item that produces the solution as a third-person one—is a correction (that this third person is female, displayed via the proterm "her"). So, in line 47, there is a repair solution designed so as to incorporate an embedded correction: whereas the *repair* delivers a solution to the third person/second person understanding problem, the *embedded correction* delivers a solution to the more persistent trouble that gave rise to the receptionist's repair initiation in the first

place (the reconciling of "my partner" with "Sandra"). The relatively "exposed" feel of this embedded correction derives from the way in which it is implicated in repair: In tracking Nicola's turn for how it delivers a solution to the question she has posed in her immediately prior talk, the receptionist finds in the pronoun "her" a solution both to the third-person and second-person trouble (the repair solution) and also a way of resolving "my partner" with "Sandra" (the embedded correction).

The receptionist's "Oh for her-" (Fragment 24, line 49) receipts the third-person repair solution cut off as she finds herself repeating Nicola's female pronoun in place of the male pronoun she has previously used. The second prosodically marked "O:h" displays her realization of the embedded correction that the repair has also implemented—understanding that "my partner" can be reconciled with "Sandra" if her interlocutor has a female partner. Her subsequent apology takes responsibility for her own prior understanding problem, thereby acknowledging that it was her ordinary cultural assumptions (what we call the *heterosexist presumption*) that had led to her understanding problems in the first place. In sum, then, Nicola's response at line 41 deploys a repair solution format to deal with the third-person and second-person confusion and an embedded correction format to deal with the more interactionally delicate issue of her lesbianism.

Unlike the speakers in CAR INSURANCE (Fragment 20c) and NHS DIRECT (Fragment 23), the recipient of the embedded correction in DENTIST (Fragment 24) does *not* collaborate with her lesbian coconversationalist in keeping the error correction off the surface of the conversation. That is, although she registers and accepts the correction, she does not accept the *form* in which the correction has been done. Acceptance of a correction in embedded form involves the recipient in deployment of the replacement item without directing any talk to the trouble being dealt with. Acceptance of a correction in exposed form involves some kind of talk about the trouble—typically an account for having produced it or an apology of some kind. According to Jefferson (1987), it is recurrently the case that "whether he [sic] accepts or rejects the correction, prior speaker does so in the form initiated by his co-participant" (pp. 97–98), that is, an exposed correction will be dealt with by the recipient in an exposed form and an embedded correction in an embedded form. However, although Nicola's corrections are both embedded in the ongoing talk, the receptionist shifts into the exposed form when she explicitly apologizes for having assumed Nicola's heterosexuality. An apology sequence (Fragment 24, lines 49–51)

and some laughter (line 52) suspend the ongoing business of the sequence before the receptionist displays her grasp of the partner's name by repeating it as a confirmation check and then proceeding with the other questions relevant to registering Sandra as a new patient. As we have seen, an embedded correction contrasts with an exposed correction (an other-initiated repair) in that it "provides the opportunity to correct with discretion" (Jefferson, 1987, p. 100, footnote 4) and does not make sequentially relevant any explicit talk addressed to the correctable matter from the recipient. In rejecting the opportunity Nicola has offered to accept correction in an embedded (and therefore discreet) form, the receptionist is rejecting the implication in Nicola's talk that her lesbianism—and/or the receptionist's heterosexist presumption—is something to be discreet about. In line 49, she accepts and apologizes for what she thereby treats as having been a correctable offence.[16]

CONCLUSION

The lesbians in our data set were open about their sexual identity across a wide range of social contacts including family, friends, and (sometimes) institutional contacts with strangers. Their lived experience of lesbianism is light years away from the shame, secrecy, or angry defiance that characterized the lives of many lesbians as recently as 20 or 30 years ago (Kitzinger, 1987, 2004). The closet—with its implications of a life organized around concealment of a discreditable stigmatized identity—is no longer a key feature of (these) lesbian lives.

