

Language and Identity: A Case Study on Queer Community Language in Dean Modah Tiktok Videos

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ABSTRACT

TikTok has been effective in cultivating a creative arena where users can easily access and make digital material by using a collection of shared audios, filters, text-to-speech, and a special system for user involvement. Digital platform such as TikTok continues to promote social conduct motivated by the need for acceptance from the community. This paper explores Queer's English language used in Dean Modah's TikTok videos. By applying a sociolinguistic approach, this paper examines the English language used by Queer community to express their identity. The results show that the English language used by Queer community undergoes a morphological process, particularly a coinage process. The meanings of Queer language are different from the lexical meanings. The new meaning formulation denotes the dominant personal function of the language used. The new meaning formulation in Queer English language use is to support the community members to freely express themselves. It can be concluded that word formulation, changes in meaning, and use of language identify the identity of the Queer community.



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Introduction

Language always develops within a civilization. There are several languages spoken in society since individuals come from diverse backgrounds and engage in varied activities. For instance, the language used when teaching differs from the language used when giving speeches. Each of them has distinctive qualities. The language used in contexts connected to these groups or occupations is referred to as register in sociolinguistic analysis.

Language as a marker of social group identity has been the focus of previous research. The development of the media has shown a lot of the language diversity of these social groups. On the other side, language development is supported by the development of media. The use of language in a particular social context is supported by the development of media. For example, symbolic language is used to show women's identity in Mormon religious communities (Trihastutie, 2018). Language also shows the characteristics of certain localities of society (Winardi and Trihastutie, 2017). Along with the emergence of various communities and the development of media, the use of various registers appears. The use of registers is a marker of the characteristics of the social community of its users. Social media supports the emergence of various language registers. This paper explores the English language used by the queer community on TikTok platform. Focusing on, what Wardaugh (2005, 52) called, the concept of register, this paper examines the word formation process, changes in meaning, and language function of TikTok videos.

One of the most well-known social media programs on the market is Tik Tok, a video-sharing service developed by ByteDance Ltd. that has had more than 3 billion downloads (Iqbal, 2022). TikTok has been effective in cultivating a creative arena where users can easily access and make digital material by using a collection of shared audio, filters, text-to-speech, and a special system for user involvement. Videos that are trending on TikTok change almost monthly as a result of the platform's popularity and the ever-evolving nature of social media platforms as a whole, with lesser trends only affecting a small portion of the platform's user base. These patterns continue to mold the platform's digital culture, promoting social conduct motivated by the need for acceptance from the community (Afifulloh & Wijayanti, 2022).



On TikTok, the LGBTQIA+ community is quite prominent. A lot of content produced by the LGBTQIA+ community or praising this community has been popular, including audio like Saucy Santana's 'Material Girl,' AR filters, and trends. Pop-cultural influences frequently come from the cultures of marginalized groups, such as the black and LGBTQIA+ communities. The dominant groups in society often adopt aspects of these cultures to follow current trends in fashion, music, and language. Due to the large concentration of diversity and interactions online, these changes to the Internet's pop culture have intensified since the emergence of social media.

Dean Modah is a prime example of the LGBTQIA+ influencers that exist on Tik Tok. The @modah user name will take you to Dean Modah's TikTok profile. With more than 250.000 followers on his TikTok account, Dean Modah is one of the most well-known queer influencers on the platform that teaches people about Basic Gay Vocabulary. Dean Modah is regarded as the first queer influencer on TikTok to post content about basic gay vocabulary. The development of queer community English registers is accompanied by a sociolinguistic phenomenon known as register. According to Wardaugh (2006), register is a distinct vocabulary connected to a different occupational group. On Dean Modah's TikTok videos, there are a ton of queer registers. The registers include terms like 'miss thing,' 'it's giving us,' 'gorge,' 'gaggy,' 'major,' and numerous others that are uncommon to those outside the queer community.

Each register's lexical meaning in a dictionary is not the same as what it means in Dean Modah's TikTok videos. When the registers used in Dean Modah's TikTok videos are contrasted with their lexical definitions in dictionaries, the meanings of the registers alter. The registers appear to make it possible to highlight particular elements in the queer community that only certain individuals, like LGBTQIA+ people, can comprehend. How Queer English language usage expresses their community identity can be seen from the word formation process, changes in meaning, and language function of Dean Modah TikTok videos. According to Ferguson (as cited in Mahmood, 2013), people who participate in frequent communication settings tend to acquire similar vocabularies, intonation aspects, and traits of syntax and phonology.



