

Journal of Language and Sexuality

Implicit homophobic argument structure: equal marriage discourse in The Moral Maze --Manuscript Draft--

Manuscript Number:	JOLS-D-14-00002
Full Title:	Implicit homophobic argument structure: equal marriage discourse in The Moral Maze
Short Title:	
First Author:	Isabelle van der Bom
Corresponding Author:	Sara Mills Sheffield Hallam University Sheffield, S Yorks UNITED KINGDOM
Article Type:	Article
Section/Category:	Other
Keywords:	homophobia; argumentation; same-sex marriage; imaginaries; metaphor; stance; recontextualisation
Manuscript Classifications:	30.12: Critical Discourse Analysis; 70.2: Gender and Language; 80.2: Heteronormativity; 80.3: Heterosexism; 80.7: Homophobia; 90.1: Ideology; 120.2: Media Representation; 120.6: Metaphor; 150.11: Power; 150.13: Prejudice; 160.1: Queer Linguistics
Abstract:	<p>This article analyses the linguistic and discursive elements which contribute to the production of implicit homophobia. Strategies for countering homophobic language have been developed. However, our interest here is in documenting implicit homophobia, where homophobic beliefs are only hinted at, are disassociated from the speaker, or are embedded within discursive and argument structures.</p> <p>We analyse the debate around the introduction of same-sex marriage legislation in the UK. We focus on a series of programmes on BBC Radio 4, The Moral Maze, where the issue of same-sex marriage was debated with a team of panelists and invited guests. Different perspectives on same-sex marriage were discussed, in a seemingly objective way, where the interactants distanced themselves from homophobic beliefs. We focus on stance, recontextualisation, imaginaries, and metaphor to make implicit homophobia visible. Thus, we develop a linguistic and discursive 'toolkit' which will enable implicit homophobia to be challenged and countered.</p>
Suggested Reviewers:	
Order of Authors Secondary Information:	

Implicit homophobic argument structure: Equal-marriage discourse in the *Moral Maze*¹

Abstract

This article analyses the linguistic and discursive elements which contribute to the production of implicit homophobia. Explicit homophobia has been well documented and strategies for countering discriminatory language have been developed (Baker, 2014; Leap, 2012). However, our interest here is in documenting implicit homophobia, where homophobic beliefs are only hinted at, are disassociated from the speaker, or are embedded within discursive and argument structures.

We decided to analyse the debate in the media around the introduction of equal or same-sex marriage legislation in the UK. We focused our analysis on a series of radio programmes on BBC Radio 4, *The Moral Maze*, (2011-12) where the issue of same-sex marriage was debated with a team of panelists and invited guests from a range of different organisations. Different perspectives on same sex marriage were discussed, in a seemingly objective and dispassionate way, where the interactants distanced themselves from homophobic beliefs and yet, implicitly subscribed to implicit homophobia. We used an analysis drawing on argumentation structure (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012) and through focusing on stance, recontextualisation, imaginaries, and metaphor, we developed an analysis which made the way that implicit homophobia works more visible. In this way, we hope to foreground implicit homophobia, and develop a linguistic and discursive 'toolkit' which will enable it to be challenged and countered.

Keywords: homophobia; argumentation; same-sex marriage; imaginaries; metaphor; stance; recontextualisation

¹ We would like to thank Jodie Clark and Liz Morrish for their input in the early stages of this research project.

1. Introduction:²

The aim of this paper is to map out at a discourse level what implicit homophobia consists of. Explicit homophobia, just like explicit sexism or racism, is relatively easy to identify, though still difficult to combat (Butler, 1997; Mills, 2008). However, *implicit* homophobia, where speakers hint at or presuppose homophobic beliefs whilst also claiming that they are not homophobic, is much more difficult to identify. The focus of this paper, therefore, is to provide a linguistic, discourse-level toolkit for identifying implicit homophobia. In this paper, we consider the debates about the legislation on equal marriage that have taken place in the UK; as a result, the homophobic beliefs that we identify here are specific to that context. We hope, however, that this discussion will also provide a framework for future analyses of implicit homophobia in other contexts. It is not always clear when something is implicitly homophobic. Indeed, when investigating these debates, we were initially loath to categorise the beliefs expressed around same-sex marriage in this way. By providing a framework, however, we hope to enable others to identify homophobia in its less obvious forms. This is not prescriptive; it is an illustration of what can be uncovered when a focus on linguistic elements is integrated with a focus on the discourse level.

By linguistic elements, we refer to features such as nouns, passivisation, tense, deixis, and so on. In much critical discourse analysis (CDA) work, it has been assumed that this should be the focus of analysis (Fairclough, 1989; Jeffries, 2010). However, more recent CDA work has insisted that we focus instead on elements at a higher discourse level, above the level of the sentence and at the level of argument structure (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012). We argue that it is only through integrating linguistic with discourse level elements that we are able to adequately analyse texts. We examine a range of linguistic and discourse level elements in this

² We worked collaboratively on the writing of this project by using the documents facility on Google Drive.

1
2
3
4 article, namely stance, metaphor, recontextualisation and imaginaries, but these need not be the
5
6 *only* things that are focused on in this kind of analysis. Salient features are dependent on the text
7
8 analysed and the specific debates that are taking place at the moment of writing; imaginaries are
9
10 important here, for example, because of the specific argument about what would happen if
11
12 same-sex marriage was legalised, a situation which was not a reality at the time of the data
13
14 collection.
15
16

17
18 The principal method of analysis used in this investigation is that of a modified form of CDA, a
19
20 form of linguistic analysis which is openly political about its aims. Through analysing linguistic
21
22 features in a range of texts, CDA theorists expose the ideological workings of these texts in order
23
24 to make readers aware of the way that texts co-opt them or persuade them. The main focus of
25
26 CDA theorists is newspaper texts and advertisements, although recently there has been a move
27
28 to analyse spoken discourse and to use corpus analysis (Baker, 2008; 2014). The Discourses of
29
30 Marriage Research Group (DoM) aims to raise awareness of homophobia, to provide a means
31
32 for identifying it, to facilitate increased discussion and activism, and to provide more productive
33
34 terms within which to discuss it (cf. Burton, 1982). By making participants in these debates
35
36 aware of the implicitly homophobic nature of their statements, it may be possible to shift the
37
38 terms of the debate. Our aim is political, and constitutes a form of action research³.
39
40
41
42

43
44 Firstly, we discuss the equal marriage debate and the stages of its legislation. We then go on
45
46 to describe the data, which consists of transcripts of three programmes on BBC Radio 4's *Moral*
47
48 *Maze* which, in 2011-12, focused on the same-sex marriage debate. We then discuss research
49
50 on language and homophobia, before moving to a discussion of the integrated linguistic and
51
52 discourse level elements of our analysis. The elements which we focus on, in order to describe
53
54 implicit homophobia, are recontextualisation, stance, imaginaries and metaphor; together, in the
55
56
57
58

59 ³ Action or standpoint research is politically motivated research which aims to bring about change in the
60 world (c.f. Burr, 1995).
61
62
63
64
65

context of the *Moral Maze* debates, these make up the argumentation structure. By 'argumentation structure', we mean the complex ways in which a text tries to persuade the reader of a particular argument or position. This is understood by Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 36) as 'a social and rational activity of attempting to justify or refute a certain claim, and aiming to persuade an interlocutor (a reasonable critic) of the acceptability (or unacceptability) of a claim', achieved dialogically through the presentation of rational and logical reasoning. Thus, in this article, we uncover the arguments used in *The Moral Maze* which we consider to be implicitly homophobic.

Our overall aim is to describe the way that, within this debate on the *Moral Maze*, the arguments about equal marriage are framed within a religious and biologicistic/'natural' framework which poses heterosexual marriage as the norm and which implicitly categorises same-sex relationships as abnormal and associated with other stigmatised, non-heteronormative sexualities (such as polyamory, incest and polygamy). In order to set out a framework for talking about equal marriage in positive terms, and not framed solely by religious discourse with its focus on sin, compliance, tradition and aberration, we find that there is a need to frame the discussion of same-sex marriage in terms of human rights or sexual freedoms. In this way, we hope to be able to map out alternative conceptions of equal marriage as well as illustrating the arguments against it.

2. The marriage equality debate in the UK

Same-sex couples were unable to have a legally-recognised union in the UK until 2005, when 'civil partnerships' were introduced by the Labour government. This was brought in as a separate legal union to marriage, (which remained the exclusive right of heterosexual couples)⁴. In September 2011, Liberal Democrat MP Lynne Featherstone, then the Under Secretary for

⁴ Heterosexual couples are not currently able to choose to have a civil partnership.

Equalities, announced that a government consultation into same-sex marriage would be launched in March 2012, consisting of a survey which was available for all citizens to complete. The survey asked the people of England and Wales' views on whether same-sex couples should be able to have a civil *marriage* rather than a civil *partnership*, and how this should be implemented. In December 2012, it was announced that 53% of the 228,000 responses agreed that same-sex couples should be able to have a civil marriage ceremony (HM Government 2012). One month later, Maria Miller, the Secretary of State (for Culture, Media and Sport) and Minister for Women and Equalities, introduced the Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Bill to Parliament. The Bill proposed the extension of civil marriages to same-sex couples, but prevented religious unions for same-sex couples or civil partnerships for heterosexual couples. After lengthy debate in the House of Commons, the Bill was passed by Members of Parliament with 366 votes in favour, and 161 votes against. After moving to the House of Lords, as is British constitutional procedure, the Bill was again debated and passed back to Parliament before being written into law by the Queen in July 2013. The Act came into effect in March 2014.

Throughout this twenty-two month process, the British media broadcast and published debates about whether same-sex couples should be allowed to marry. Political parties on the left, such as the Green Party, the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats and some Conservative party members – including the Prime Minister, David Cameron – were all broadly in favour, as were popular newspapers such as *The Times*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*⁵. Equally influential newspapers such as the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Times* were against it, along with some members of the Conservative party, but most political parties in opposition were minority parties – including the far-right *British National Party* and the *United Kingdom Independent Party*. A number of media outlets gave high-profile religious leaders a

⁵ These claims are based on preliminary findings from our analysis of a corpus of UK newspaper articles focusing on same-sex marriage (in prep).

platform to express their opposition to the plans; this included the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, who said in the *Daily Mail* that 'marriage will only remain the bedrock of a society if it is between a man and a woman' (Carey, 2012) and the country's most senior Catholic, Cardinal Keith O'Brien, who wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* that the government were indulging in 'madness' and same-sex marriage would be a 'grotesque subversion' (O'Brien, 2012).

The debate continued throughout the entire legislative process and, unusually, was considered three times by the *Moral Maze*, a weekly current affairs debate show on BBC Radio 4. In the analysis which follows, the discussions taking place in these broadcasts are considered in relation to how discourses of homophobia and equality are constructed and negotiated by the participants. Specifically, the use of stance, imaginaries and metaphor is investigated, in terms of how they enable speakers in the *Moral Maze*, through discussing heterosexual and homosexual relations within the context of religion, to take implicitly homophobic stances towards or against same-sex marriage whilst posing themselves as reasonable, logical and *not* homophobic.

