# Hetties, Queens, and Fag Hags. Ironic Name Giving in LGBTIQ+ Discourse

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In this paper I outline verbal humor and irony in LGBTIQ designations, i.e. in name giving *among* and *by* LGBTIQ+ persons and also terms *about* them. My analysis focuses on personal nouns used in a humorous way both for LGBTIQ+ persons and straight/heterosexual persons, both used within LGBTIQ+ communities to refer to other group members or to outgroup persons and also used in heterosexual/heterosexist/homophobic discourse. I examine instances which are structured by heteronormativity as well as cases in which heteronormative thinking is overcome or deconstructed, in which humorous personal nouns are used for exclusion and serve as markers of otherness. Also aiming to identify who is targeted and in what ways humorous designations are used to downplay persons, I outline similarities and differences between humorous personal nouns used in heterosexist/heteronormative discourses and those used within LGBTIQ+ communities. The aim of this paper is to show how the humorous aspect of such personal nouns is constructed and what role it plays in transmitting and understanding certain semantic aspects.

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## The merry gay

If we consider *gay* as *happy, excited, cheerful* and *lively,* as the Merriam-Webster dictionary[1] suggests, the link to humor and fun seems immediate and intrinsic to the word itself. The *gay* I want to focus on in this paper is linked to another meaning of *gay,* though: the meaning of *gay* as *homosexual.* This meaning prevails today so that other, earlier meanings such as *merry, lively,* etc. are almost entirely out of use. Even though many speakers of English are aware of these older meanings, gay is only rarely used in this sense. The shift from *gay* as *merry* to *gay* as *homosexual* was not direct but developed across various intermediate stages. Already from the 16th century onwards, *gay* took on meanings dealing with sexual conduct such as promiscuous, frivolous, and uninhibited.[2] From the 18th century on, *gay* was also used to describe a woman living by prostitution.[3] The sexual *gay* then took on the homosexual meaning approximately about the beginning of the 20th century, and especially since the 1950s and 1960s, *gay* has been used for self-definition by homosexual persons.[4] While initially *gay* with the meaning of *homosexual* was restricted to slang, in the last 40 or 50 years its use has become mainstream and it dominates today. The homosexual *gay* today oscillates between the usage of *gay* as an offensive slur and also *gay* as a positive self-identifier.

When analyzing names given to gay persons, it is not easy to keep up a gay mood: many terms used to refer to gay persons, or more broadly, LGBTIQ+ persons, have nothing to do with light-heartedness and merriness, but are rather heavily offensive slurs. We could argue that some people nevertheless find some slurs funny or humorous, especially if ignoring or better blending out the wounding potential of these terms. Rather than discussing whether offensive, hurtful slurs could be considered funny or humorous, I will examine humorous linguistic features such as euphemism, irony and word plays in the word formation of these terms. I do not want to focus only on words that are used to refer to LGBTIQ+ persons, but also on terms used by LGBTIQ+ people to refer to heterosexuals.[5]

## Naming in LGBTIQ+ discourse

In my paper, I will outline uses of humor and irony in LGBTIQ+ discourses, i.e. in statements *about* and *by* LGBTIQ+ persons. I investigate personal nouns used to mark otherness, on the one hand in heterosexual discourse to refer to homosexuals/LGBTIQ+ and then by LGBTIQ+ themselves to refer to themselves

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[1] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gay Accessed 5 December 2016.

[2] http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77207?rskey=MiDhpd&result=1&isAdvanced =false#eid. Accessed 5 December 2016.

[3] http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77207?rskey=MiDhpd&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid Accessed 5 December 2016.

[4] http://www.dictionary.com/browse/gay. Accessed 5 December 2016.

[5] It is impossible to refer to LGBTIQ+ persons or straight/heterosexual persons as uniform, homogeneous groups. When referring, for example, to "a term used by A for B", this affirmation is not to be understood as "a term used by all As" or "a term used exclusively by As", i.e. A is not a precondition for using this term and A and the usage of the term are not inextricably linked; neither does it mean that all B are targeted by the used term. While in the chapter "Terms for homosexuals by heterosexuals" the analyzed terms could also be classified as homophobic, such a classification is not productive for the other chapters. For reasons of simplicity, the distinction has been made into terms used by A for B, even though, as shown, neither A nor B can be considered homogeneous groups and the simplistic distinction according to the supposed user (group) has its weaknesses. Keeping these weaknesses in mind, A and B are rather to be understood as discursive positions.

and to heterosexuals. In this analysis, I use *discourse* rather in the Foucauldian sense than in a strictly linguistic one. Therefore, instead of setting up a corpus of texts of naturally occurring language and using it as a basis for analysis, I will rely on dictionaries, online glossaries, and discussions in blogs, forums and groups. Treating them as knowledge producing sources, I will showcase the broad spectrum of lexical variety of terms which feature humorous aspects.

Instead of concentrating on jokes, my analysis deals with humorous, often ironic expressions on a lexical basis. I will present humorous terms referring to LGBTIQ+ and heterosexual persons and identities. This paper intends to analyze both terms for LGBTIQ+ and heterosexuals with the purpose of exposing humorous or ironic strategies of word formation and the creation of humor and irony through semantic aspects. Humor is not only used in heterosexist/homophobic discourses to mock LGBTIQ+ people, but it also plays a role within LGBTIQ+ discourses, where it can be used to refer to other group members or to outgroup persons, i.e. heterosexual or heterosexist persons.