Gender and digital platforms has been studied by several researcher such as film and gender (Afifulloh, 2022; Wardaningsih & Kasih, 2019), Facebook and gender, (Garcia, et al. 2018), but these all researches based on feminist and representation approach. This research pictures digital platform TikTok in linguistics side by examining Queer identity and their language in use.

Method of Reasearch

This research is mixed methods. It exercises gathering, categorizing, analyzing, and interpreting data. The data are calculated before being interpreted. The data was gathered from Dean Modah's TikTok account, which can be accessed by typing in @modah. Queer Community English registers discovered on Dean Modah's TikTok account that were purposefully obtained in December 2022 were used as research data. Dean Modah is a TikTok influencer from LGBTQIA+ community. The selection of Modah's TikTok videos is because he is recognized for being the first TikTok influencer to explain the meaning of a lot of queer registers in his videos. The data from Modah's TikTok videos were interpreted to explain the Queer Community identity through their use of English registers.

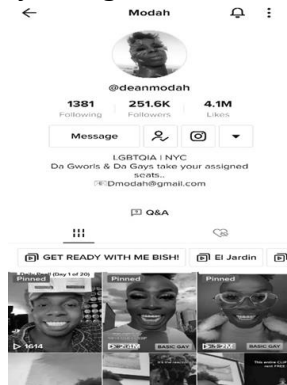


Figure 1. Dean Modah TikTok account @modah from <https://www.tiktok.com/@deanmodah>



Discussion

The data analysis shows the word formation process, changes in meaning, and language function as the following.

Table 1. Types of English Register in Queer Community and its Pragmatic Meaning

Basic Queer Words	The Pragmatic Meaning
A Kiki	A social gathering
A Zaddy	A daddy
Aren't You Living?	Don't you love it
Bitch	A term of endearment
Bulge	Gay groin
Construction Worker	Gay Construction Worker
Cunt	Extremely famine or good
DI Sneaky Link	Late night hookup
Do You Use Mistr?	Are you on prep?
Don't Do Me	Don't insult me
Down Low	Undercover gay
Drama & Conflama	A heightened version of drama
Duck Walk	A style of gay dance
Dusted	Perfect and Refind
Eleganza	Elegant
Extranness	Extra
Fieeerccely	Aggressively
Gaggy	Surprising
Get Into This	Give me your attention
Girlina	A sweet naïve young lady
Glamazon	A tall glamorous woman
Gorge	Gorgeous
Gworl	Girl
Henny or Hunty	Hunny
I Am Living	I like it a lot
I Got My Life	I feel fulfilled
In The Liofe	To be part of LGBTQIA+ community
It's Giving Us	To display confidence
Jugs	Boobs
Lawd	Lord
Layed	Exceptionally stylish
Left Gagging	To be shocked
Lewk	Your outfit
Major	Something impressive



Mawwwma	Mama
Miss Thing	Anyone
Mones	Hormones
Munch	To give oral
No Tea No Shade	No offence
Okrrr Mama	Okay
Ovah	Outstanding
Ovah The Top	Better than incredible
Pay It	To forget about it
Perched	Posing elegantly
Pump	To walk with confidence
Realness	Very real like
Serving Face	To show off your face
Serving The Gworks	Looking better than everyone
Sis	A good friend
Spook The Tea	To tell the truth
Storm	To act out
Tetwasss	Small breast
The Ball	The function or event
The Children	Young member of LGBTQIA+ community
The Scene	Current social location
The T	The truth
The Village	Christopher Street
To Gag	To surprise
To Gather You	To get you together
Trade	A masculine male
Try You	To attempt to confront
Tuhhnite	Tonight
Wolf Pussy	Hairy vaj
Yack	To have sexual intercourse
Yasss	Yes
Yo cakes	Your backsides

Table 2. Types of English Register in Queer Community and its Linguistic Form

No	English Registers Units	Linguistic form		Frequency
		Word	Phrase	
1	A Kiki		✓	1
2	A Zaddy		✓	1