3. The *Moral Maze*

The *Moral Maze* is a weekly forty-five minute radio programme, produced by the BBC since 1990 and hosted by Michael Buerk on Radio 4. Each week, Buerk introduces a particular topic which is to be discussed by four members of a panel through the interrogation of a selection of four 'witnesses'. The three programmes under scrutiny here are *The Moral Worth of Marriage* (first broadcast 16th February 2011, henceforth *MM0*), *Gay Marriage*⁶ (14th March 2012, henceforth *MM1*) and *The Moral Virtue of Marriage* (6th February 2013, henceforth *MM2*)⁷. It is

⁶ The popular media, including the BBC, routinely referred to the Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Bill as 'Gay Marriage'. In this paper, we refer to it instead as 'same-sex marriage' or 'equal marriage' to allow for the fact that not all people in same-sex relationships necessarily identify as *gay*.

⁷ Transcripts of each broadcast were created by the Discourses of Marriage Research Group and are

1
2
3
4 extremely irregular for the *Moral Maze* to revisit a topic, and so three separate broadcasts on
5
6 this topic signifies its social significance and newsworthiness.⁸
7
8

9 The structure of the *Moral Maze* is consistent from week to week; there is a panel, made up of
10 regular social commentators (including journalists, religious or business leaders, academics and
11 politicians) and a selection of witnesses who are invited because of their relevant specialist
12
13 experience or knowledge. In the course of the debates on same-sex marriage that make up our
14
15 data, several of the panellists - Melanie Phillips (who works for the right-wing *Daily Mail*
16
17 newspaper), ex-Conservative MP Michael Portillo and Catholic writer Clifford Longley - appear in
18
19 two broadcasts. Kenan Malik, a science historian and neurobiologist, appears in all three. The
20
21 witnesses are comprised predominantly of religious leaders and political campaigners, each
22
23 being interviewed, after being introduced by Beurk and making an opening statement. Beurk then
24
25 selects two of the panel members to interview the witness individually.
26
27
28
29
30
31

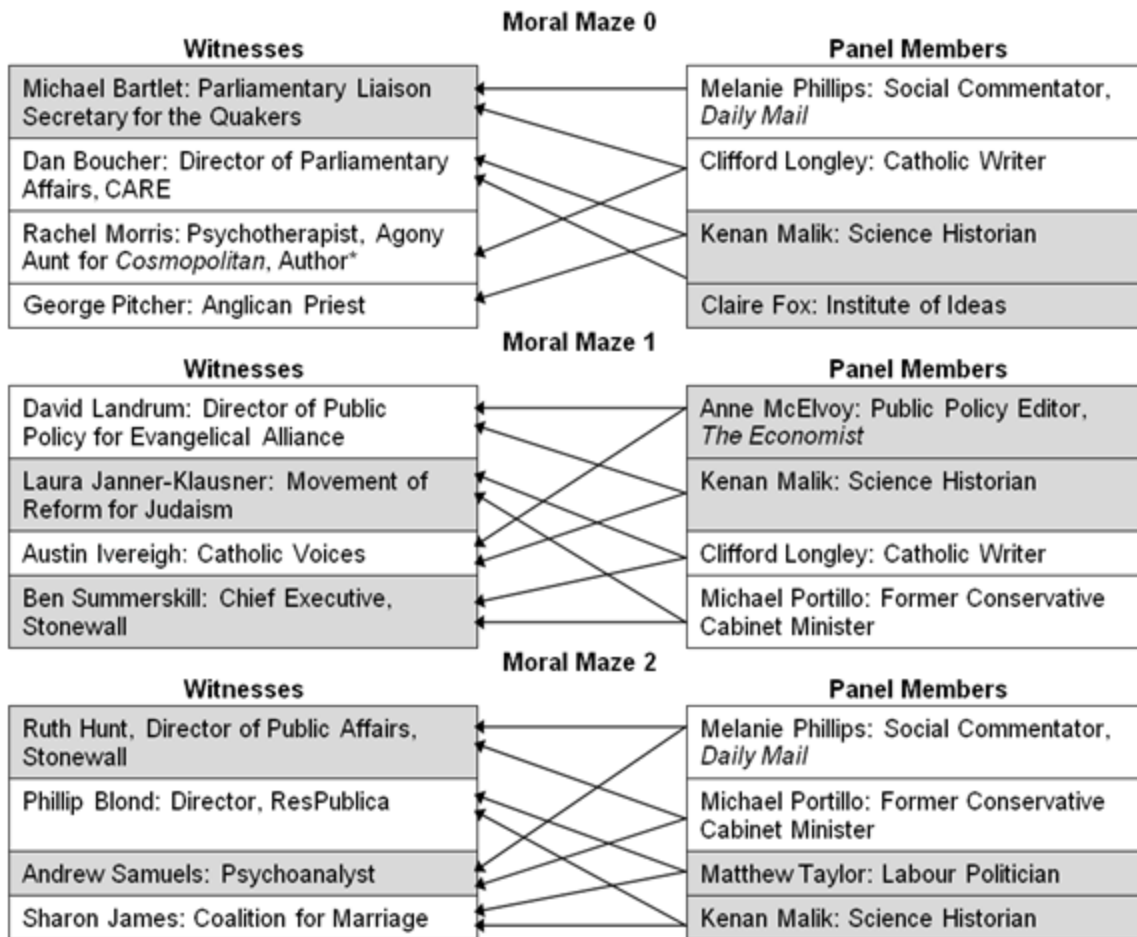
32 The witness is always the last person to take the floor before their segment ends, and they
33
34 tend to be given an equal amount of floor time - between eight to ten minutes - although this does
35
36 vary a little depending on the flow of discussion. Across the three *Moral Maze* transcripts
37
38 considered in this article, there are five witnesses and four panel members who broadly support
39
40 same-sex marriage, with six witnesses and three panel members opposed to it. Figure 1 shows
41
42 the structure of each of the recordings, detailing which witnesses were interviewed by which
43
44 panel members. The individuals highlighted in grey are in favour of same-sex marriage, whereas
45
46 those in white took stances against it. The panel members selected to interview each witness
47
48 are on opposite sides of the debate; no witness is interviewed by a panel member who shares
49
50
51
52
53
54
55

56 available via our blog, at <http://discoursesofmarriage.blogspot.co.uk>.

57 ⁸ MM0 is not analysed in as much detail as the later two programmes as it was largely concerned with the
58 state of heterosexual marriage in the light of the upcoming legislation on same-sex marriage. We do,
59 however, refer to this programme when it is of contextual relevance.
60
61
62
63
64
65

their stance.

Figure 1: Mapping the *Moral Maze*



*Rachel Morris is not included in the analysis as she did not discuss same-sex marriage

Of particular significance to the current study is what Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 83) refer to as *recontextualisation*. This is the process whereby discourses from one context are reappropriated or 'colonised' in another, such as economic discourses like Marxism being taken and used within political or business fields, or management discourse being used within the context of universities. When speakers build arguments they both draw on existing discourses from other contexts and gradually create their own discourses that come to be associated with their argument (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012: 84). The process of recontextualisation is

1
2
3
4 important to consider when analysing the construction of a line of argumentation - such as
5
6 justifying either a pro- or anti- same-sex marriage stance - as, by drawing on recognisable
7
8 discourses from contexts such as the law courts or scientific research, speakers may index
9
10 (point to) an authoritative identity or construct an objective stance .
11
12

13 The debates in the *Moral Maze* are legitimised through the recontextualisation of the social
14
15 institution of law; the way that the programme is structured colonises discursive structures more
16
17 typically associated with legal contexts. The format of the show may be compared with the
18
19 format of a UK Crown Court, with Buerk serving as the judge (an impartial, yet controlling,
20
21 persona) and the panel members serving as barristers who ask questions of the witnesses (a
22
23 loaded term) who are called to testify. According to Coulthard and Johnson (2007:96), there are
24
25 several fixed elements of a Crown Court trial, including the indictment (“the offence(s) with which
26
27 the trial is concerned being read out to the court”), the opening address, evidence from
28
29 prosecution and defence lawyers, the closing summing-up and judgement. In the *Moral Maze*,
30
31 Buerk begins each broadcast with an overview of the topic at hand, representative of the
32
33 indictment and a judge’s opening address. He then introduces each of the panel members in
34
35 turn, allowing them a brief opening statement in much the same way that both prosecution and
36
37 defence barristers are given the floor to summarise their position. Witnesses are then called,
38
39 albeit by the host rather than the panel members themselves, and are (cross) examined by two
40
41 panel members.
42
43
44
45
46
47

48 The recontextualisation of legal discourse in the *Moral Maze* allows the ‘witnesses’ to be seen
49
50 as legitimate and authorised to speak on the topic of discussion. Coulthard and Johnson note
51
52 that ‘Not all witnesses are equal’, claiming that, in court cases, the vast majority of witnesses will
53
54 be ‘lay people’, with expert witnesses called upon only when necessary (2007:112). However, in
55
56 the case of the *Moral Maze*, all of the witnesses are arguably experts in their respective fields.
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 What is questionable is whether their expert status as, for example, religious leaders,
5
6 campaigners or psychoanalysts, actually qualifies them as 'experts' on marriage law. Their role
7
8 as witnesses gives them a presumed authority, yet their views on marriage are necessarily
9
10 biased. This fuels the debate, of course, but the reasons for them being selected as expert
11
12 witnesses seem arbitrary or even partisan. The fact that historians on religion and religious
13
14 leaders have been chosen as experts, for example, leads to the debate being skewed towards
15
16 the framing of marriage in terms of historical and religious discourse and, because same-sex
17
18 marriage is discussed as an aberration in this context, tends to frame the debates in implicitly
19
20 homophobic terms. Similarly, we might ask why there are no witnesses who specifically identify
21
22 as atheist, whilst Rabbis, Quakers, Catholics and Anglicans are asked to contribute. There is
23
24 also no commentator who happens to be gay but is not specifically involved in LGB (lesbian, gay
25
26 and bisexual) rights activism. We feel that the casting of the broadcast within such a religious
27
28 and historical framework ensures that the discussion is led in a particular way; the focus tends
29
30 towards religion rather than LGBT activism or human rights.
31

32
33 In terms of the recontextualisation of legal proceedings, the host, Michael Buerk, is presented
34
35 as an impartial judge, and he therefore gives each witness a similar amount of time to speak.
36
37 However, when he introduces the the topic of discussion in the opening segment of each *Moral*
38
39 *Maze* debate, he does tend to highlight the arguments against same-sex marriage rather than
40
41 those for it. It is the host's remit to introduce each panelist and witness, and also to end the
42
43 questioning of one panel member and introduce another; in this sense, he has control of the floor
44
45 at all times. Towards the end of the broadcast, each panel member is invited to comment on
46
47 what they have heard, parallel to the closing speeches afforded to defence and prosecution
48
49 barristers in court (although, unlike the monologue of the courtroom, there is some discussion
50
51 between panel members). The host always gets the final word. He may give an extremely brief
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 summary, similar to a condensed version of a judge's summing-up, before ending the
5
6 broadcast. Whilst there is no jury as such in the *Moral Maze*, it is arguable that the radio
7
8 listeners go beyond being passive audience members; they are encouraged to evaluate the
9
10 arguments of the panel and the witnesses in order to 'sentence' the issue at hand on an
11
12 individual level.
13
14