Humor can take on the same function as slurs: It can be used for degrading (minority) groups by concentrating and reducing them to certain isolated, often stereotypical features and characteristics. The specific characteristic becomes the unique defining feature, from a characteristic ascribed to an individual it transforms into the main identifying feature of an entire group. The determination of such specific defining features can fulfill aims such as distinguishing between *them* and *us,* thus serving as a marker of *otherness.* This *othering,* the manner in which social group dichotomies are represented via language, is a powerful rhetorical tool.[6] As sexuality in general and homosexuality and LGBTIQ+ forms of gender expression and sexuality, in particular, represent a taboo in the dominant heteronormative society, the use of euphemisms plays an important role.

In this paper, attempts are made to explain and classify terms used to refer to homosexual/LGBTIQ+ persons, first used by heterosexuals (see paragraph "Terms for homosexuals by heterosexuals/in homophobic discourses") and second by homosexuals/LGBTIQ+ themselves (see paragraph "Terms for homosexuals used in LGBTIQ+ discourses"). In a second step, terms used by homosexuals/LGBTIQ+ to refer to heterosexual persons are examined (see paragraph "Terms for heterosexuals used by homosexuals"). With particular attention being paid to their formation, terms are classified according to their semantic content and especially whom they refer to.

My analysis focuses on terms used in a humorous way within LGBTIQ+ communities to refer to other group members or to outgroup persons. I examine instances which are structured by heteronormativity as well as cases in which heteronormative thinking is overcome or deconstructed, in which humorous personal nouns are used for inclusion or exclusion and serve as markers of otherness. By analyzing who is targeted and showing in what ways humorous designations are used to downplay persons, I aim to outline similarities and differences between humorous terms used in heterosexist/heteronormative discourses and those used within LGBTIQ+ communities. Furthermore, I want to investigate the purposes of the uses of such humorous terms: are the marking of otherness and the creation of a common identity crucial influencing factors in the use of these terms?

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[6] For linguistic analysis dealing with othering see e.g. Fairclough 1992, 1994; O'Barr 1994; Riggins 1997; van Dijk 1997.

The aim of this paper then is to show how humorous aspects of such personal nouns are constructed and what role humor plays in transmitting and understanding certain semantic aspects. Outlining which characteristics and features are shared by terms for homo- and for heterosexuals and where there are differences, I will provide an in-depth analysis of the word formation processes and the components which are contained and put together in order to form new words, especially to refer to heterosexual people. The results of this analysis are then used to speculate as to why certain terms are used.

**Humor in language**

Humor in linguistics or generally in language is a very broad and still growing field of research. Studies on the topic of humor in language mainly distinguish between three types of humor:

- Theories of incongruity, or inconsistency, or contradiction, or bisociation. […]
- Theories of superiority, or disparagement, or criticism, or hostility that accentuate the (negative) attitude of the producer and/or user of humor towards its target and the often alleged aggressive character of laughter. That is, humor is said to be pointed against some person or group, typically on political, ethnic or gender grounds.
- Theories of release, or relief, or relaxation, also known as psychoanalytic […] (Krikmann 2006, 26-27)

The second category, the theories of superiority, disparagement, criticism, or hostility, plays an important role for the following analysis, as this surely is the prevailing form of humor used in homophobic discourse. Krikmann himself defines this kind of humor as "pointed against some person or group, typically on […] gender grounds" (2006, 27). As gender and sexuality are often thought together and perceived as linked to each other, this aspect becomes not only applicable but perfectly suitable for this analysis. Krikmann adds that these theories are often not to be clearly separated but appear often in mixed forms.

With his Semantic Mechanisms of Humor in 1985, Victor Raskin provides the first expressly linguistic approach to humor. He develops his script-based semantic theory of humor (SSTH) (Raskin 1985). Furthermore, Raskin distinguishes between three types of "aggressive" humor, namely sexual, ethnic and political, and subdivides sexual humor into four categories:

1) sexual/non-sexual opposition: overt, unspecified;
2) sexual/non-sexual opposition: overt, specified;
3) non-sexual opposition in explicitly sexual humor;
4) specific sexual opposition in explicitly sexual humor.
(Raskin in Krikmann 2006, 34)

Here, the second category could apply for my examples. As Raskin focuses on entire texts and I on words, an exact application of his ideas is problematic. Interesting for the purpose of this paper is Raskin's classification of abnormalities or scripts within the second type, where he lists "GENITAL SIZE, SEXUAL PROWESS, SEXUAL EXPOSURE, SEXUAL IGNORANCE or INEXPERIENCE, various instances of FORBIDDEN SEX (zoophily, adultery, prostitution, incest, same-sex intercourse)" (Krikmann 2006, 34). This classification shows a clear heteronormative and

heterosexist perspective, as it lists non-normative sexualities and same-sex intercourse per se as humor-provoking "forbidden sex". As this paper focuses on different sexualities, this approach surely is too short-sighted for my purposes.

The General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) developed by Salvatore Attardo and Victor Raskin provides a hierarchy of knowledge resources:

1) Language
2) Narrative strategy
3) Target
4) Situation
5) Logical mechanism
6) Script opposition
(Krikmann 2006, 37)

Interesting for the aim of this paper are knowledge resources 3 and 4, i.e. the target and the situation, as they add pragmatic aspects and focus on the targeted person, on whose presumed/stereotypical characteristics the humorous effect is based.

Many of the humor theories in linguistics focus on jokes as entire texts, while this paper concentrates on verbal humor on a lexical level. Therefore, the outlined theories can only partly be applied. From the theories outlined above, I will establish links to SSTH categories, especially the one on sexual abnormality. Attardo's GVTH provides the target as a knowledge resource which is useful in my analysis and which is outlined for the analyzed terms. In order to show the humorous aspects or verbal humor in this paper, the analysis must move to a lexical level. Theories on euphemisms, of irony and of word plays and puns are of fundamental significance for the upcoming analysis.