3	Aren't You Living?		✓	1
4	Bitch	✓		1
5	Bulge	✓		1
6	Construction Worker		✓	1
7	Cunt	✓		2
8	Dl Sneaky Link		✓	1
9	Do You Use Mistr?		✓	1
10	Don't Do Me		✓	1
11	Down Low		✓	1
12	Drama & Conflama		✓	1
13	Duck Walk		✓	1
14	Dusted	✓		1
15	Eleganza	✓		1
16	Extraness	✓		1
17	Fieeercely	✓		1
18	Gaggy	✓		1
19	Get Into This		✓	1
20	Girlina	✓		1
21	Glamazon	✓		1
22	Gorge	✓		1
23	Gworl	✓		2
24	Henny or Hunty	✓		1
25	I Am Living		✓	2
26	I Got My Life		✓	1
27	In The Liofe		✓	1
28	It's Giving Us		✓	1
29	Jugs	✓		1
30	Lawd	✓		1
31	Layed	✓		1
32	Left Gagging		✓	2
33	Lewk	✓		1
34	Major	✓		1
35	Mawwwma	✓		1
36	Miss Thing		✓	2
37	Mones	✓		1
38	Munch	✓		1
39	No Tea No Shade		✓	1
40	Okrrr Mama		✓	1
41	Ovah	✓		1



42	Ovah The Top		✓	1
43	Pay It		✓	1
44	Perched	✓		1
45	Pump	✓		1
46	Realness	✓		2
47	Serving Face		✓	1
48	Serving The Gworls		✓	1
49	Sis	✓		1
50	Spook The Tea		✓	1
51	Storm	✓		1
52	Tetwasss	✓		1
53	The Ball		✓	1
54	The Children		✓	1
55	The Scene		✓	1
56	The T		✓	1
57	The Village		✓	1
58	To Gag		✓	1
59	To Gather You		✓	1
60	Trade	✓		1
61	Try You		✓	1
62	Tuhhhnite	✓		1
63	Wolf Pussy		✓	1
64	Yack	✓		1
65	Yasss	✓		2
66	Yo cakes		✓	1
Σ		32	34	71

There are 2 types of registers found, namely simple register, and complex register. Simple registers are registers that are made up of simple words. Complex registers are registers that have undergone any morphological process. This identification is required to determine which English registers have undergone morphological processes and which have not. Out of 66 English registers, two simple registers are bulge and major. The rest are complex registers.

Table 3. Types of Word Formation Process

No	Types of Word Formation Process	English Registers Units	Σ	%
1	Blending	Glamazon,	1	1,56%



2	Compounding	Aren't You Living?, Construction Worker and Don't Do Me,	3	4,68%
3	Derivation	A Zaddy, Eleganza, Extraness, Fieeerceley and Yasss	5	7,81%
4	Clipping	Gorge, Mones and The T Bitch, Cunt, Duck Walk, Dusted,	3 15	4,68% 23,46%
5	Conversion	Fieeerceley, Gaggy, Munch, Pump, Sis, Storm, The Ball, The Children, The Scene, The Village and Trade A Kiki, Dl Sneaky Link, Do You Use Mistr?, Down Low, Drama & Conflama, Get Into This, Girlina, Gworl, Henny or Hunty, I Am Living, I Got My Life, In The Liofe, It's Giving Us, Jugs, Lawd, Layed, Left Gagging, Lewk, Mawwwma, Miss Thing,	37	57,81%
6	Coinage	No Tea No Shade, Okrrr Mama, Ovah, Ovah The Top, Pay It, Perched, Realness, Serving Face, Serving The Gworls, Spook The Tea, Tetwasss, To Gag, To Gather You, Try You, Tuhhhnite, Wolf Pussy, Yack and Yo cakes		
TOTAL			64	100%

The table above shows the categories of the complex registers based on the word formation process. The most dominant type of word formation process is coinage. There are 37 registers created through coinage, and it is because the English registers found in Dean Modah's Tik Tok Videos are written in a variety of ways, including with a space between the elements, added letters in between the elements, or simply replacing a letter in the elements. Meanwhile, the rest of the registers are made of conversion, clipping, derivation, compounding, and blending formation processes.