15
16 Our analysis of the three *Moral Maze* broadcasts considers this recontextualisation of the law
17
18 courts in the light of the arguments that are presented in relation to same-sex marriage. We
19
20 consider the linguistic strategies underlying these arguments and specifically focus on those
21
22 which allow speakers to position same-sex relationships as unequal to heteronormative ones. In
23
24 order to identify such implicitly homophobic discourse, we consider the ways in which speakers
25
26 draw on these heteronormative ideologies, an issue discussed below with reference to research
27
28 in language and sexuality.
29
30

31 32 **4. Language and homophobic discourse** 33

34
35 As will be shown below, in the *Moral Maze* broadcasts analysed in this article, the speakers who
36
37 are against same-sex marriage largely draw on heteronormative discourses to justify their
38
39 stance. Heteronormative discourses are those which position heterosexuality as both natural
40
41 and normal (Motschenbacher, 2011: 152) and, in turn, render 'all other forms of human sexual
42
43 expression pathological, deviant, invisible, unintelligible, or written out of existence' (Yep, 2002:
44
45 167). Heteronormativity is, then, a subtle cultural system which serves to maintain a gender and
46
47 sexual order which is driven by 'opposite-sex' attraction; through this system, homophobic
48
49 discourses are enabled. Homophobia may be defined as an irrational fear directed against
50
51 same-sex identities, desires and practices (Baker and Ellece, 2011: 56), and there has recently
52
53 been increasing interest in the language of homophobic discourse within the field of language
54
55 and sexuality (Leap, 2012: 567). As Morrish notes, homophobic language involves hate speech,
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 the use of which can have negative outcomes ranging from ‘an incitement to vote for a
5
6 proposition, or to murder or abuse the individual suspected of being gay’ (2010: 325).
7
8 Homophobic discourse is not always realised in the form of hate speech, however. Indeed, as
9
10 Brickell (2001: 214) has argued, overtly homophobic language which directly positions LGB
11
12 people as inferior has become somewhat ‘frowned upon’. In this article, we are interested in
13
14 what we refer to as *implicit homophobia*, focusing upon the linguistic strategies which are used
15
16 to draw upon heteronormative ideologies which, in turn, allows speakers to position same-sex
17
18 relationships as unequal to heterosexual ones, and at the same time ensures that the speaker
19
20 cannot be accused of being homophobic. As Morrish (2010) argues, no linguistic features are
21
22 intrinsically homophobic; it is rather the use of particular terms and argument structures in a
23
24 given context which may lead to an overarching message of homophobia. As such, a text – or its
25
26 authors - cannot be classified as homophobic based solely on linguistic feature-spotting but,
27
28 instead, ‘shared properties of homophobic texts’ will be found at the discourse level (Morrish,
29
30 2010: 328). In this sense, homophobia is best seen as occasioned by an amalgamation of
31
32 discursive and stylistic strategies, rather than as being embedded within a text (Leap, 2004).
33
34
35
36
37
38

39 Whilst studies of *explicit* homophobia may focus, for example, on the use of homophobic
40
41 epithets such as ‘fag’ (Pascoe, 2005), or on the way ‘gay’ can be used to stigmatise
42
43 heterosexual males who are perceived as insufficiently ‘masculine’ (Cameron, 1997), research
44
45 investigating how homophobia is *hidden* within texts relies on layered analysis of texts; from
46
47 close linguistic analysis to an analysis of broader discursive and socio-historical levels.
48
49

50 Peterson’s (2010) research is an example of this; he examines how institutional homophobia is
51
52 instantiated in texts on the website of a Christian organisation. He focuses on stylistic choices
53
54 and discursive strategies to uncover how lexical choices, modality, agency, genre appropriation
55
56 and semantic relationships are used to reinforce supposedly objective evaluations that position
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 gay people as deviant. Similarly, Provencher's (2010) study of homophobic language in France
5
6 focuses on discursive strategies in relation to speaker/listener constructs and social semiotics.
7
8 He finds that the discreditation of an openly gay mayor because of his sexuality is possible in
9
10 France, due to broadly accepted notions of French citizenship and the underlying assumptions
11
12 about who belongs to the collective social unit (e.g. normative members of society). In the
13
14 analysis which follows, we take a similar 'layered analysis' approach to uncover the implicit
15
16 homophobic discourse underlying individuals' stances against marriage equality.
17
18

19
20 Of particular concern here, of course, is political discourse and debate concerning rights for
21
22 same-sex couples. In Britain today, the use of overtly homophobic or sexist language by those in
23
24 politics and in the public eye is deemed unacceptable. This was demonstrated in September
25
26 2013, when Member of the European Parliament Godfrey Bloom was reprimanded for joking that
27
28 women in parliament were 'sluts' (Holehouse and Deacon, 2013). Those individuals opposing
29
30 legal changes that give LGB people more rights must therefore be careful with their use of
31
32 language. The study of speeches by politicians and public figures about the equality of gay
33
34 people is more likely to bring to light examples of *implicit* rather than *explicit* homophobia, then.
35
36 An example comes from Burrige (2004), who analysed transcripts from the House of Lords
37
38 during debates surrounding the repeal of Section 28, a law passed in 1998 to prevent teachers
39
40 from 'promoting' same-sex relationships to children. Burrige shows that those opposed to the
41
42 repeal of this law did not tend to make overtly homophobic comments, but instead emphasised
43
44 that 'the rationale for discrimination [was] located in something external to a speaker's attitude to
45
46 homosexuality' (Burrige, 2004:328). One particular issue repeated in Burrige's data was the
47
48 consideration of the rights of children, which framed anti-repeal comments in terms of social
49
50 welfare, as opposed to prejudice against gay people. As will be shown later, this link between
51
52 homosexuality and child welfare is reiterated in the *Moral Maze* data, in the repeated use of the
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

heteronormative argument that marriage is intrinsically linked to procreation and successful child rearing. Homosexuality is thus characterised as endangering children.

Baker (2004) also provides a useful analysis of the language used in debates in the House of Lords between 1998 and 2000, focussing on proposals to lower the age of consent for gay men from 18 to 16. Baker's analysis centres on how discourses of homosexuality are constructed by participants through the investigation of frequent lexical items used by opposing sides. He located a range of implicit homophobic arguments. Those against the proposal to lower the age of consent for gay men drew on discourses of danger, criminality and abnormality. A discourse of 'danger and ruin' was characterised by the belief that anal sex is dangerous (Baker, 2004: 97), another example was that the reforms represented the 'thin end of the wedge', a metaphor with similar connotations to the 'slippery slope', which features in the *Moral Maze* data below. Baker shows how the use of phrases like *gross indecency* and *commit* imply criminal behaviour, and anal intercourse is thus positioned as aberrant in relation to 'normal intercourse' (2004: 100). Baker argues that the anti-reformers are able to present implicit homophobic arguments by only talking about homosexual *acts*, not gay *people*, thereby drawing a distinction between behaviour and identity. This disassociation allows the anti-reformers to justify their opposition in that, if homosexuality is defined as an act, and the prototypical act of homosexuality is anal sex, which is dangerous and criminal, then the age of consent for anal sex should not be lowered.⁹ In an earlier study, Morrish (1997) analyses newspaper reports of the parliamentary vote on the age of consent for gay men. She found that whilst members of 'the gay community' argued from the stance of human rights, right-wing commentators framed the debate in terms of 'prurient judgements about sexual behaviour' (1997: 341). Gay sex was also described as 'falling short of

⁹ In an October 2013 BBC 2 programme, *Out There*, on the legislation on homosexuality throughout the world, Stephen Fry drew attention to the fact that anti-gay campaigners tend to focus on anal sex obsessively, even though he argues that not all gay men engage in it. See also Baker (2014) for discussions of the representation of homosexuality.

1
2
3
4 God's ideal' by a Church of England priest (*ibid.*) This resonates with the findings of Baker's
5
6 (2004) study, in that anti-reformers focus on sexual behaviour rather than sexual identity.
7
8 Baker also shows that those in favour of reform framed the debate in terms of equality and
9
10 tolerance, a finding which also features in the work of Baunach (2011). In relation to debates over
11
12 same-sex marriage taking place in the USA, Baunach notes that the 'media frame' of morality
13
14 (as used predominantly by those who are anti-same-sex marriage) was contrasted with the
15
16 equality/tolerance media frame (characteristic of those who were pro-same-sex marriage).
17
18 Rather than focussing on whether an argument is homophobic or not, Baunach's analysis
19
20 reveals that those in favour of same-sex marriage may position the debate as a 'civil rights or
21
22 acceptance issue' (Baunach, 2011: 348-9). In doing so, they are able to move the debate on
23
24 from 'right or wrong' questions and towards 'equality' questions.
25
26
27
28

29
30 An important issue in this area of research, however, is the question of visibility: who actually
31
32 contributes to debates about gay rights in the mainstream media? Moscovitz (2010) highlights
33
34 this question in her analysis of a corpus of US news bulletins, documenting who was given
35
36 airtime to talk about/for same-sex marriage. Moscovitz found that 'gays and lesbians were not
37
38 often given a chance to speak in news reports' (2010: 34), meaning that those who were to be
39
40 directly affected by any changes in legislation were not part of the decision-making process in
41
42 prime-time public domain. Given the present study, Moscovitz's finding is interesting, because
43
44 although some contributors in our data self-identify as married or unmarried by choice, none of
45
46 the participants explicitly identify as gay (or in same-sex relationships) during the radio
47
48 broadcasts. Furthermore, Moscovitz (2010:27) noted that when covering 'gay issues... gay and
49
50 lesbian people are typically pitted against opposing 'official' sources from legal, medical, religious
51
52 and political authorities'. In the *Moral Maze* data, below, speakers were not asked to identify
53
54 themselves in terms of their sexual orientation, although (in line with Moscovitz' argument) we
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 do see 'experts' from the fields of religion and politics dominating the discussion. In the three
5
6 *Moral Maze* transcripts (as shown in Figure 1), seven out of a total of twenty participants are
7
8 primarily labelled as representing a religious/religion-based institution, and five are introduced as
9
10 being from a political/campaigning background.
11
12

13
14 In order to reveal implicitly homophobic stances in broadcasts of the *Moral Maze*, we follow
15
16 the approaches outlined in this section by identifying the intertextual clues, references and
17
18 discursive strategies which underpin speakers' opposition to same-sex marriage. Provencher
19
20 (2010: 291) asks how these clues or references may lead to the interpretation of a message as
21
22 'invested with homophobic intent'. Whilst we do not feel it is possible to identify the 'intent' of
23
24 speakers, through the analysis of stances taken, metaphors employed and imaginaries invoked
25
26 in the participants' speech, we map out more clearly the workings of implicit homophobic
27
28 discourse.
29
30

31 32 **5. Analysis**

33
34 In this section, we examine recontextualisation, stance taking imaginaries and metaphors in turn.
35
36 We begin, below, by briefly examining which discourses are being recontextualised, in order to
37
38 analyse the argumentation strategies and stances which are being indexed when speakers
39
40 make their claims. For example, if a speaker draws on scientific or religious discourse during a
41
42 *Moral Maze* discussion, we describe the ways that they do this in order to make a successful
43
44 claim and mark out their own position as logical and authoritative. We then move on to consider
45
46 the use of metaphor and imaginaries, and patterns of stance-taking which are used to in
47
48 arguments that produce implicit homophobia.
49
50
51

52 53 **a. Recontextualisation**

54
55 We discussed above the way that the format of the *Moral Maze* seemed to have a judicial
56
57 structure. In addition, the lexical and syntactic choices of the panel members also reflect this
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 judicial framing. For example, one witness makes direct reference to a particular law - 'It's
5 actually a right laid out in the 1989 Declaration of Rights for the Child' (*MM2*) – to support their
6 arguments. Additionally, in *MM1* we have collocation sets such as 'would you accept that
7 [+proposition]', 'so, you do agree that [+proposition]', and 'can you confirm that [+proposition]', all
8 of which are reminiscent of legal questioning (*cf.* Tiersma 1999: 164) and all of which are used
9 only by panel members. This particular grammatical structure also relates to how panellists use
10 stance attribution (discussed in detail below).