**Euphemism**

The topic of sexuality in general and homosexuality and other forms of non-(hetero)normative sexualities in particular are taboo topics in Western society. Therefore, many discourses on sexualities and more specifically also many terms that relate to sexuality hide their sexual content in euphemisms. "The subject of sex, being a major concern in human life and one that is likely to elicit embarrassment, is a potent source of euphemism for Western people of most ages and walks of life" (Linfoot-Ham 2005, 229).

For Montero, euphemism is

> a set of linguistic mechanisms which, acting on the phonic-graphic aspect of the word or on its semantic content, permit the creation or renewal of already existing linguistic forms, which, in that context and in that situation, denote but do not connote the samething [sic]. (Montero qtd. in Casas Gómez 2009, 732).

Euphemisms offer a way of speaking about taboo topics without directly pronouncing them. By using concealing language, the taboo concerning the talked about topic is reproduced and reinforced: "the function of euphemism is to protect the speaker/writer, hearer/reader, or all of the above from possible effrontery and offence." (Linfoot-Ham 2005, 228) This explanation does not mean, though, that a euphemism cannot be offensive. Especially sexual euphemisms can carry a rather strong offensive potential.

The formation of new euphemisms usually follows three principles:

> It must be distant enough from the unpleasant topic it covers, related enough to the concept in order to make an indirect link and pleasant enough that it brings to mind a better connotation.[7]

More elaborate is Beatrice Warren's (1992,134) classification of the main devices for constructing euphemisms:

- o Structural/formal innovation:
  - ▪ word formation devices:
    - • compounding
    - • derivation
    - • blends
    - • acronyms
    - • onomatopoeia
  - ▪ phonemic modification
    - • back slang
    - • rhyming slang
    - • phonemic replacement
    - • abbreviation
  - ▪ loan words
- o Semantic innovation
  - ▪ particularization
  - ▪ implication
  - ▪ metaphor
  - ▪ metonymy
  - ▪ reversal or irony
  - ▪ understatement / litotes
  - ▪ overstatement / hyperbole

(Classification of the main devices for constructing euphemisms; see Warren 1992,134)

In the following analysis, I will present examples for some of the outlined devices for creating euphemisms. Another very important criterion for analysis is irony.

**Irony**

"Is it not somewhat ironic [itself] that, for all the effort that linguists, psychologists, authors, and the like have devoted to understanding and using irony, no one can define irony?" (Littmann and Mey 1991, 131). For the following analysis, I will focus on verbal irony. Many sources provide very simplified and limited explanations and define irony simply as indicating the contrary of what is really meant. This understanding of irony only offers a rather short-sighted view. The Merriam-Webster offers two possibilities of understanding irony:[8]

- using words that mean the opposite of what you really think especially in order to be funny

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[7] http://unravellingmag.com/articles/euphemisms/. Accessed 5 December 2016.

[8] For further research on irony see also e.g. Searle 1979, Grice 1989, Sperber and Wilson 1992, Gibbs 1994.

- strange or funny because something (such as a situation) is different from what you expected[9]

The second definition in our case seems particularly helpful, as it includes people's expectations. According to this definition, an ironic understanding is possible, if a situation or something is funny or strange because the viewers' expectations are not met. We can establish a link to Raskin's theories, as he also makes use of the viewers' expectation or better the non-compliance with these expectations as a criterion for his classification (e.g. of sexual humor). We can link this argument directly to heteronormativity. If we see heteronormativity as a set of expectations which need be fulfilled in order to produce and maintain a sense of rightness and normality, then we understand how, if these expectations are not met, this rightness and normality is not reached. Instead, something funny or strange, something queer, so to speak, is produced. These examples show that expectations play a role on two different levels: one the one hand, the expectations of fulfillment of heteronormative norms, and, on the other, expectations and the failure to meet them as humor producing factor.

**Wordplays and puns**

The Merriam Webster defines wordplay as a playful or clever use of words.[10] The online Oxford Dictionary under British & World English defines wordplay as "[t]he witty exploitation of the meanings and ambiguities of words, especially in puns: so many of the jokes are based on wordplay."[11] Delabatista defines wordplay as follows:

> Wordplay is the general name for the various textual phenomena in which structural features of the language(s) are exploited in order to bring about a communicatively significant confrontation of two (or more) linguistic structures with more or less similar forms and more or less different meanings. (Delabastita 1996, 128)

A pun is a form of wordplay usually defined as "deliberate communicative strategy, or the result thereof, used with a specific sematic or pragmatic effect in mind" (Delabatista 1997, 1-2) or according to the Merriam Webster "a humorous way of using a word or phrase so that more than one meaning is suggested."[12] The humor of a pun depends very much of the "expectations shared by the framer of the message and the addressee and on the way the latter is taken by surprise and plunged into something entirely different from what s/he has been prepared for" (Delabatista 1996,138).

The analysis will show the important role of the above-mentioned features of euphemism, irony as well as wordplays and puns in name giving in the field of sexualities.

**Analysis**

To create the corpus with terms for the analysis, an online search was conducted for the keywords "funny –" or "humorous term for homosexual" or "humorous term for gay" and "term for heterosexual". The search led to a number of websites, forums and blogs where terms are listed and sometimes explained. The sources thus range from

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[9] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/irony. Accessed 5 December 2016.
[10] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/wordplay. Accessed 5 December 2016.
[11] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/wordplay. Accessed 5 December 2016.
[12] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pun. Accessed 5 December 2016.

online (slang) dictionaries such as *Urban Dictionary*,[13] blogs and forums where users discuss related questions and suggest terms they are familiar with[14] to Wikipedia Lists.[15] A list of the websites used as sources can be found in the appendix "Links".