We have shown—and in this way contributed to CA's understanding of person reference—that in conversations with friends and family, the lesbians in our data set indexed their own (and others') homosexuality in the "natural" and unmarked ways in which heterosexuals index their heterosexuality. These include the use of a locally subsequent reference form in a locally initial position (Schegloff, 1996) as a device for displaying coupledom. Of course, at some point in the past, these lesbians must have done "first comings out" to the parents and friends with whom they now so unproblematically index their lesbianism. Elsewhere in the corpus, some of the lesbian and gay male contacts of our five volunteers reported *not* being out to parents and described elaborate subterfuges to conceal a same-sex relationship (YU09) and parents who are devastated at the information that they have a gay child (e.g., a mother who "doesn't really wanna accept it

she's very up—y'know she does cry about it still"; YU09). The normalization of their lesbianism in their family lives today is a collaborative achievement between lesbians "brought up in a very homophobic world" (NE02) and their heterosexual friends and family members.

We have also shown that in contrast with heterosexuals who can unproblematically index their heterosexuality in conversation both with people who are already aware of their sexuality *and* with those who are not (Kitzinger, 2005c), lesbians encounter considerable interactional difficulty in managing their lesbian identities with strangers. Coming out and being outed as lesbian or gay—or as the mother of a lesbian—were discussed by coconversationalists elsewhere in our data corpus (and are analyzed in Land & Kitzinger, in press). In this article, however—in an important departure from previous research on coming out (although see Kitzinger, 2000) —we have focused on coming out as it is performed "live" in actual interactions. We have shown that lesbians do not embark on these interactions with the purpose either of remaining in the closet or of coming out as lesbian. Instead, their primary interactional goals are the achievement of pragmatic ends such as an unblocked drain, a dentist appointment, or an insurance quotation. In the course of going about these ordinary concerns, they find their lesbianism made relevant as a result of the heterosexist presumption. It is in response to this presumption that lesbians are faced with the dilemma of whether or not to come out and if so, how. The basic machinery of social interaction in very ordinary and mundane contexts continually embodies a heterosexist presumption that produces these occasions of *coming out* and *being outed.*

The overarching heteronormativity displayed in these calls would cause no problem for a heterosexual caller. Instead, it would actively *assist* the smooth running of the interaction (see Kitzinger, 2005b). For example, the heterosexist presumption would result in the selection of the correct proterm for a heterosexual's (different-sex) partner without the caller needing to specify it, and the computer would unproblematically accept the caller's married status. Heteronormativity has, then, a profound effect on the lives of both heterosexuals and of nonheterosexuals. The same heterosexist presumption that causes hassles for lesbians helps to facilitate a straightforward interaction for heterosexuals. The heterosexist presumption displayed in these calls is a mundane instance of heterosexual privilege in action.

As LGBT researchers and as conversation analysts, we are especially interested in the systematic avoidance of repair (via noncorrection or em-

bedded correction) in these interactions. Our analysis has shown how the avoidance of repair maintains the impression of "nothing unusual is happening." In particular, the use of embedded correction is a method for correcting the heterosexist presumption while—at the same time—keeping lesbianism off the surface of the conversation. Far from flaunting their sexuality, the lesbians whose talk we have analyzed here are doing everything possible to be discreet about it and to treat it as "no big deal." In deploying embedded repair, the demonstrated capacity of the lesbian coconversationalist to respond in sequentially appropriate terms and to forward the action with which the sequence is otherwise engaged while—at the same time—replacing a presumed male partner with a female partner serves to display that this replacement is an incidental point of accuracy not germane to the main business of the interaction. It claims, in effect, that the gender of the partner and the lesbianism of the speaker (should) make no substantive difference (e.g., to booking a dentist appointment or to taking out car insurance). As such, it is a bid for—although, as we showed in Fragment 22, it does not always achieve—equality of treatment for the lesbian couple.

In these data fragments, then, embedded correction is an attempt to produce lesbianism as a "routinized" and "normalized" identity in an interactional context in which the need to perform the correction has already made apparent that lesbianism is neither "routine" nor "normal." For CA, this research builds on previous work on repair and correction to develop our understanding of the interactional contingencies that drive embedded (vs. exposed) correction and embedded (vs. exposed) receipts of correction.