11
12 Further parallels between the role of a Crown Court Judge and the *Moral Maze* include the
13 host's rejection of long statements by panel members when they are questioning a witness,
14 similar to the way a judge rules. For example, the host interrupts panel member Melanie Phillips
15 in *MM2* to ask 'this is a question, is it Melanie?', cutting into what was becoming a monologue in
16 which she expressed her own views. Although the use of a tag question may mitigate the impact
17 of the face threatening act¹⁰ performed by Buerk in this example, Melanie Phillips has to justify
18 her position in order to continue. This process is similar to court proceedings and illustrates the
19 power differentials between the panellists and the host.¹¹ Beurk also controls the input of panel
20 members by noting the length of time for discussion they have left and by rejecting extended
21 turns for witnesses.

22
23 However, recontextualisation in the *Moral Maze* data goes beyond legal discourse. There is
24 also recontextualisation of terms associated with religion, in particular Christianity. Religion is
25 mentioned to varying degrees as one of the key issues surrounding (opposition to) same-sex
26 marriage, but the discussion of religious issues is not in and of itself evidence of

27
28 ¹⁰ A face threatening act, for Brown and Levinson (1987), is a challenge to a person's need to be both liked
29 and not imposed upon.

30
31 ¹¹ This issue of face saving and face threat is of importance here, because in this type of debate, a strong
32 imperative is bolstering your claim to impartiality and authoritativeness (see Watts, 2003 on face and face
33 threat).

recontextualisation. There are some instances, however, where religious terminology and imagery are appropriated into the discourse without overt reference to any religious element of marriage, such as:

(1) ...we continually evolve, which is why I believe we've survived for so long because if we'd stayed where we were we'd still be in the desert very thirsty, *MM1*

(2) I talk about marriage being there to sanctify a relationship, *MM1*

(3) That was nice to have a convert, isn't it?, *MM1*

(4) Do you think that people who think that that should be preserved are themselves some kind of bigot?, *MM2*

(5) And the other nine percent can go to hell, can they?, *MM2*

(6) In other words, it's a three part bond: mother, father, children, *MM2*

(7) Can I mention the word sacred union of two people who come together in order to procreate children? *MM2*

Mentions of Jews in the desert (1), going to hell (5) and a three part bond (6) are examples of the recontextualisation of religious themes in these broadcasts. Furthermore, we can see lexical items with religious connotations, such as sanctify (2), convert (3), bigot (4), and sacred (7) occurring in *MM1* and *MM2*. Thus, although to a much smaller extent than the recontextualisation of the field of law, there is still arguably a link to religious discourse used to legitimise the debates at hand, and these mentions of religion necessarily frame the debate in religious terms.

Finally, scientific lexis is drawn on in the debate, predominantly to support the arguments of those opposed to same-sex marriage. Marriage is referred to as 'a natural institution' seven times across *MM1* and *MM2*, whilst the church is characterised as a living being (8). In contrast, human relationships are reduced to statistics (examples 10-11 and 13), meaning that the debate

1
2
3
4 is both quantified and dehumanised.
5

- 6 (8) But, the church is an organic thing, the church is a *body*..., *MM1*
7
8 (9) Well ninety-one percent of gay people say they believe in marriage, *MM2*
9
10 (10) ...the outcomes for married people and their children tend to be statistically better,
11
12 *MM0*
13
14 (11) Natural parents in a married household, *MM2*
15
16 (12) ...a one in two chance of being without one of their natural parents, *MM2*
17
18 (13) It's the condition which links generation of children to their biological parents, *MM2*
19
20 (14) It's always better for the children of biological parents to stay with their biological
21
22 parents, *MM2*
23
24 (15) The reason we exclude some of those marriages is for a biological reason and
25
26 marriage is based on biology, *MM2*
27
28 (16) There are some inequalities that are down to biology, *MM2*
29
30 (17) Can you confirm that one man cannot impregnate another man..., *MM2*
31
32 (18) ...a situation where people have a natural desire to live together in a marriage but
33
34 happen to be gay, *MM2*
35
36
37
38
39
40

41 The word 'natural' is used interchangeably with the term 'biological' when referring to parents
42 (examples 11-14). By definition, 'biological parents' must refer to the two human beings who
43 contributed genetic material for the creation of a child, yet there is no such clear-cut definition for
44 the term 'natural parents'. By using the two terms interchangeably, same-sex parents, who
45 currently cannot both contribute genetically to their child/children (see example 17), are
46 eliminated from the scope of both 'biological' and 'natural' parents. The logical parallel to this,
47 though not stated explicitly, is that same-sex parents must therefore be 'unnatural' as they
48 cannot fulfil this biological criterion. This conceptualisation of parenthood supports the argument
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 that those opposing same-sex marriage draw upon heteronormative discourses to support their
5
6 position.
7

8
9 Invoking the concept of nature when discussing the legal rights of gay people is not unique to
10
11 this dataset; Edwards (2007: 249) summarises van Gend's (2004: 1) argument that 'Nature does
12
13 not include same-sex relationships in its design and no biological imperative therefore exists for
14
15 sex between women or between men'. Furthermore, these biological differences are explicitly
16
17 stated as a cause of inequality between gay and straight couples (examples 15-16), thus
18
19 removing any human agency and rejecting arguments about sexuality-based discrimination (see
20
21 Edwards 2007 for an extended discussion of the links between marriage and biology in
22
23 same-sex marriage debates). However, it is important to note that the link between nature and
24
25 marriage is not always made in support of those opposing same-sex marriage. Example 18
26
27 illustrates that the term can also be used in order to legitimise same-sex relationships.
28
29

30
31 Overwhelmingly, the most popular link between science and marriage in the *Moral Maze*
32
33 dataset is the repetition of arguments about procreation. The lemma 'procreation' occurs 33
34
35 times across *MM1* and *MM2*, with the cluster 'procreation of children' occurring nine times. The
36
37 repetition of this term, alongside 15 occurrences of 'biology' and 120 occurrences of 'child',
38
39 highlights the primary argument used by those opposed to same-sex marriage: marriage is
40
41 where procreation should take place. As procreation is not possible (in the strict biological sense
42
43 noted above) for same-sex couples, they therefore cannot be married. We thus see the rejection
44
45 of same-sex marriage based on a supposedly scientific basis, which draws heavily on
46
47 heteronormative discourses - that couples marry so that they can procreate without sin, and that
48
49 all couples want to have children. Such arguments run throughout *MM1* and *MM2*, despite
50
51 mentions of both gay and straight couples using IVF or choosing adoption. Throughout the
52
53 discussions, then, participants build their argument for or against same-sex marriage by putting
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 forward particular standpoints or views which relate to the morality of same-sex relationships
5
6 generally and the perceived social and biological need for marriage - this enables those against
7
8 same-sex marriage to make their stance clear without appearing to be homophobic. In the
9
10 following section, this is considered in more detail.
11
12

13 **b. Stance**

14
15 As outlined in the analysis so far, we are concerned in this paper to explore the means by which
16
17 speakers construct an argument for or against same-sex marriage, with particular emphasis on
18
19 the arguments against. A useful way of thinking about this process is to consider what the
20
21 speakers are doing as *stance-taking*. A stance is an evaluation, whereby a speaker takes up 'a
22
23 position with respect to the form or content of one's utterance' (Jaffe 2009: 3). By considering
24
25 how speakers take stances, we can see how they build their arguments. By analysing the
26
27 stances taken by the programmes' participants, we are able to locate key themes which are
28
29 used in the production of an argument against same-sex marriage.
30
31
32
33
34

35 As mentioned above, both panelists and witnesses initially are called upon to state briefly their
36
37 views on same-sex marriage. It is interesting, then, to note that many of the panellists do not use
38
39 the opportunity to take direct, unambiguous stances; if those against same-sex marriage, only
40
41 Portillo ('I think that the extension to gays...is unnecessary', *MM1*) and Phillips ('marriage is a
42
43 unique institution with a unique value to society... [it] consists in the safeguarding of the...next
44
45 generation [and] can't be applied to others', *MM2*) do this. Of those in favour, only Taylor ('I don't
46
47 see that institution being damaged by it being opened up to homosexuals', *MM2*) and McElvoy
48
49 (who states that it would be 'profoundly unfair' to exclude gay people from marriage, *MM1*) take
50
51 what we might call 'direct' stances - statements which clearly reveal their position on the subject
52
53 of same-sex marriage.
54
55
56
57
58

59 In contrast to this, the panel member Malik avoids taking clear stances throughout his turns in
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 all three broadcasts, and therefore does not express his opinion particularly clearly. For example,
5
6 in *MM1* he responds to the request for his stance by asking an open question ('what should
7
8 [marriage] be like now...?') and, in *MM2*, he states rather ambiguously 'I think marriage is a
9
10 social institution'. Similarly, in *MM1* Longley rallies against the homophobic language used by
11
12 some in the Catholic church around the time of the broadcast, rather than taking a direct stance
13
14 which aligns him with or against same-sex marriage itself. Interestingly, in *MM2*, Portillo's stance
15
16 changes from that of *MM1*, where he was explicitly *against* same-sex marriage, to that of an
17
18 apparent lack of interest, stating that he does not 'get terribly passionate' about the subject. This
19
20 shift may be indicative of the changing social and political landscape, as by the time *MM2* was
21
22 broadcast in 2013, the Government consultation (see Section 2, above) had shown public opinion
23
24 to be mostly positive or neutral.
25
26
27
28
29

30 Focusing on the witnesses, we can see that it is during their statements that the most
31
32 stances are taken. This is because the witnesses are asked to present and defend their opinion,
33
34 and are often challenged into making a clear stance (e.g. 'I think that...'). In contrast, the
35
36 panellists rarely have to defend – or even articulate – their own opinions or evaluations. The
37
38 majority of stances taken by the witnesses against same-sex marriage function to define
39
40 marriage as a heterosexual union, thus falling back on heteronormative ideologies that men and
41
42 women are fundamentally different yet matching. In *MM1*, Landrum's stance makes use of the
43
44 claim that 'marriage is about difference', whilst Ivereigh refers to 'gender complementarity'. In
45
46 *MM2*, Blond's stances reveal his position very clearly: 'marriage has two primary goods – the
47
48 generation of children and it magnificently negotiates the sexual difference'. James continues
49
50 this theme, again focusing on children, by stating that 'marriage is the way of uniting man and
51
52 woman to have their own children'.
53
54
55
56
57