Table 4. Types of Changes in Meaning

No	Types of Changes in Meaning	English Registers Units	Σ	%
1	Widening of meaning	A Kiki, A Zaddy, I Am Living, I Got My Life, Layed, Major, Pump, Sis, Storm, The Scene and To Gather You	11	16,66%
2	Narrowing of meaning	Aren't You Living?, Construction Worker, DI Sneaky Link, Do You Use Mistr?, Don't Do Me, Down Low, Drama & Conflama, Duck Walk, Dusted, Fieeerceely, Gaggy, Get Into This, Girlina, Glamazon, Henny or Hunty, In The Liofe, It's Giving Us, Left Gagging, Miss Thing, Mones, Munch, No Tea No Shade, Okrrr Mama, Ovah, Pay It, Perched, Serving Face, Serving The Gworls, Spook The Tea, The Ball, The Children, The Village, To Gag, Trade, Try You and Yo cakes	36	54,54%
3	Amelioration	Bitch and Cunt	2	3,05%
4	Pejoration	Bulge, Jugs, Tetwasss, Wolf Pussy and Yack	5	7,57%
5	Metonymy	Eleganza, Extraness, Gorge, Gworl, Lawd, Lewk, Mawwwwma, Ovah The Top, Realness, The T, Tuhhhnite and Yasss	12	18,18%
Total			66	100%

The changes of word usage defined by Hollmann (2007) is Changes in meaning as changes in form, which means words are constantly used, and speakers' intentions vary from time to time, causing meaning to change. According to Hollmann (2007), there are six types of meaning changes. This study discovered five changes out of six, these are widening of meaning, narrowing of meaning, amelioration, pejoration and metonymy. The most dominant changes is narrowing of meaning. The reason many English registers have been identified and undergone the process of semantic subtraction and alteration is that the meaning of the register has been reduced or changed from its lexical meaning, and this new meaning is more appropriate in this context than before the change. For example, the word 'layed' in its lexical meaning would mean something is on staying flat on a



surface or you are in a resting position on some sort of surface. However, in the queer community, this would mean that you are looking exceptionally stylish. This is also the same case for the word 'cunt' before it used to refer to women's genitalia, but in this community, the meaning changes to extremely feminine. This result is also evidence that our initial assumptions about the meaning of the English register indicate certain things that only certain individuals, such as queer people can understand.

Table 5. Language Functions Served by the English Registers

No	Functions	English Registers Units	Σ	%	
1	Instrumental	Give a warning	Don't do me, Get into this, munch, pay it, serving face, spook the tea, storm, to gag, to gather you, try you, and yack	11	15,49%
2	Representational	Give information about objects and current events.	A kiki, Dl Sneaky Link, drama and conflama, it's giving us, mones, the ball, the scene, the t, the village and tuhnhnite.	10	14,09%
3	Interactional	Contact between the participants	Bitch, Do You Use Mistr?, Okrrr mama, Aren't you living? and Yesss	6	8,45%
4	Personal	Personal feeling Oriented to the speaker	A zaddy, bulge, construction worker, cunt, down low, duck walk, dusted, eletanza, fiercly, gaggy, girlina,	44	61,97%



	glamazon, gorge, gworl, henny and hunty, I am living, I got my life, in the liofo, jugs, lawd, layed, laft gagging, lewk, major, mawwwma, miss thing, no tea no shade, ovah, ovah the top, perched, pump, realness, serving the gwrols, sis, tetwass, the children, trade, wolf pussy and yo cakes	
Total		71 100%

Regarding language functions, the English register is classified based on Halliday's seven language functions. These seven language functions are instrumental function, regulatory representational function, interactional function, heuristic function, personal function, and imaginative function. Table 5 shows that 4 types out of 7 language functions. The table also shows total 71 English registers, 44 served as personal functions. Hence, the most dominant language function is the personal function.

Queer language identifies, what Hornby (1995) said, morphological formation process. This process exercises a simple word which only contains one morpheme and cannot be divided into smaller, more intelligible parts (Ramlan, 2009). Queer community formulates their own words which correspond to Yule's (2010) classification of word construction varieties. To make their language identity different from the major, Queer community forms abbreviations that cannot be spoken as words. This is what Fogarty (2006) called as initialism. Queer community changes the meaning of the words in order to make their particularity. The changes in meaning as well as the use of metaphors may result in changes in perception. The changes show the way Queer community perceives their surroundings and reveals their worldview. The registers used are to help people in the community freely express themselves. As Christodoulou (2009) said, the changes in word meaning are to facilitate the interaction between individuals. Queer's language reveals their knowledge about the world. It also conveys their identity, personal preferences, and imagination.



Conclusion

It can be concluded that word formulation, changes in meaning, and use of language identify the identity of the Queer community. The language used by the Queer community shows their existence which is different from other communities in society. The language of the Queer community announces how the community understands reality and communicates their perspective on the world.

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