Having considered how innovative combinations of SFDA, FPDA and CDA can offer more fruitful analyses than adopting a single approach, this final analysis chapter considers the further incorporation of perspectives which highlight the political significance of what the previous analyses reveal. The analyses presented and discussed in Chapter 4 show how CDA and FPDA can offer differing interpretations of the same data (although there are similarities in the interpretations offered by each approach as well), but those interpretations are not necessarily incompatible. In this chapter, I argue that incorporating elements of queer theory can further our understanding of how ideologies of gender and sexuality are constructed, negotiated, maintained and challenged by the students in their spoken interaction. In doing so, I draw on previous work which has explored the uses of queer theory in analysing gender, sexuality and language (Bucholtz and Hall, 2004; Leap, 2008; Morrish and Sauntson, 2007; Sauntson, 2008). Queer theory is helpful for achieving this because it takes ‘normality’ itself as its main object of investigation. Rather than presenting gender as an *a priori* category – as something which is already there waiting to be ‘discovered’ – queer theory interrogates the underlying preconditions of gender identity, and how these may be enacted and formulated in discourse. This principle led to the development of queer linguistics. Hall (2003: 366) defines ‘queer linguistics’ as ‘a field that explicitly questions the assumption that gendered ways of talking are indexically derived from the sex of the speaker’. It is primarily concerned with how heterosexual normativity is discursively (re)produced and sometimes resisted through specific linguistic practices. In this way, queer linguistics is premised upon some (but not all) similar principles to FPDA but it also seems to sit quite comfortably alongside CDA with its political and emancipatory agenda. However, it may not sit so comfortably alongside SFDA and indeed
the relatively apolitical principle of FPDA, which, although revealing in terms of the discursive construction of gender, does not espouse a particular political agenda from the outset. Through the detailed analysis of data extracts, this chapter will explore such tensions and possibilities for complementarity.

Within queer theory, Butler’s (1990, 1993, 1997, 2004) theories of performativity are of crucial importance for enabling us to question socially sanctioned concepts of normality in relation to gender and sexuality. This chapter considers how notions of ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal/marginal’ genders are negotiated and constructed in both the classroom interaction and interview data, and how students and teachers define and police the boundaries of gender normality. Queer theory presents a unified view of gender and sexuality in that it recognises that cultural ideologies of gender normativity are bound up with assumptions of heterosexuality. This is a key tenet of queer theory which distinguishes it from the other approaches used throughout the book. We started to see this in some of the examples discussed in Chapter 4 and in the conversations with LGB-identified young people discussed in the introductory chapter. In this chapter, I argue and illustrate how the methods of analysis used throughout the book can be used alongside queer theory to critically examine the discursive constructions of ‘normal’ and ‘queer’ gender and sexuality in the classroom settings under scrutiny. I show how incorporating some of the principles of queer theory into the types of analyses already used can help to uncover the ways in which heterosexuality is naturalised and how other forms of sexual and gender identity are ‘queered’ in classroom interaction. Again, using aspects of queer theory in conjunction with the analytical frameworks of SFDA, FPDA and CDA is not straightforward and carries with it a set of tensions and contradictions which are sometimes difficult to resolve. I explored some of these tensions and contradictions in Chapter 2, and attempted to offer some ways of potentially resolving them. In this chapter, some of these ideas will be tested out in the data analysis. I argue that confronting such analytic and methodological tensions is more fruitful than ignoring them, and acts as a means of moving the field of gender and language research forward, in terms both of its theory and methodology. Indeed, some recent work in gender and language has utilised aspects of queer theory selectively in conjunction with more overtly feminist approaches to develop more practical and concrete systems of discourse analysis (for example, Bucholtz and Hall, 2004).

Throughout the chapter, I will discuss ideas and examples in which the related concepts of ‘homophobia’ and ‘heterosexism’ frequently