58 The repeated use of the construction 'marriage+is' enables these speakers to align
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 themselves with heterosexual marriage rather than same-sex marriage; they tend not to begin
5
6 their utterances with 'I think that...', but instead offer repeated definitions which make their stance
7
8 clear. Despite being a panellist rather than a witness, Phillips also draws on this particular form
9
10 of argumentation, claiming that 'marriage as an institution is important to society purely because,
11
12 I would suggest, of its crucial importance in the safeguarding and upbringing of children' (*MM2*).
13
14 Similarly, whilst Ivereigh argues that marriage is 'a fundamentally inclusive institution' (*MM1*),
15
16 Blond argues that it is 'a peculiar heterosexual institution' (*MM2*). The stances taken against
17
18 same-sex marriage, then, are often achieved by the reinforcement of what marriage is; indeed, in
19
20 *MM0*, panellist Longley claims that there needs to be a 'precise definition of marriage' because,
21
22 if there is not, 'anybody [can] come along and (...) hijack it'. In this moment, it is clear that
23
24 heterosexual people are not potential referents of 'anybody', making it clear that Longley is
25
26 positioning gay people, specifically, as potentially hijacking marriage. This construct clearly
27
28 places same-sex relationships as *other* and *different* to heterosexual ones, thus reproducing
29
30 heteronormative cultural expectations and reflecting typical stance-work by those against
31
32 same-sex marriage in the broadcasts.
33
34
35
36
37
38

39 By looking at stance-taking in the *Moral Maze* broadcasts, an important conclusion may be
40
41 drawn about the way that an argument against same-sex marriage is constructed. By taking a
42
43 similar stance repeatedly, speakers can build a contextualised subject position for themselves.
44
45 In *MM1*, for example, Landrum repeats the stance that marriage is about difference by stating
46
47 that it is conjugal, for procreation, a social good and natural; in turn, he constructs the subject
48
49 position of 'a logical person', which indexes rationality and allows him to present himself as
50
51 reasonable rather than phobic. In doing so, he is also able to avoid taking an explicit stance or
52
53 overtly stating his position on homosexuality itself; instead, by constantly *defining* marriage in a
54
55 way which precludes same-sex couples, he can build an argument that marriage simply cannot
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 include two people of the same-sex. Such stance-taking enables those against same-sex
5
6 marriage to avoid taking explicitly homophobic stances, as they position the reasons by which
7
8 they define marriage as unchangeable and, therefore, as out of their hands.
9

10
11 In contrast to this, stances taken which are in favour of same-sex marriage in the debates
12
13 tend to be direct; this highlights the fact that tolerance is more socially acceptable in this debate
14
15 than homophobia, hence the reason that those taking an anti-same-sex marriage stance
16
17 mitigate their stances. The pro-same-sex marriage stances tend to concern the following
18
19 themes: same-sex couples should have equal access to marriage, marriage is a social good
20
21 irrespective of sexuality, and what matters is that two people love each other. However, these
22
23 stances are typically made in *response* to the constant reproduction of heteronormative
24
25 marriage discourses put forward by those who reject the argument of equal marriage. For
26
27 instance, Janner-Klausner's pro- stances in *MM1* include the argument that 'procreation is only
28
29 part of marriage – it's good for families to have two people who commit to each other' and the
30
31 stance that 'marriage equality has nothing to do with incest'. Similarly, Samuels in *MM2* is forced
32
33 to argue in favour of same-sex marriage by responding to heteronormative discourses
34
35 concerning marriage and procreation, taking stances such as 'marriage is not the only way to
36
37 deal with the questions of giving children the upbringing they deserve' and 'there are very many
38
39 ways to relate to one another and for families to organise themselves in society'. In this sense,
40
41 all of the pro- stances are taken in response to the anti- stances, whereas the anti-marriage
42
43 stances seem to hold weight in their own right. This reflects both the set-up of the broadcasts, in
44
45 that those chosen to represent the opposition to same-sex marriage focus on moral and
46
47 religious reasons, and also the broader cultural context whereby heteronormative ideologies are
48
49 so salient that same-sex couples continue to be looked upon as 'other'. In this sense, however,
50
51 those in favour of same-sex marriage are able to construct a convincing argument, but they are
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 always 'on the back foot' in that they have to work harder to defend their stance, because it is
5
6 more likely to be seen as radical (whereas those against same-sex marriage have history,
7
8 tradition and religion on their side).
9

10
11 The nature of the programme, mimicking as it does a legal setting, leads there to be a distinct
12
13 power disparity between the witnesses and the panel members. This, in turn, leads to an
14
15 interesting use of stance, whereby those in power (the panel) tactically *attribute* a stance to the
16
17 witness they are interrogating, rather than simply asking them their opinion or directly evaluating
18
19 something. An example of this comes from *MM2*, where Portillo attributes a stance to Hunt; she
20
21 argues that marriage is a good thing, so he claims 'you are saying that the opposites of these
22
23 things, that non-commitment, sex without love and promiscuous sex are presumably a bad
24
25 thing'. By imposing a stance upon a witness like this, the panel member gains power over them,
26
27 as they impose upon them a need to respond and, potentially, save face. This has an impact on
28
29 how speakers respond to particular propositions, as the position that they are put in by those
30
31 opposing them is usually designed to weaken their argument by disrupting its direction and
32
33 making them appear to contradict themselves¹². An example of this appears in *MM1* when
34
35 McElvoy attributes a stance to Ivereigh: '...assuming that you would accept that [same-sex
36
37 marriage] is a natural desire'. In doing this, McElvoy forces Ivereigh to take a stance for or
38
39 against the proposition that gay people are as likely as heterosexual people to want to marry,
40
41 which indirectly indexes broader cultural debates surrounding homosexuality as an inherent
42
43 condition rather than a lifestyle choice, and stereotypes related to homosexuality and
44
45 non-monogamy. In this case, Ivereigh acknowledges that 'gay love is a reality', seemingly
46
47 weakening his argument against same-sex marriage, but goes on to return to his central,
48
49 heteronormative argument that marriage is 'apt for procreation'. Assigning an explicitly moralistic
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58

59 ¹² Similarly, Coupland and Coupland (2009) find that, in the case of doctors and patients, it tends to be the
60 powerful participant in the interaction (the doctor) who attributes stances to the patient.
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 stance to another person is a useful tactic, it seems, because it allows the person interrogating
5 them to imply their own moral stance without having to explicitly take it themselves.
6
7

8
9 Although there are moments when a pro-same-sex marriage argument is aired, it is
10 nonetheless the case that stances which oppose same-sex marriage occur more frequently in
11 these broadcasts, because they rely on discourses of logic which are supported by
12 heteronormative ideologies of gender complementarity and procreation. These powerful
13 discourses are positioned in such a way that those taking pro-same-sex marriage stances are
14 forced to respond to and challenge them, leading to their claims for equality being discussed and
15 explored to a lesser degree. In this sense, the evaluations on same-sex marriage - whether for
16 or against - tend to be defined by heteronormative ideologies. A key way that this situation
17 emerges is through the construction of the perceived future threat that same-sex marriage would
18 bring; as discussed in the following section, if one is to argue that same-sex couples should be
19 able to marry, they must first be able to argue against the potentially negative consequences that
20 this could lead to.
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36

37 **c. Imaginaries**

38
39 In this part of our analysis, we consider the ways in which the participants of the *Moral Maze*
40 broadcasts construct 'imaginaries' in order to argue that a future where same-sex marriage is
41 legalised would be a troubled one. Imaginaries are discursive structures that represent
42 hypothetical situations or possible worlds unrealised at the level of discourse (Fairclough and
43 Fairclough 2012). Imaginaries differ from 'imagined concepts' in the sense that imagined
44 concepts represent actual states of affairs, while imaginaries do not. In other words, imagined
45 concepts are 'representations of the actual world' [while] 'imaginaries' [are] representations of
46 the non-actual (Fairclough and Fairclough 2012: 103). According to Fairclough and Fairclough
47 (2012), imagined concepts potentially have the performing ability to shape institutional reality,
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 depending on the number of people sharing the purported vision. Imaginaries do not have the
5
6 same performative power. However, imaginaries can be a very powerful performative device as
7
8 well. This is, for example, the case when an imaginary is presented as if it is an imagined
9
10 concept, or in other words, when a hypothetical situation is described as if it were a clear future
11
12 reality. Whether the imaginary then, in fact, creates or shapes institutional reality depends on
13
14 whether the vision is supported, and whether those who support it have the power to declare a
15
16 certain imaginary as a fact and impose their view of what the world is on others. Thus, although
17
18 imaginaries do not actually represent a real or future reality, they might be represented by the
19
20 speaker as if they do, and are therefore a powerful argumentative device.
21
22
23

24
25 Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) discussion of 'imaginaries' and 'the imagined' is useful,
26
27 because it allows us to analyse how varying imaginaries of same-sex marriage - a hypothetical
28
29 situation in the UK at the time of the debate and thus an imaginary - are constructed by different
30
31 participants in the *Moral Maze*, and how these imaginaries are linked by the participants to other
32
33 visions of future realities. The *Moral Maze* participants use imaginaries to create desirable or
34
35 undesirable visions of same-sex marriage and its effects. Landrum, for example, presents a
36
37 future vision which cannot be verified as an actual future world ('we don't know what [same-sex
38
39 marriage] would mean socially', *MM1*), but continues his turn by constructing future visions of
40
41 same-sex marriage as damaging 'legally and culturally' (*MM1*), negatively impacting the
42
43 education of children (*MM1*), and changing society's view of the family (*MM1*). Landrum also
44
45 states that he thinks same-sex marriage: 'would undermine religious freedom' because 'no
46
47 matter what safeguards the government would promise for religious people to have religious
48
49 marriage if you like, and I do think it would create a sort of premier league and Vauxhall
50
51 conference tiering of marriage in some way, erm. I just don't think the safeguards will be worth
52
53 the paper they're written on' (*MM1*, our emphasis).
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 These statements differ in the strength of their modal commitment: the speaker's future vision is
5
6 illustrated by the use of the modal verb will, which is more definitive than the use of would. The
7
8 speaker's commitment to the future vision he or she presents is also mitigated, at times, by
9
10 statements indicating that these are the thought processes of the speaker – such as by using 'I
11
12 think', or by an acknowledgement of the speaker's lack of knowledge towards the truth of such a
13
14 vision, for example in the case of the use of the phrase 'we don't know' (Landrum *MM1*).
15

16
17 Although opponents most frequently construct future visions of same-sex marriage, proponents
18
19 also do so. Summerskill, in answer to Portillo's question 'is part of what you're arguing now that
20
21 you think that if there is gay marriage that will reduce erm homophobia?', (*MM1*), constructs a
22
23 positive future imaginary of same-sex marriage: 'I think almost certainly it will increase the level
24
25 to which people are respected (...) in exactly the same way as everyone else' (*MM1*). Though
26
27 the use of the future modal 'will' here was initiated by Portillo question, in which the modal verb
28
29 'will' was used as well, it is also mitigated by Summerskill as he indicates that these are his own
30
31 thoughts by stating that he is '*almost* certain'. Although same-sex marriage is not a realised state
32
33 of affairs, it is also presented as an actual vision by McElvoy, who states that 'same-sex
34
35 marriage is based on on the same humane desire to be committed to the other person to live in
36
37 a lovely relationship and to be part of the social fabric which is held together by people behaving
38
39 responsibly and where possible loyally to each other' (*MM1*).
40
41
42
43
44
45