The analysis starts with numerous examples of euphemistic and/or ironic terms for homosexual/LGBTIQ+ persons. These terms represent the outcome of searching online sources for "humorous" or "funny" terms for homosexuals or gays. The findings are grouped and classified according to semantic features in order to provide a good basis for analysis. In a second step, terms used to refer to heterosexual persons are listed, classified and analyzed according to their shared semantic features and user information. The analysis will help draw parallels and discover common features and differences in the semantic and pragmatic aspects involved in the processes of word formation of terms to refer to homosexual/LGBTIQ+ and heterosexual people.

### Terms for homosexuals by heterosexuals/in homophobic discourses

It is not difficult to come up with terms for homosexuals. There are some basic terms such as *homosexual, gay* or *queer* that (almost) everybody in mainstream language use is familiar with. Additionally, there is an endless list of more or less familiar terms with offensive potential. While the first mentioned widely known terms also provide the possibility to refer to persons in a rather neutral way and can be found in dictionaries, the second group of offensive slurs is mostly excluded from "official" sources such as dictionaries or other linguistic authority sources. Nevertheless it is not difficult at all to find them. A quick search on the internet already provides an almost endless list of sources such as websites, forums, and discussion groups which discuss and list all kinds of slurs for homosexuals. This abundance of terms to refer to homosexual persons indicates "what Halliday (1978,165) terms 'over-lexicalisation', a phenomenon that marks a problem area in the language" (Linfoot-Ham 2005, 229). This problem area in the language could be a taboo, for example. As Allen and Burridge (1991, 96) explain, "the degree of synonymy in the vocabulary for the genitalia and copulation has no parallel elsewhere in the English lexicon – except in the terms for 'whore'". The following analysis will show that also in the case of terms and slurs used to refer to homosexual men we can speak of over-lexicalization.

Even if we specify the search to "funny" or "humorous" terms for homosexuals, the list of given sources is long. I want to suggest to classify these cases as belonging to the above-mentioned "theories of superiority, or disparagement, or criticism, or hostility that accentuate the (negative) attitude of the producer and/or user of humor towards its target and the often alleged aggressive character of laughter" (Krikmann 2006, 26-27), i.e. we are dealing here with a kind of humor which targets persons or groups on gender and sexuality grounds. In Raskin's words, the following terms are examples of aggressive humor. While surely many people would agree that most of the given terms are rather offensive and not funny, we could nevertheless consider some of them humorous in a wider sense due to the processes of their word formation and the above-listed criteria.

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[13] http://www.urbandictionary.com/. Accessed 5 December 2016.

[14] http://www.kboards.com/index.php/topic,206568.msg2878437.html?PHPSESSID=0cd7a5ebca09 6dda4a2b330bc9753c2e#msg2878437, or https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/alt.tasteless. jokes/zdrSbFlcbcc Accessed 5 December 2016.

[15] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_LGBT_slang_terms. Accessed 5 December 2016.

## Humor as an instrument for mocking

An important, if not the most important characteristic of many of the humorous terms used to refer to homosexual/LGBTIQ+ people is the aim of mocking the targeted persons. As these terms often are highly offensive, we can observe parallels to slurs, offensive language and sexist/homophobic jokes. These characteristics justify the classification of these terms as aggressive humor.

I argue that by producing this aggressive humor most of these terms aim at mocking homosexual or LGBTIQ+ people. The targeted point of these slurs is the "unwillingness" or the "inability" of LGBTIQ+ people to stick to social norms regarding sexuality and gender representation. This not obeying or deviating from heteronormativity is seen and expressed as a failure and thus is used as a point of attack. Not meeting the requirements set out in the dominant heteronormative society serves as the weak point used to attack and mock homosexual and LGBTIQ+ people.

## Concealing terms

Examples: *four-letter man; Peter Puffer, poofter, puff*

A way of concealing the homosexuality of the targeted person is achieved in *four-letter man*, with the four indicated letters being *H-O-M-O*, the short form of *homosexual*. Also the form *Peter Puffer* can be considered concealing, just as *poofter* or *puff*, as they modify the slur *poof*, so it is no longer directly recognizable and understandable. In these cases, the euphemistic function is dominant.

## Dominant gender roles and attribution of opposite gender characteristics to homosexuals

Ironic or humorous name giving therefore is, for example, often based on the non-fulfillment of dominant heteronormative gender roles. If a person who is read as a man fails to fulfill the heteronormative criterion of showing sexual and/or affective interest in persons read as women, he fails an important gender norm, and thus is not considered a "full" or a "real" man from a heteronormative and heterosexist point of view. As the sense of rightness conveyed through heteronormativity intrinsically links a person's sexuality or sexual orientation to their gender expression, homosexuality is interpreted as a misled inversion. Sexual or affective interest for someone identifying with the same sex as oneself thus means breaking a heteronormative rule: a man must be interested in a woman and a woman in a man (if at all). According to the laws of heteronormativity, the sexual and/or affective interest for a man is thus a norm that clearly belongs to women. Therefore, the interest of a man in another man is read as a female characteristic which disturbs his masculinity and spoils it with feminine traits, making him become not a "real" man and downgrading him to less than a man. In many cases, feminized forms are used to express this very idea. Also the other way around, female homosexuality is understood as masculine traits in women who thus are not considered "real" women, but women with masculine disruptive factors, thus becoming less than "real" women.

