

## **Verbal Visibility: An Analysis of Queer Lexical Development in Digital Fan Communities**

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This research was for the 2021 Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) cohort. My research questions will guide me in theorizing a “queer lexicon” as related to the linguistic culture of LGBTQ youth in online fan communities: How do the new modes of connectivity made possible by digital media shape LGBTQ identity exploration and community development through language use in fandoms on various social media? How do contemporary forms of communication impact a wider sense of queer legibility, with particular attention concentrated on the retainment, reappropriation, and restructuring of certain text styles, formats, or phrasings? In what ways does the recognizable propensity for younger LGBTQ people to connect digitally impact their perceptions of temporality and sociocultural belonging? I will analyze the language of digital LGBTQ fandom environments to determine how phenomena like memes, formatting choices, and other subcultural typicalities demonstrate communally constructed language norms that contribute to a connective, identifiable, and developing queer lexicon.