46 In the *Moral Maze 2*, the discussion revolves around the question of what marriage is in general,
47
48 instead of what same-sex marriage entails. Future actual or hypothetical visions of what
49
50 same-sex marriage is are therefore constructed much less frequently. On the basis of
51
52 participants' definitions of what marriage is (see below), it is implied or made explicit why
53
54 same-sex couples therefore should or should not be excluded from it. An example comes from
55
56 Witness Phillip Blond, who states that 'marriage is a peculiar heterosexual institution because it
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 does two things that no other institution can do, it *deals* with male-female relationships, and it
5
6 *deals* with the fact that heterosexuals have children and homosexuals do not' (*MM2*). By
7
8 definition, Phillip Blond therefore excludes same-sex couples from his vision of marriage. This
9
10 links back to the observation made earlier in this article (see the section on stance above) that
11
12 marriage in the Moral Maze debates analysed here is defined as a fundamentally heterosexual
13
14 union by opponents of same-sex marriage, and this debate thus falls back on heteronormative
15
16 ideologies.
17
18
19

20
21 Imaginaries can also be constructed to put forward moral judgements, by constructing a
22
23 vision of how the world should be, rather than how it is. Phillip Blond creates several visions like
24
25 this, for example, he states 'churches should be more radical and offer blessings of
26
27 civil-partnerships' (*MM2*). In another interesting example, Blond first expresses a belief 'What I
28
29 believe is, is that we need universals applying to particular groups', and then continues to
30
31 discuss this belief as a future vision: 'What's good for women will be different from what's good
32
33 for men. There will be a gold standard for the advancement of of women, there will be a different
34
35 gold standard of what men, or children or anybody else needs'.
36
37
38

39
40 By placing this belief in the future, it is 'further removed' from the actual world and the present
41
42 state of affairs, and therefore is more difficult to counteract. An example of how morals are used
43
44 to present a future world that will be dangerous or unknown if same-sex marriage is legalised
45
46 occurs in *MM1*, whereby Portillo represents opposite-sex marriage as a 'good thing' (*MM1*), and
47
48 'the best chance for the stable upbringing for children' (*MM1*). The imaginary of same-sex
49
50 marriage is therefore implicitly constructed as an undesirable goal by Portillo, and he argues
51
52 explicitly in the next line that same-sex marriage 'breaks the link of marriage and procreation'
53
54 (*MM1*). This actual vision of what same-sex marriage entails is further developed by Portillo with
55
56 the construction of two future hypothetical visions which are enabled by the use of
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 modality. These future realities conceptualise the consequences of the break between marriage
5 and procreation by stating that there 'could be unpredictable' and 'possibly risky results' (*MM1*).
6
7 Portillo presents this possible world as one where other non-normative relationships may
8 prosper if same-sex marriage is legalised; when interrogating Janner-Klausner, a rabbi who
9 supports same-sex marriage, he asks: 'If a brother and sister come to you wanting to be
10 married, a father and a daughter wanting to be married, a threesome wanting to married, do you
11 have any ethical resting place in denying them from marriage?'. As indicated by Janner
12 Klausner's response 'Yes, but I'm asking why you're comparing homosexuality to those', the
13 treating of other types of relationships, as if they are unproblematically analogous to
14 homosexuality is implicitly homophobic; it categorises same-sex relationships as 'other' and as
15 equal to unions such as incest and polygamy which, currently, are more widely perceived as
16 deviant in British society. It is clear, here, that the 'slippery slope' metaphor is employed by
17 Portillo, here, to put forward a dangerous possible future world, and thus is a central aspect of
18 his argumentation structure.

19
20 What the 'slippery slope' metaphor achieves, then, is the argument that granting a social group
21 one particular right will lead to further requests for reforms that will become gradually more
22 'unreasonable'. Baker (2004) also identified a similar metaphor use in House of Lords debates
23 on proposals to lower the age of consent for gay men (discussed in section 4, above). As Baker
24 notes, the very presence of this discourse suggests inequality between gay and straight people
25 in the eyes of the law (2004: 101).

26
27 In *MM1*, David Landrum, director of public policy for the Evangelical Alliance, also invokes the
28 'slippery slope' metaphor in order to argue that same-sex marriage represents the
29 'unreasonable' requests that the granting of civil partnerships has led to: 'The slippery slope
30 argument's already been made by dint of the fact that we're here discussing this now, ten years

1
2
3
4 after civil partnerships'. However, the 'slippery slope' argument is made most explicitly by
5
6 Catholic writer Clifford Longley: 'We were talking just now about the slippery slope argument
7
8 erm haven't we just been watching a dramatic demonstration of the truth proof of the slippery
9
10 slope argument in 2004 2005 2006 when the civil partnership act was going through Parliament it
11
12 was said time and time again that this was it this is only this is this is what was demanded there
13
14 is no following consequential demand for gay marriage' (MM1).
15
16
17

18 Here, Longley refers to the 'demands' of gay people, which, as Baker points out in his study of
19
20 speeches made in the House of Lords regarding law reform for gay men, usually collocates with
21
22 words which imply a lack of legal right, such as *unlawfully*, *kidnappers* and *ransom* (2004: 101).
23
24 Same-sex marriage is therefore framed in terms of an unreasonable request, which may
25
26 therefore lead to other such 'unreasonable demands'.
27
28
29

30 The 'slippery slope' metaphor forms part of a metaphor complex (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 97)
31
32 of 'danger metaphors', which includes a 'can of worms' metaphor (MM1) and a 'later in the
33
34 queue' metaphor (MM1). A 'slippery slope' can be defined as a proposal or statement that is met
35
36 with objection because of the possible consequences it might have, not because of the proposal
37
38 itself *per se*. In this sense, it is a highly effective vehicle for the construction of possible future
39
40 imaginaries. What 'slippery slope' metaphors have in common, therefore, is the idea that one
41
42 turn of events will lead inevitably to other events, the latter of which bear negative consequences.
43
44 An example comes from David Landrum, who characterises the extension of marriage to
45
46 same-sex couples as opening up 'a whole can of worms' to suggest that it would problematise
47
48 future educational policy: '[Marriage] would be redefined and we don't know what that would
49
50 mean socially, but my guess would be it would open up a whole can of worms legally and
51
52 culturally as to the effect of that in education in how we erm teach our children, and how we view
53
54 family as well would be, changed (MM1).
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 The 'can of worms' metaphor has a negative semantic prosody, and is often used to indicate
5
6 that the resulting outcome of a turn of event would be out of control, leading to further chaos. In
7
8 *MM1*, Clifford Longley asks Laura Janner-Klausner "is there another demand as it were later in
9
10 the queue that will come about probably in a couple of years from now?" As with the 'can of
11
12 worms' metaphor, this 'later in the queue' metaphor is also likely to be interpreted by the listener
13
14 as connoting negative evaluation, and implies that granting same-sex marriage will inevitably
15
16 lead to other requests for equal rights reform. In David Landrum's quote above, the events
17
18 constituting the 'can of worms' are changes to education policy in light of the 'redefinition' of
19
20 marriage. These arguments are implicitly homophobic because equal rights are being treated by
21
22 those against anti-same-sex marriage as invalid. These imaginaries are not always represented
23
24 as hypothetical future visions, instead being constructed as actual and inevitable dangerous
25
26 future events, if same-sex marriage were to be allowed in the UK. This allows for a portrayal of
27
28 same-sex marriage as dangerous, and therefore non-normative. Participants in the *Moral Maze*
29
30 who use such slippery slope argumentation first construct same-sex marriage as a
31
32 circumstantial premise and then present undesirable *possible* consequences of having such a
33
34 circumstantial premise as the *actual* future visions of what this hypothetical circumstantial
35
36 premise would lead to.

37
38
39 Imaginaries can often be hinted at through the use of metaphors. These metaphors are used
40
41 to argue that the more 'rights' gay people are granted, the more they will 'demand', and that this
42
43 will also lead to other 'unreasonable demands' from other groups, such as the extension of
44
45 marriage to polygamists. Whilst those who are in favour of marriage reform frame the changes
46
47 in terms of an 'extension' of marriage, those opposing it refer to a 'rebranding' of marriage. In this
48
49 way, the participants do not take an explicit stance either for or against same-sex marriage,
50
51 relying instead on heteronormative ideologies and the circular argument that marriage is the way
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 it is because that is how it has always been. At the time of the *Moral Maze* recordings, same-sex
5
6 marriage in the UK was not a reality, but it *was* a challenge to the norm.
7
8

9 This section has discussed imaginaries, and danger metaphors, as part of the argumentation
10
11 structure of implicit homophobia; we will now focus on the importance of metaphors in their own
12
13 right.
14

15 **d.Metaphor**

16
17 We have shown so far how the analysis of imaginaries reveals the ideological basis of stances
18
19 that are taken by participants in the *Moral Maze* broadcasts. We have also shown that metaphor
20
21 plays an important role in the construction of these imaginaries. Metaphors perform other
22
23 functions as well in this data, however. In this section, we examine the personification of
24
25 marriage and the use of metaphors of war to argue for and against same-sex marriage. This
26
27 requires us to address two broad types of metaphor: 'figurative' metaphor (such as legalising
28
29 same-sex marriage being a 'slippery slope') and 'conceptual' or 'cognitive' metaphor - those
30
31 which reveal that X is conceptualised in terms of Y (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 5). For example,
32
33 in the statement 'she won the argument', the concept of argumentation is lexicalised in terms of
34
35 a battle, thus revealing the underlying conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR.
36
37
38
39
40

41
42 The structural metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR is a well-known construct for conceptualising
43
44 verbal behaviour (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 15). In the *Moral Maze* broadcasts, the same-sex
45
46 marriage debate is sometimes framed in terms of war. For example, in *MM1*, Ben Summerskill
47
48 makes the following statement in response to Clifford Longley's line of questioning about the
49
50 divisive nature of the same-sex marriage debate: 'Well there isn't [a consensus] now but part of
51
52 that erm *distinct* and *dissonant* unpleasantness is being manufactured by people who have a bit
53
54 of a *history* of giving a kicking to homosexuals and I have to say I do think this debate – and I
55
56 don't apply this to you for one instant – I do think this debate would have benefitted from a few
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 more clerics saying what *really* motivates is I don't like homosexuals very much...rather than
5
6 dressing stuff up in theological /folk as the cloak for that'
7
8

9 Summerskill therefore frames the church's behaviour towards gay people in terms of a
10 physical attack, emphasising the *physical* damage caused. He also accuses members of the
11 church of being dishonest here, where their arguments against sex-sex marriage, and
12
13 homosexual identity in general, are conceptualised as a form of disguise to hide homophobic
14 attitudes. We could describe this in terms of a LYING IS A DISGUISE metaphor, which
15
16 Summerskill uses to imply the corrupt nature of some members of the Catholic church.
17
18 Summerskill also describes the more explicitly homophobic language used by some clerics as
19 'poisonous', again metaphorically implying the negative effects of such language, that can also
20
21 be seen as forming part of a war metaphor complex.
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29

30 Personification, a type of ontological conceptual metaphor, is another rhetorical strategy used
31
32 by participants to argue for the importance of marriage. In the introduction to the *Moral Maze*, the
33 novel conceptual metaphor MARRIAGE IS A PERSON underpins Buerk's statement that 'the
34 more heterosexuals reject the idea of marriage, the more homosexuals have become well,
35
36 wedded to it' (*MM* 1). In this case, the choice of verb 'wedded', which is usually only used in
37
38 relation to people, treats the concept of 'marriage' as a social actor. The effect of personifying
39
40 marriage in this way may be that it acquires a greater social importance, because society values
41
42 people more than concepts. This sense of importance is used by advocates on both sides of the
43
44 argument for different ends: those against the proposals for same-sex marriage personify the
45
46 concept of marriage in ways that suggest the importance of keeping marriage as it is currently
47
48 defined. Those in favour of same-sex marriage personify marriage in order to argue that
49
50 marriage is not static, and therefore amenable to change.
51
52
53
54
55
56