As language use or better many of the listed slurs show, this attribution of features and traits of the opposite sex is then enlarged, attacking homosexual men as "feminized" half-men and homosexual women as "masculinized" half-men/half-women.

Examples: *chicken; fairy; joy-boy; limp wrist; Nellie; pussy; Sissy; three-legged beaver*

These examples show various strategies of feminizing the targeted homosexual men. In the case of *fairy*, a fictional female character is used, in the case of *Sissy* and *Nellie* personal names. A feminized or effeminate behavior is also used to form a denomination for a gay man, such in the case of *limp wrist*. A *joy-boy* is used for someone who is considered less than a man; *pussy* and *chicken* are listed as synonyms.[16]

A *three-legged beaver* is a term which unites both male (three-legged = two legs + a penis) and female (beaver = vagina) features.

All these examples, which show how opposite gender characteristics are attributed to homosexual persons, can be read as ironic. Insofar as homosexuals/LGBTQI+ persons fail to meet the criteria set out by heteronormativity, they break heteronormative expectations, thus leading to the creation of strangeness. This strangeness is linguistically formulated and marked by applying non-fitting gender roles.

### Reference to sexual activities/practices

Many of the found terms can be listed in this category. These terms used for homosexual people limit the perspective and refer exclusively to sexual activities and practices attributed to homosexuals (by heterosexuals). As sex and sexual activities, in general, and homosexual sexual activities, in particular, represent a taboo, this field offers a fertile ground for euphemisms.

#### Terms for homosexual men

Examples: *anal avengers, anal aviator, anal perpetrator, anal perpetrator, anal rooters, anal rooters, anal-receptor; arse bandit; ass masters, ass munchers, ass packer, ass pirate; asshole bandit; asshopper; ass-king; back door butler; back-door man; backside artist; ball sack emptier; beef blower; bend over buddies; brown hatters; bum bandit, bum chum; butt bandit, butt hugger, butt knocker, butt pirate, butt poker, butt ranger; butt-hole surfer; chutney ferret; cock captain, cock surfer; cornhole commando; crap clown; cum juggler; dick smoker; dirt-chute plunger; dung detective; fanny bandit; fart-catcher; flute; fudge packer, fudge tunnel engineer; ham slammer; hemorrhoid massager; inspector of manholes; jobby jabber; kielbassa slinger; knob jockey; loose fart; marmite-miner; master of the manflute; meat grinder, meat-hound; mud humper, mud maniac; oil driller; one eyed proctologist; penis fly trap; pillow biter, pillow-muncher; pole smoker; pooper, pooper snooper; queer bate; receiver of swollen goods; rectal ranger, rectal receivers; robbers of the turd haven; rump humper, rump pumper, rump Rambo, rump ranger, rump rider, rump thumper, rump wrangler; sausage jockey, sausage smuggler; scrotum smokers; semen sampler; shirt lifter; shit sergeant, shit shunter, shit stabber; sperm burper; sperm gurglers; sphincter specialist; starpuncher; tonsil jockey; tube goober; tube luber; tubesteak tarzan; turd burglar, turd tamper; uphill gardeners*

All these terms refer directly or indirectly, in a more or less euphemistic and ironic way, to sexual practices (anal intercourse, fellatio) and the employed body parts. All these examples show a clear case of over-lexicalization: the obsessive concentration on male-male sexual practices provides evidence for the taboo in heteronormative/homophobic discourses.

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[16] http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Joyboy. Accessed 5 December 2016.

**Terms for homosexual women**

To a by far lesser extent, there are also euphemistic terms which are based on sexual practices to refer to lesbian women.

Examples: *carpet muncher, minge muncher, muffer, kissing fish*

All these terms refer to a sexual practice, namely cunnilingus. In this case, too, this practice is not limited to lesbian women. Some of these terms are not only part of homophobic, but also misogynist discourse, such as *kissing fish*, with *fish* being a derogatory term for the female sexual organs and also *pars pro toto* for women in general.

Even though all these practices, both used in terms for homosexual men and in those for homosexual women, are not limited to same-sex sexual practices, they are nevertheless used to name homosexual and LGBTIQ+ persons. As non-reproductive sexual activities, they can be considered as outside of heteronormativity.

**Terms for homosexuals used in LGBTIQ+ discourses**

**Polari**

Examples: *fruit (+ compounds), horse's hoof*

Several euphemistic terms used to refer to homosexual men or homosexuality in general serve the purpose of hiding the meaning (see paragraph on concealing terms), of encoding meaning to make it understandable only to ingroup members. In this sense, they could be considered as part of an *anti-language* in the Hallidayan sense (Halliday 1976).

A good example is the question "Are you a friend of Dorothy?", which represents a widely used ingroup way of asking someone about their presumed homosexuality. In case the recipient understands the questions (a reference to the Wizard of Oz and a synonym for being homosexual) and confirms, both speakers share the knowledge about their homosexuality. If the recipient does not get the special meaning of "friend of Dorothy", the topic of homosexuality is not disclosed. Thus, the usage of "friend of Dorothy" is a perfect example for an ingroup marker.

Many similar terms and phrases can be found in Polari, a sort of Hallidayan anti-language between homosexual men in use in London approximately until the 1960s (see Baker 2002). Also in today's English, several terms and phrases originally stemming from Polari are still in use, such as *fruit* for *homosexual. Fruit* is also often used in compounds such as *frozen fruit, fruit loop, fruit punch, fruit stand*, etc. (see also *fruit fly*).

A *horse's hoof* is a good example of a Polari word formed through the typical London rhyming slang: *hoof* rhymes with *poof*, so *horse's hoof* means *gay*.