Like Seidman et al. (2002), we believe that lesbian and gay identities have been increasingly normalized in recent years. In Britain, the legislation equalizing the age of consent (Ellis & Kitzinger, 2002) and introducing civil partnerships for same-sex couples (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2005) is evidence for this, and none of the coconversationalists here expresses disgust, outrage, or moral condemnation of lesbianism: Indeed, some of them, by apologizing for their heterosexist presumption, treat themselves as being at fault for having so presumed. However, neither the legislative changes nor the interactional responses we documented here constitute evidence that homosexuality is as yet a routine or normal sexual identity equivalent to heterosexuality. We suggest that "rethinking the sociology of the closet" means paying attention to the detail of the everyday ways in which *heterosexuality* is "routinized" and "normalized" as a hegemonic identity—such that coming out as lesbian continues to involve the disrup-

tion of tacit assumptions and the correction of taken-for-granted versions of the world. Life beyond the closet still involves decisions about whether "[t]o display or not to display; to tell or not to tell; to let on or not to let on; to lie or not to lie; and in each case, to whom, how, when, and where" (Goffman, 1963, p. 57).

NOTES

1 The fact that someone can be categorized with reference to a particular identity category does not make that identity automatically relevant in any particular interaction (Schegloff, 1997b). Just as heterosexuals are not always relevantly heterosexual at any particular interactional moment (Kitzinger, 2005b), so too lesbians are not always relevantly lesbians: They are equally well describable with reference to other conventional sociological categories including those indexing their gender, class, ethnicity, age, nationality, disability status, and so forth. These other categories are sometimes more interactionally relevant ones, even for those people who are also—sometimes simultaneously—hearably lesbian. Our focus here is on the ways in which their lesbianism becomes relevant in their talk; however, see Land and Kitzinger (2005b) for analyses of interactions in which these same lesbians produce themselves instead as, for example, a woman, a student, or a schizophrenic.

2 The intention had been to collect conversations from nonheterosexual people in general; however, it turned out that only lesbians volunteered to record their calls for this research. The corpus does include conversations between our lesbian volunteers and gay male coconversationalists (as well as heterosexual coconversationalists and many whose sexuality never becomes apparent over the course of the calls). Here, however, we have limited our analysis to lesbians only. Calls in the V. Land data corpus are tagged with mnemonics identifying from which of the five households each is taken. Calls collected by Karen are tagged NE; Nicola, OC; Rebecca (and her partner Julie), SW; Chloe (and her partner Katy), YU; and Sylvia (and her partner Janice), SC. Calls from each household were numbered consecutively—so, for example, SW21 refers to the 21st call on the tapes returned by Rebecca.

3 It is of course possible for same-sex couples to change their names to produce this effect as have Julie and Hillary Goodridge, the lead plaintiffs in the landmark lawsuit that achieved the right to marry for same-sex couples in Massachusetts (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2005).

4 A cut of ham/bacon.

5 In telephone conversations, the *maleness* or *femaleness* of the caller is attributed on the basis of voice quality: Only two gender misidentifications are apparent in the hundreds of calls in the data sets to which we have access (and none in the Land corpus). As we show, recipients' confidence in their ability to make correct gender attributions on the basis of voice quality is such that in none of the telephone data we have so far collected

in which lesbians refer to their partners in ways that identify them as female (e.g., by using a female proterm or identifiably *female* name) does a recipient revise his/her assessment of the *femaleness* of the speaker. Clearly, this confidence in gender attribution may be misplaced (and exploited; see Hall, 1995), but it is strong and contributes, of course, to the recipient's hearing of the speakers in Fragments 15 through 17 as heterosexual.

6 Space precludes the presentation of the data omitted here—but neither here nor in the earlier interaction omitted between lines 14 and 31 is there any reference by either Janice or the call taker to the second person to be insured.

7 Janice and Sylvia were married in Canada when same-sex marriage became legal there in 2003.

8 *Spouse* is not a word in common use in ordinary colloquial British English: There is not one single instance of it in the corpus of after-hours calls to the doctor (Kitzinger, 2005b) nor in the classic CA corpora of heterosexuals talking (Kitzinger, 2005c). Instead, as in Fragments 15 and 16 previously, married heterosexuals routinely use *husband* and *wife.*

9 We are grateful to an anonymous reviewer for drawing our attention to this point.

10 Here are two examples in which Rebecca refers to herself as "Miss":

WATER BOARD
[Land: SW21]