57 In *MM2*, Phillip Blond asserts the need to 'protect' marriage, which, as well as implying that
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1 marriage is fragile, also arguably treats marriage as an animate being. Other anti-same-sex
2
3
4 marriage commentators also make use of a 'protection' metaphor to argue for upholding the
5
6
7 status quo. David Landrum describes the government's proposed changes to the Marriage Bill
8
9 as 'trying to tinker' with marriage (*MM1*); the choice of verb arguably frames government reform
10
11 in terms of attempts to 'fix' marriage, given that the word 'tinker' usually collocates with a
12
13 discourse of mechanics, and occasionally indexes a sense of ineptness, the implication here
14
15 being that same-sex marriage represents the government as novices who are 'playing' with the
16
17 very idea of marriage. The idea of 'tinkering' with marriage is also alluded to by Austen Ivereigh
18
19 from Catholic Voices: 'politicians are overstepping the mark by trying to tinker with this
20
21 fundamental social good' (*MM1*). It is also interesting that in both cases, the verb 'trying' implies
22
23 that these attempts have been or will be unsuccessful. Ivereigh also combines the 'tinkering'
24
25 metaphor with the 'slippery slope' argument discussed above, when he states that 'to tinker [with
26
27 marriage] would bring such profound consequences, one consequence there would no longer be
28
29 a mechanism by which the state could promote that in particular which is best for children for
30
31 families and for society' (*MM1*). Here the epistemic modal verb 'would' indexes the certainty of a
32
33 future in which children are raised by same-sex spouses, which is evaluated as negative, given
34
35 that the adjective 'profound' usually co-occurs with negative circumstances.
36
37
38
39
40
41
42

43 Marriage is furthermore often treated by participants as a tangible object. This is evident in the
44
45 exchange below. The verbs 'touched' and 'held' usually co-occur with animate subjects, but here
46
47 they are being used in direct relation to marriage:
48
49

50 DL [Marriage is] actually something that shouldn't be, touched by politics beyond it sort
51
52 of being held in custody, held in eh::
53
54

55 AM aspic
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

DL aspic by politics, very good, thank you.

Again personifying marriage has the effect of highlighting its importance, therefore implying that to change it has negative effects. In this case, the metaphorical use of 'held in custody' also constitutes a recontextualisation from legal discourse, which may result in the listener accessing schematic associations of the phrase with criminality. Arguably, the consequence of this is that it implies that changes to the status quo are being compared with criminal activity.

Clifford Longley, questioning Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner uses the idiomatic phrase 'playing fast and loose', which ordinarily would be used with tangible objects, to imply that the proposals for equal marriage constitute a careless act: 'OK now religions, even liberal ones like yours draw very their very life blood do they not from ancient tradition...isn't it, highly paradoxical therefore to be playing fast and loose with such an ancient tradition as marriage?' Clifford Longley's argument here is that because marriage is an 'ancient tradition', and religions are founded on ancient traditions, religious marriage should not be tampered with. The listener may well infer from the 'fast and loose' metaphor that marriage is fragile, since things that are ancient are often breakable; the implication is that 'playing fast and loose' will have a negative effect on marriage.

Matthew Taylor also employs a personification metaphor in *MM2* during his questioning of Phillip Blond when he states "you want to restrict [marriage], you don't want homosexuals to get married, so it can't be about lifelong commitment because otherwise you would be opposed to second marriages" (*MM2*). The verb 'restrict' treats marriage as a physical object; the implication being that not allowing same-sex couples to marry is an imposition on marriage itself. Other arguments from the pro-same-sex marriage side include the metaphor MARRIAGE IS A BINDING DEVICE, for example when Malik states: 'KM Let's pick up this argument you made that what marriage does is **knit together** generations' (*MM2*) and the response from McElvoy is 'Well I just start from the idea that marriage is a good thing and it's **a spiritual and social glue**

1
2
3
4 and to exclude homosexuals from it just strikes me as profoundly unfair and actually rather
5
6 unchristian'. (MM1)
7

8
9 In both these examples, marriage is defined in terms of a bonding mechanism. This contributes
10
11 to the participants' pro-argument that marriage is important and therefore both heterosexual and
12
13 same-sex couples should have access to it. McElvoy's recontextualisation of religious discourse
14
15 is in response to the religious argument that marriage is a religious institution that can only take
16
17 place between a man and a woman.
18
19

20 As the discussion above shows, metaphors which personify marriage serve to highlight the
21
22 perceived importance of marriage, which is used to construct arguments for maintaining the
23
24 (heteronormative) status quo. Metaphors which conceptualise marriage as a 'natural' institution
25
26 are also used to argue for restricting marriage to heterosexual couples on the basis that it lies
27
28 outside of human interference. Again, we assert that this is implicitly homophobic because it
29
30 excludes same-sex couples from having equal rights to heterosexual couples.
31
32

33
34 By contrast, metaphors are also used by those in favour of same-sex marriage. Indeed, whilst
35
36 participants against marriage reform use the 'slippery slope' metaphor to warn of the inevitability
37
38 of further demands for equality, participants in favour of marriage reform make reference to the
39
40 'slippery slope' in order to undermine it. In the following example from MM1, Rabbi Laura
41
42 Janner-Klausner uses the 'slippery slope' metaphor in opposition to a 'mountain' metaphor, to
43
44 characterise the two arguments in relation to same-sex marriage: 'I love the image of a slippery
45
46 slope, 'cause I just I just don't agree with it, I see a mountain that we are walking up, people
47
48 walking together, walking towards progress'. Both metaphors are underpinned by the conceptual
49
50 metaphor CONCEPTS ARE OBJECTS OF NATURE. The 'mountain' metaphor is underpinned
51
52 by the conceptual metaphors EQUALITY IS A JOURNEY and CONCEPTS ARE OBJECTS.
53
54 These metaphors have distinctly different connotations: the notion of a 'slippery slope' usually
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

collocates with negatively evaluated concepts, whereas 'mountain', when used metaphorically, is usually used with reference to obstacles to be overcome, which is therefore intended as a positive achievement.

Other same sex marriage supporters use metaphors that are underpinned by the EQUALITY IS A JOURNEY metaphor: Ruth Hunt, director for public affairs for Stonewall, describes the vote passed in the House of Commons as 'the first hurdle', which also treats the campaign for equal rights as a series of obstacles to be overcome; the deictic orientational metaphor 'we're not there yet' conceptualises the legalisation of same-sex marriage as a location (MM2). It also links with the journey to equality metaphor, noted above. Ruth Hunt utilises a PROGRESS IS FORWARD orientational metaphor when she states that "Civil Partnerships were incredibly important as a step forward," which also forms part of the EQUALITY IS A JOURNEY complex.

In this section we have seen how the personification of marriage is used by both sides of the debate to argue for the importance of marriage, for different ends. Participants in favour of the changes emphasise the binding function of marriage, and the imposition on marriage which a 'restrictive' heterosexual definition of marriage entails; those against assert that 'tinkering' with marriage will have dire consequences.

6. Discussion: Argumentation Structure

We have endeavoured to show, throughout the analyses presented so far, that the participants against same-sex marriage in the *Moral Maze* broadcasts rely largely on heteronormative discourses. They position heterosexual marriage as morally, socially and biologically logical and important. In turn, same-sex marriage is positioned as oppositional to this and, therefore, as fundamentally problematic. The varied ways in which these speakers build their argument have been shown in relation to stance, metaphor, imaginaries and recontextualisation; whilst each of these issues have so far been considered in turn, we would like to use this penultimate section

1
2
3
4 to show how the combination of these linguistic elements combined leads to an implicitly
5
6 homophobic argumentation structure. We have considered each of the elements of
7
8 argumentation structure individually; in this section, we bring them together in our final analysis.
9

10
11 A particularly interesting moment which highlights this well comes from David Landrum,
12
13 Director of Public Policy for the Evangelical Alliance and member of the campaign group
14
15 'Coalition for Marriage', in *MM1*. The stance work of this participant typically focused on defining
16
17 marriage as fundamentally about gender complementarity. In doing so, Landrum was able to
18
19 make his own position clear and to build an argument against same-sex marriage. A particularly
20
21 fruitful way for him to do this was to focus on the biological advantages of male/female
22
23 relationships; in doing so, he was able to detract from the religious argument, which is simply a
24
25 matter of faith. In addition to his focus on the biological benefits of marriage, Landrum also
26
27 recontextualised scientific discourses when defining what he claimed marriage actually is. He
28
29 personifies marriage as a living organism when he states 'what we're talking about here is
30
31 changing what marriage is fundamentally. The DNA of marriage will change if these proposals
32
33 [succeed]'.
34
35
36
37
38

39 In using the metaphor of DNA here, Landrum implies that allowing same-sex marriage would
40
41 change the fundamental structure of marriage as an institution. Specifying its DNA structure
42
43 alludes to the notion of scientific intervention, which the listener may well associate in this
44
45 context with controversial practices, such as human or animal cloning. Whilst this comparison is
46
47 not guaranteed, even without the links to experimentation, the notion of DNA as something which
48
49 is fixed and an essential part of human biology is called to mind. As human beings we cannot
50
51 change our DNA. By imbuing the concept of marriage with its own DNA, Landrum is presenting it
52
53 as a fixed object which cannot and should not be altered by humans. This positioning of
54
55 marriage as an organism with its own DNA gives more weight to Landrum's later argument that
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

1
2
3
4 politicians should not try to alter the tradition of opposite-sex marriage. Treating marriage as a
5
6 living organism allows Landrum to make an analogy between changing the structure of marriage
7
8 and morally contentious alterations in living beings, for example, genetic modification, implying by
9
10 extension that same-sex marriage is immoral. In turn, this allows him to construct a dangerous
11
12 imaginary, albeit one which is very certain; there is no scope here to suggest that a change of
13
14 DNA would be a positive thing. As well as arguing that marriage *will* change, he goes on to
15
16 suggest that 'it would change all sorts of definitions at the centre of our society' (MM1). As
17
18 discussed in the section on 'imaginaries', by constructing a negative future imaginary like this
19
20 about marriage (when including same-sex marriage), it is 'further removed' from the actual world
21
22 and present state of affairs, and therefore more difficult to counteract. This also again links to the
23
24 'slippery slope' metaphor, in this case where one negative imaginary would lead to many more
25
26 negative imaginaries. There is no option, when employing this metaphor, to argue for a positive
27
28 outcome. As discussed above, positive outcomes are generally referred to with metaphors
29
30 related to obstacles or journeys - events where humans can have a level of control over how
31
32 they proceed - whereas a slippery slope suggests a lack of control, which, in and of itself is
33
34 negative. It is exactly those kind of negative stance constructions that allow opponents in the
35
36 Moral Maze debates to construct future visions of same-sex marriage as dangerous and
37
38 immoral, and thus non-normative.
39
40
41
42
43
44
45

46 Through the use of recontextualised scientific discourse, metaphor and the construction of an
47
48 imaginary world, Landrum's stance-work in this moment once again allows same-sex marriage
49
50 to be presented as a threat to society. It clearly positions same-sex relationships as other, and
51
52 as inferior to opposite-sex ones. We therefore argue that stances such as this are implicitly
53
54 homophobic.
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65

7. Conclusions

Throughout this article, we have come to a number of conclusions about the way that implicit homophobia works and how it can be analysed and countered.

a) What we have discovered about implicit homophobia in this context:

The repeated taking of stances which position same-sex marriage as threatening, unnatural or illogical allow an anti-same-sex marriage discourse to be produced, which at the same time not characterising the speaker as holding homophobic beliefs.. In this sense, because the discourse is recontextualised as scientific and legalistic, none of the face-loss normally associated with openly explicitly homophobic statements is presented. Indeed, explicit homophobia is rejected, for example, in the response to McElvoy's question, about whether there is 'an element of distaste and rejection for the homosexual liaison at the bottom of [the arguments against same-sex marriage?]' (*MM1*). The panelists and witnesses against same-sex marriage do not wish to be portrayed as homophobic, as this would undermine their position in the debate. Instead, the participants present themselves as logical and authoritative, through alluding implicitly rather than explicitly to homophobic beliefs. Those who are arguing for same-sex marriage are put in a reactive position, constantly having to argue against these seemingly objective assertions, and thus always being caught on the backfoot. This homophobia thus has to be interpreted by the listener, rather than simply asserted explicitly by the speaker.