**Irony and opposite gender roles**

Examples: *Aunt Fancy, auntie, Daisy, Lacy, Mary, sister, queen*

Also these examples show ironic language use through the attribution of opposite gender roles (cf. chapter on dominant gender roles above). The attribution of femininity to homosexual men and of masculinity to lesbian women is not unique of heterosexual discourse. The heteronormativity prevailing in the dominant society also influences minority discourses. Thus, also in LGBTIQ+ discourses, often an attribution of opposite gender roles can be observed, also on a linguistic level. This

shows that gender roles dictated by heteronormativity are deeply rooted in many discourses, especially in hetero- and homosexual discourses, as both hetero- and homosexuality are based on the binary gender foundations laid out in heteronormativity. Non-binary persons remain invisible in both heterosexual and homosexual discourses.

These examples show cases where proper names are employed (*Lacy, Daisy, Mary, aunt Fancy*). In the other cases (*sister, auntie, also aunt Fancy*), (female) gendered kinship terms are used to express the common affiliation as ingroup members.

### Intersections

Especially within LGBTQI+ discourse, some examples can be found that unite different intersecting markers such as gender and age:

*Auntie, Grimm's fairy, Mother Superior*

Other examples link gender and race/ethnicity:

*Brownie queen, rice queen*

We can observe that often terms used in LGBTIQ+ discourses tend to be more specific; they help classify persons from within the LGBTIQ+ spectrum and refer to and thus linguistically produce typologies/categories of persons within the LGBTIQ+ communities, thus becoming clear ingroup markers.

### Word plays

Several examples can be found for metaphorical naming of subcategories of homosexual men such as *bear, cub, otter*, and *handbag* ("handsome young gay men who hang around drag queens"[17]). Also the metonymical naming of bisexuality as *AC/DC* falls into the category of wordplays. Another metonymical wordplay is *U-Hauls*. Here, in a humorous way, the name of the truck rental company *U-Haul* turns into the category name for lesbian women who move together quickly.

### Short forms / abbreviations

Examples: *homo, lezzy*

Also short forms or abbreviations can be found such as *homo* instead of homosexual or *lezzy* as a hypocorism of lesbian, i.e. the longer word lesbian is truncated to one syllable and an −*y* or −*ie* is added in order to build a new word in the form of a diminutive. Diminutives can serve on the one hand as a form of endearment. On the other, they can also belittle and downplay a person, thus serving as a tool for intimidation and humiliation.

### Terms for heterosexuals used by homosexuals

Generally, it can be observed that only a very small number of terms can be found to refer to heterosexual persons. Quite a number of these terms are used for heterosexual persons in relation to homosexual or LGBTIQ+ persons, and only very few for heterosexuals in general.

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[17] http://www.aaronsgayinfo.com/Fterms.html Accessed 5 December 2016.

### Short forms, abbreviations, in –y/-ie, Acronyms

Examples: *hets, hetties; cishets*

The most used form, *het*, is a hypocorism of heterosexual, i.e. it is a new form which is created by reducing the longer word *heterosexual* to a single syllable, *het*. Directly derived from this form is the compound *cishet*, both a reduction of *cisgender* and *heterosexual*. Sometimes the ending –y or –ie is added (*hettie*), thus creating a form which can be used both as a form of endearment and as a pejorative diminutive.

### Reproduction

Example: *breeders*

While the vast majority of the terms outlined above to refer to homosexuals refer to sexual activities and/or body parts, not even one such example can be found in the analyzed material to refer to heterosexuals. The only term that could be linked to heterosexual sexual activity is *breeders*, which refers to reproduction.

## Heterosexuals in homosexual surroundings

In order to refer to heterosexual persons in homosexual/LGBTIQ+ surroundings, often composed terms are used. In these cases, one part of the compound consists of an offensive slur for homosexual men or women. Thus, this offensive slur is taken on and re-used by the targeted group, thus becoming appropriated and positively re-evaluated.

## Heterosexual persons with homosexual persons

Example: *fruit fly*

This category flourishes with puns and word plays, and many cases of irony. Often offensive slurs for homosexual men are taken up, reclaimed and integrated into the new word. Thus a twofold effect is created: On the one hand, the original slur loses much of its offensive power, because it is taken on and re-used by the offended group; on the other, the offensive power is passed on and transferred to the targeted person of the newly coined term, turning the new term into a slur.

A term which encompasses both heterosexual men and women who enjoy the company of homosexual/LGBTIQ+ persons regardless of their gender is *fruit fly*. Here, the Polari term *fruit* serves as the first part of the compound *fruit fly*, which serves as a metaphor for the targeted heterosexual person "flying" around homosexual/LGBTIQ+ persons.

The largest groups of denominations can be found for heterosexual women in the company of homosexual men. The different word formation categories listed below are not to be understood as exclusive categories, as many terms show more than one feature and can be classified in more than one word formation category.

## Heterosexual women with homosexual men

### Compounds with terms for homosexuals

Examples: *fairy princess, fairy godmother, cherry fairy; queen bee*

As already outlined above, these terms are compounds with one part consisting of terms used to refer to homosexual men. The example *queen bee* furthermore shows a metaphorical use, as compares the (wealthy?) heterosexual women surrounded by men with the role of the queen bee.

**Reduplication and rhyme**

Examples: *fag hags, flame dame; gayboy bunny*

In this case a compound is created from the slur *fag* and the rhyming *hag* (an "evil spirit, dæmon, or infernal being, in female form" or "ugly, repulsive old woman" according to the OED[18]). The word formation process is a reduplication, i.e. a repetition with only one slight change, namely the /f/ to /h/. Similarly to *fag hag*, also *flame dame* is created through a kind of reduplication with the modification of /fl/ to /d/. It also shows a pure rhyme. Also the example *gayboy bunny* is created through rhyme. Only the initial /pl/ of *Playboy bunny* was modified to /g/.