01	Clt:	Could you confirm thee name and address:
02		[plea:se.]
03	Reb:	[It's:] Miss Rebecca Craggs, nine seven
04		six Fairmead Avenue, Newtown R-T seventeen
05		eight L-K:.
06	Clt:	Fi:ne I've got that Miss Craggs.=Could I
07		take a telephone number please.
08	Reb:	.hh Yeah it's ((continues))

TELEPHONE COMPANY
[Land: SW26]

01	Clt:	Ri:ght. First of a:ll (.) can you:: (.)
02		confirm thee name and postcode on the
03		account please.
04	Reb:	Yeah it's Miss R Cra:g [gs]
05	Clt:	[Ye]ah

11 Note that forms of other-initiated repair that stop short of providing the repair solution, such as open class repair initiations (e.g., "Pardon?") or category constrained interrogatives (e.g., "who?"; "my what?") are unlikely—given the heterosexist presumption—to enable recipients to come up with the appropriate repair solutions. This at least is the

analysis of the lesbian speakers who provide the repair solution themselves instead of initiating repair that invites the prior speaker to provide the repair solution.

12 The one interlocutor—the call taker in Fragment 20a previously—who subsequently detects some possible problem with his selection of "husband"—also performs an embedded correction as shown in Fragment 20c following.

13 Space precludes any display or analysis of the intervening 3 min of talk. Note, however, that this talk does not include any reference (proterm or otherwise) to the second person to be insured. The offline talk (between Janice and Sylvia) is reproduced in Note 14 (as Fragment 20b).

14 Fragment 20b CAR INSURANCE
((*Off-line conversation in italics)*)

67	Jan:	*SYLVIA:: DO YOU KNOW WHEN THE CLAIM WAS:*
68		(.) F:OR THE *MICRA:*.
69		(3.0)
//		((Online discussion between Janice and call taker as to whether the exact date is actually necessary; it is, and Janice undertakes to locate it))
90		((24 secs))
91	Syl:	Here you are. "We are now ready to
92		settle your*clai:m" What's the date on that.*
93	Jan:	The twentieth of No*vembe:r. Oh! So it was la:ter.*
94	Syl:	Well uh (.) the claim was *settled in November so*
95		[the theft would've been] *earlier than that.*=
96	Jan:	[R i : : g h t .]
97	Jan:	Okay I'll see: if ((interference as handset is picked
98		up))
99	Jan:	Hi:. I've got a letter saying the
100		claim was settled in November.

15 The receptionist's effort to solve the problem of a female name in this slot is reminiscent of students' efforts, a couple of decades back, to solve the riddle that used regularly to be included in psychology of women textbooks as evidence for sexist presumptions. It went something like this. A father and his son, injured in a car accident, are taken to hospital, and the boy wheeled into theater where the surgeon takes one look at the child and says "I can't operate—that's my son." "How can this be?" C. Kitzinger remembers from teaching that students would come up with complicated theories involving adoptions, kidnappings, identical twins separated at birth, and so forth rather than invoke the (logically obvious but socially proscribed) answer that the surgeon was the boy's mother. Fortunately the riddle is no longer (usually) heard as such by British students today—just as in the nonheterosexist future we are seeking to create, the receptionist would not puzzle over the provision of a female name in this interactional slot.

16 The majority of LGBT people with whom we have discussed this data (and coming out more generally) say that they appreciate this kind of (exposed) receipt when a heterosexist presumption is corrected. It is experienced as an instance of the heterosexual per-

son being willing to address their own heterosexism explicitly, to take responsibility for it, and to apologize for it. By contrast, an embedded receipt (such as those in Fragments 20c and 23) is often experienced as treating the heterosexist presumption—and the coconversationalist's lesbianism—as something either so trivial as not to merit overt comment or as a dirty secret that ought not be acknowledged publicly. In a recent questionnaire study (Conley et al., 2002), "ignoring gay issues" (p. 28) was considered to be a common heterosexual mistake by 11% of the respondents, and "overemphasizing homosexuality" (p. 28) to be a mistake by 18%. As Conley et al. (2001) said, "it does appear that in some sense, heterosexual people may be walking a very fine line between acceptable and unacceptable treatments of the topic" (p. 28). Compared with the insurance salesman in Fragment 22b—who seems to us to be overemphasizing homosexuality—this receptionist seems to us to have got it just right!

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