These participants do not present themselves as being homophobic, and therefore save their face, yet are essentially putting forward the argument that same-sex marriage could lead to the end of western civilisation. They use imaginaries and danger metaphors to imply that disaster will arise if same sex marriage becomes legal, fundamentally affecting and undermining heterosexual marriage and civilisation as a whole. This demonstrates that they are implicitly drawing on heteronormative ideologies where they position same-sex couples as deviant.

Therefore, even though it is implicit, they are putting forward homophobic positions as seemingly 'logical' and 'reasonable' arguments.

b) Implications for the analysis of homophobia:

It is important when analysing homophobia from a linguistic perspective to analyse both explicit and implicit homophobia. Implicit homophobia often goes unnoticed, in much the same way as early debates around sexism were largely focused on explicit, 'overt' sexism. We have shown, for example, that the use of metaphor enables implicit, under-the-radar homophobia whereby speakers do not have to directly or overtly express their beliefs; by presenting marriage as a concrete object, one which cannot be 'tinkered' with, it is possible to convincingly argue that it must not be changed. By using CDA in our approach to the analysis of argumentation structure, it has been possible for us to focus on linguistic elements, such as conceptual metaphor, that might otherwise go unnoticed. Homophobia is clearly far more than the analysis of statements, such as 'I hate gays'. It is well-rooted in this discussion of same-sex relationships and marriage. As it is more difficult to challenge, implicit homophobia is a more robust barrier for equal rights campaigners than explicit homophobia, which is now generally received negatively in wider social discourse.

Although most of the research work of the Discourses of Marriage group is concerned with the analysis of implicit homophobia in relation to these debates about same-sex marriage, it is also for us essential, based on this critique of homophobia, to try to develop ways of both challenging these ideas and also discussing marriage in more productive ways. If the argument in favour of same-sex marriage is framed only within religious contexts, we are limited in terms of the range of the arguments that can be used. Our arguments will remain caught up in discussions of the 'natural' and the 'traditional'. However, there are clearly more ways of talking about pro-same-sex marriage, for example in terms of more general discussions of human

rights and freedom around issues of sexuality.

c) How to counter these homophobic discourses:

We need to ask how these discourses can be challenged, and of what use is a study like this to the broader social movement. In a sense, in engaging with discussions like this, we need to bring about a wider reframing of the debate, by discussing same-sex marriage outside the field of religious discourse. We need to consider to what extent these strategies discussed here are homophobic. We are not claiming that the presence of the strategies is essentially and in itself homophobic, but rather that given the particular discursive context, in this case religious, scientific and legalistic recontextualisations, such statements have the potential to serve as, and be understood as, discriminatory. Linguistic features and strategies are multifunctional: a particular metaphor that is used is not homophobic in itself, unless it is used within a particular context. Thus, an analysis which focuses on both the discourse level along with the linguistic level is able to focus on the way that implicit homophobia is about an interplay between contextual features and linguistics items.

We hope that our analysis has integrated the focus on linguistic and discourse level elements in order to map out the way that homophobic statements are made by speakers, who at the same time position themselves as neutral and reasonable. Whilst in different contexts implicit homophobia will take different forms, drawing on elements such as stance, argumentation structure, imaginaries and metaphor, may be a starting point for the analysis of implicit homophobia in other contexts across a wider range of texts.¹³

¹³ Our focus on same-sex marriage, and its linguistic representation in wider discourse, is an ongoing project with more analyses planned. For more information on the Discourse of Marriage Research Group visit our blog at: <http://discoursesofmarriage.blogspot.co.uk>.

References

- Baker, P and Ellece, S. 2011 *Key Terms in Discourse Analysis*. London: Continuum.
- Baker, P. 2004. 'Unnatural acts': discourses of homosexuality within the House of Lords debates on gay male law reform. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 8/1, 88-106.
- Baker, P. 2008. *Sexed Texts*. London: Equinox.
- Baker, P. 2014. *Using Corpora to Analyse Gender*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Baunach, D. M. 2011. Decomposing trends in attitudes toward gay marriage, 1988-2006. *Social Science Quarterly*, 92/2, 346-363.
- Brickell, C. 2001 'Whose "special treatment"? Heterosexism and the problems with liberalism'. *Sexualities* 4 (2): 211-36.
- Brown, P. and Levinson, S. 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Burr, V. 1995. *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*. London: Routledge.
- Burridge, J. 2004. 'I am not homophobic but...': disclaiming in discourse resisting repeal of Section 28. *Sexualities*, 7/3, 327-344.
- Burton, D. 1982. Through glass darkly, through dark glasses. In Carter, R. (ed.) *Language and Literature*. London: Allen and Unwin. pp.195-214.
- Butler, J. 1997. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. London: Routledge.
- Cameron, D. 1997. Performing gender identity: young men's talk and the construction of heterosexual masculinity. In Johnson, S and Meinhof, U. (eds). *Language and Masculinity*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Cameron, D. and Kulick, D. 2003. *Language and Sexuality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carey, G. 2012. Marriage will ONLY remain the bedrock of society if it is between a man and a

woman. *Daily Mail*, 19 February 2012. Available at

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2103513/Marriage-ONLY-remain-bedrock-society-man-woman.html> [Accessed 11 November 2013].

Coulthard, M. and Johnson, A. 2007. *An Introduction to Forensic Linguistics*. London: Routledge.

Coupland, J. and Coupland, N. 2009 'Attributing Stance in Discourses of Body Shape and Weight Loss' in: Jaffe, A. (ed.) *Stance: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 227-249.

Edwards, J. 2007. 'Marriage is sacred': The religious right's argument against 'gay marriage' in Australia. *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 9/3: 247-261.

Fairclough, I. and Fairclough, N. 2012. *Political Discourse Analysis*. London: Routledge.

Fairclough, N. 1989. *Language and Power*. London: Longman.

Fry, S. 2013 'Out There', BBC 2, October

van Gend, D. 2004 *Re-entering the circle of life, gays, ex-gays, and marriage*. Address to the National Marriage Forum, August 4th 2004, Parliament House, Canberra. Available at http://www.marriage.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21&Itemid=15re_entering_the_circle_of_life.htm[Accessed 13 December 2013].

Harrison, B. F. and Michelson, M. R. 2012. Not that there's anything wrong with that: the effect of personalised appeals on marriage equality campaigns. *Political Behaviour*, 34/2, 325-344.

HM Government. 2012. Equal Marriage: The Government's Response. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/133262/consultation-response_1_.pdf [Accessed 11 November 2013].

Holehouse, M. and M. Deacon. 2013. Godfrey Bloom 'should resign' after sluts jibe, says Nigel Farage. *The Telegraph*, 20 September 2013. Available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/ukip/10323774/Godfrey-Bloom-should-resign-after-sluts>

-jibe-says-Nigel-Farage.html [Accessed 21 January 2014].

Jaffe, A. 2009 'Introduction: The sociolinguistics of stance', in: Jaffe, A. (ed.) *Stance: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 3–28.

Jeffries, L. 2010. *Critical Stylistics: The Power of English*. London: Palgrave

Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Land, V. and Kitzinger, C. 2007. Contesting same-sex marriage in talk-in-interaction. *Feminism and Psychology*, 17/2, 173-183.

Leap, W. 2012. 'Queer Linguistics, Sexuality and Discourse Analysis' in Gee, J.P. and Handford, M. *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Routledge: London, pp. 558-571.

Leap, W. 2004. 'Language and homophobic discourse,' Paper presented at the Eleventh Washington, DC Lavender Languages and Linguistics Conference February 2004, American University, Washington, DC.

Mills, Sara. 2008. *Language and Sexism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Morrish, E. 1997. 'Falling short of God's ideal': public discourse about lesbians and gays. In Livia, A. and Hall, K. (eds). *Queerly Phrased: Language, Gender and Sexuality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 335–345.

Morrish, E. 2010. Situating and resisting homophobic discourse: Response to Leap, Junge, Peterson, and Provencher. *Gender and Language*, 4/2, 323-335.

Moscowitz, L. M. 2010. Gay marriage in television news: Voice and visual representation in the same-sex marriage debate. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 54/1, 24-39.

Motschenbacher, H. 2011. Taking Queer Linguistics further: Sociolinguistics and critical heteronormativity research. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 212, 149–179.

O'Brien, K. 2012. We cannot afford to indulge this madness. *The Telegraph*, 3 March 2012.

Available at

1
2
3
4 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/9121424/We-cannot-afford-to-indulge-this-madness.html>
5
6
7 [Accessed 11 November 2013].
8

9 Pascoe, C.J. 2005. 'Dude, You're a Fag': Adolescent Masculinity and the Fag Discourse.
10
11 *Sexualities*, 8/3, 329-346.
12

13 Peterson, D.J. 2010. 'The basis for a free, just and stable society': Institutional homophobia and
14
15 governance at the Family Research Council. *Gender and Language*, 4/2, 257-286.
16

17 Provencher, D.M. 2010. 'I dislike politicians and homosexuals': Language and homophobia in
18
19 France. *Gender and Language*, 4/2, 287-321.
20

21
22
23 *The Moral Maze: Gay Marriage*. 2012. BBC Radio 4. 14 March, 20:00. Broadcast available from:
24
25 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qk11>.
26

27
28 *The Moral Maze: The Moral Virtue of Marriage*. 2013. BBC Radio 4. 6 February, 20:00.
29
30 Broadcast available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qk11>.
31

32
33 *The Moral Maze: The Moral Worth of Marriage*. 2011. BBC Radio 4. 16 February, 20:00.
34
35 Broadcast available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qk11>.
36

37 Tiersma, P.M. 1999. *Legal Language*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
38

39 Watts, R. 2003. *Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
40

41 Yep, G. A. 2002. From Homophobia and Heterosexism to Heteronormativity. *Journal of Lesbian*
42
43 *Studies*, 6/3-4, 163-176.
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65