**Alliteration & assonance**

Example: *homo honey*

Homo honey is a clear case of alliteration, with both words starting with the aspirate /h/. The similarity between [hom] and [hon] creates an assonance.

**Portmanteau**

Example: *gabe*

In the example *gabe*, the two words *gay* and *babe* are merged into a new word.

**Proper names**

Examples: *fruit loop, Goldilocks, Tori, Ursula*

*Fruit loop* can be classified under proper names because it also is the brand name of a cereal, in addition to being a compound containing the Polari term *fruit* for gay persons. *Goldilocks* is the name of a figure in the fairy tale "Goldilocks and the Three Bears". A woman enjoying the company of bears (category of gay men, see above) is thus called *Goldilocks.* Another name for a (maybe also queer?) woman in the company of bears is *Ursula*, used as a derivation of the Latin *urs* for *bear.*

Furthermore the shared name *Tori* of the gay icons Tori Spelling and Tori Amos is abstracted and used to refer to heterosexual women in the company of homosexual men in general.

**Men (hetero- and homosexual) with homosexual women**

Examples: *dutch boy, dyke tyke, lesbro*

Fewer terms can be found to refer to hetero- or homosexual men who enjoy the company of homosexual women. The term *dutch boy* is taken from a story about a little boy who used his finger to plug a dike to stop the town flooding.[19] The humorous aspect of the usage of *dutch boy* in relation to lesbian women is created by playing with the double meaning of *dyke* or *dike,* on the one hand as *embankment,* and, on the other, as a slur for lesbian women. *Dyke tyke* represents a clear case of reduplication with /d/ changing to /t/. In this case, both parts of the coined new compound are depreciative slurs: on the one hand *dyke* and on the other *tyke,* carrying the meaning "low-bred or coarse dog" or "low-bred, […] ill-mannered fellow."[20] *Lesbro* is a portmanteau term created by contracting *lesbian* and *brother.*

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[18] http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/83196?rskey=KXEdoR&result=1 - eid; hag n[1] 1° and 3a. Accessed 5 December 2016.

[19] Short story within the novel *Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates* by Mary Mapes Dodge (1865).

[20]  http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/208283?isAdvanced=false&result=2&rskey=BgzWId&. Accessed 5 December 2016.

**Heterosexual men with lesbian women**

Examples: *dikey likey, dyke daddy, Sappho daddy-o*

*Dikey likey* is a term created by reduplicating the slur *dyke* with the modification from /d/ to /l/. The thus resulting second part of the compound, *likey*, contains the verb *like*, so the newly coined term *dikey likey* provides its semantic explanation as a man who "likes dikes". Furthermore, this example shows the suffix *-ey* which indicates a form of endearment or a diminutive. *Dyke daddy* also is a compound with the slur *dyke* and an alliteration. The kinship term *daddy* underlines the positive relationship, just as in the case of *Sappho daddy-o*. Here the first part of the compound is not a slur, but the proper name of the famous Greek poet linked to female homosexuality and used as a euphemism for female homosexuality. In addition to forming a rhyme with *Sappho*, the *-o* at the end of *daddy-o* produces a familiar and informal word form.

**Heterosexual men with homosexual men**

Examples: *bat boy, fag stag, fifth wheel*

The term *bat boy* is formed with alliteration. Although sometimes it is used as a term to refer to homosexual men (allusion *bat-penis*), it also serves as denomination for a heterosexual man in a group of homosexual men. The *bat boy* is a figure in baseball, whose task it is to take care of the team's equipment; but not to play, i.e. a *bat boy* is not *on the team*, what also can be read as a euphemism for being gay. *Fag stag* is another example of a compound with a slur, in this case *fag*, the slur for homosexual men, originating as a short form of *faggot*, and *stag*, in the sense of *bachelor* or *man without a female partner*. The *fifth wheel* can be interpreted as metaphor for someone not belonging to a group or even disturbing.

**Homosexual men with homosexual women**

Example: *dyke diva*

*Dyke diva* is a newly coined term which shows alliteration. It is created by uniting an offensive term for lesbian women (*dyke*) and an opposite gender referring term for gay men (*diva*).

**Opposite sex partner of homosexual men/concealing homosexuality**

Examples: *beard, fag bag, fishwife, Fish and Chips*

A (fake) beard serves to hide and not to be recognized. Therefore a *beard* is a metaphor for using the company of an opposite sex person to conceal one's homosexuality. *Fishwife* and *Fish and Chips* refer to the wife or the wife and children of a(n undisclosed) homosexual or maybe bisexual man. Both of these examples contain *fish* as a misogynist/sexist slur for women. A *fag bag* is a name given to a woman married to a homosexual man. Also in this case one part of the compound is a slur, namely *fag* for homosexual men.

**"Ex-gays"**

Examples: *hasbian, wasbian, yestergay*

These examples show terms created as portmanteaus, i.e. as contractions from either *has* or *was* and *lesbian*, or *yesterday* and *gay*. The terms *hasbian* and *yestergay* furthermore create assonances with *has been* and *yesterday*, respectively. All terms refer to persons who once identified as homosexual and now as heterosexual, also referred to as *ex-gays*.

**Conclusion**

A first quick glance at the found terms shows that the vast majority refers to homosexual men and some terms refer to homosexual women; other identifications such as bi-, trans, intersexual, or generally gender non-conforming persons are not targeted. The conclusion thereof, though, cannot be that these persons are not subject to discrimination. The fact that there seem to be no terms or even slurs for them (at least in this analysis) rather shows that they seem to be not perceived at all and invisible in mainstream society. The homophobic discourse in which (many of) the above-mentioned terms are used simply refuses to distinguish between different forms of non-heteronormativity. In the binary perception of heteronormativity, non-binary persons are entirely ignored and/or integrated into the very simplified category of "not normal" equals "deviant of heteronormativity" equals "homosexual". As we have seen, most of the slurs refer to homosexual men, but nevertheless cannot be limited to them. As this explanation shows, other forms of non-heteronormativity are not perceived separately but included in the binary heteronormative and heterosexist perspective which equals all non-heteronormativity with homosexuality. What is also significant indeed is the imbalance between terms and slurs for male and female homosexuality or maybe better for non-heteronormative men compared to non-heteronormative women. While male non-heterosexuality is most targeted with slurs, the variety of slurs to refer to female homosexuality is rather limited. As in the case with non-binary and other non-heteronormative forms/persons, this can hardly be interpreted as a sign of greater acceptance, but rather as a proof of ignorance and zero-perception in the dominant society as well as in homophobic discourse and in hate speech.

Another quantitative outcome of this analysis is also very clear: There are many more names for homosexual persons than for heterosexuals. Terms for homosexuals include vulgar and offensive slurs as well as "humorous" ones, with humor being understood mainly in the sense of Raskin's aggressive humor. Terms for heterosexuals tend to be less offensive and mostly "funnier". While the vast majority of terms used to refer to homosexuals contain reference to sexual practices, (almost) none of the terms for heterosexuals do. In contrast to terms used to refer to homosexuals, typical heterosexual sexual activities are not used to create slurs. None of the terms used by homosexuals/LGBTIQ+ persons to refer to heterosexuals can be considered a (heavily) offensive slur. The only form of mockery used by homosexuals/LGBTIQ+ persons with regard to heterosexuals is not based on sexual practices but on reproduction. One could make the hypothesis that as the oppressed group, LGBTIQ+ persons cannot risk or do not dare to make use of overtly hostile terms and thus rely on humor as their weapon, while the dominating group can overtly make use of aggressive terms without concealing.

It can be summarized that all in all, this search and analysis has not brought up as many "merry", "funny" terms as one might have hoped for. Especially the long list of terms classified here as used by heterosexuals to refer to homosexuals can not at all be

regarded as "funny"; the only link to humor can, indeed, be established via Raskin's notion of aggressive humor.

The comparison between terms used for homosexuals/LGBTIQ+ and heterosexuals also leads to the result that the terms used to refer to LGBTIQ+ tend to be generalizing (thus making visible only male homosexuality, see above), whereas the terms used by LGBTIQ+ to refer to heterosexuals are very differentiated.

The number of terms to generally refer to heterosexual persons is very small. This underlines the role or better influence of heteronormativity also in LGBTIQ+ discourse. In many cases, heterosexuality is set as the norm and thus needs no specification and thus no name. The fact that terms can be found to name heterosexuals who are in some relation to homosexuals shows that heterosexuals become interesting and thus pronounced in LGBTIQ+ discourse only if relevant for or in relation to LGBTIQ+ persons. Heterosexuals are defined according to their personal relationship with homosexuals/LGBTIQ+, e.g. company-seeking, friendship or concealing relationships, and according to their gender, also in relation to the gender of the related homosexual person.

When creating terms to refer to related heterosexuals, often slurs for gay people are taken up, reclaimed and modified (e.g. *fag hag*), thus re-appropriating, but also passing on the aggressive power of the slur to the newly targeted person. The degree of offensiveness of the terms for homosexuals as used in heterosexual or better homophobic discourse exceeds that of the terms for heterosexuals by far.

The terms used in homophobic discourse to refer to homosexual/LGBTIQ+ persons can almost all be read as markers of otherness which concentrate on the deviance from heteronormative rules. The majority of the terms used within LGBTIQ+ discourses to refer to heterosexual persons can be understood as ingroup markers, on the one hand concealing meaning from outgroup persons, on the other to create a common sense of identity and belonging, etc.

Another point which can be deduced is that while some of the terms used to refer to homosexuals are taken on and also used for self-reference, either directly or through processes or re-appropriation, while hardly anyone of those for heterosexuals is. Several not mutually exclusive hypotheses could be made on the reason thereof: heterosexuals in many occasions do not feel the need to specify and term their heterosexuality, as the heteronormativity prevailing in the dominant society sets it as the standard. Furthermore, the analyzed terms used to refer to heterosexual persons mostly can be attributed to LGBTIQ+ slang and thus limited to ingroup use and often unknown to outgroup persons.

To conclude it can be observed that the outlined terms show humorous aspects on different levels: on the one hand, they make use of humorous language strategies in the processes of their word formation, as they are created as wordplays or puns or make use of irony and/or euphemisms. On a semantic level, we can find many examples for what Raskin called *aggressive humor* which aims at mocking and downplaying the targeted persons. LGBTIQ+ discourses seem to be more creative, as they do not only focus on sexual practices but rely on different techniques of word formation. Particularly striking are the tactics used in LGBTIQ+ discourse to take on, reclaim and process slurs originally used to target LGBTIQ+ persons themselves and to integrate them into newly coined terms to refer to heterosexual persons.

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**Links**

(All links accessed 5 December 2016)

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http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/83196?rskey=KXEdoR&result=1#eid;

http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/wordplay) and establishes a direct link between wordplays, puns and humor in language

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