



Analysis on Verbal Communication of Male Homosexuals from the Sociolinguistic Perspective

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Abstract: Homosexuals, especially gays, have become a sub-cultural group which cannot be ignored in the modern society, therefore, it is necessary to promote the society to envisage the phenomenon of homosexuality. From the perspective of sociolinguistics, this study analyzes the chat histories of homosexual men on the social media in order to explore how they realize self-presentation and further discuss what dilemmas they are facing. This study aims to help homosexuals construct correct social identity and let public members in mainstream culture have a more particular knowledge of homosexuality.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics; male homosexuals; Homosexual discourse; Verbal communication

Publication date: June, 2020

Publication online: 30 June, 2020

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Although people become much opener than before about homosexuality, the members of this special group still suffer from discrimination and stigmatization in many social fields, which causes them have to face many pressures, such as from self-cognition and social contact^[1]. From the perspective of sociolinguistics, homosexuals also develop a kind of speech community, in which community members share similar linguistic features and identity. This article aims to discover the linguistic features used by the members of homosexual network speech community and emphatically discuss how homosexual men represent themselves and construct their identities.

1 Social Situation and internal communication of Male Homosexuals

1.1 Social Situation of Male Homosexuals

In terms of social situation, homosexual men enjoy no fair rights in the current society. For example, “speaking right”, the key to supporting a person’s participation in social interactions, reflects the relationship of rights, individuals’ status and acceptance in social groups^[2]. However, there are few voices in favor of that right of homosexual men. No matter in the eyes of the public or some people within the homosexual group, homosexuality is associated with negative labels such as marginal, heterogeneous, nauseous, and abnormal. Some people even regard the homosexuals to conduct bad issues such as crime, drug use, and AIDS, which leads to the fact that homosexuals do not have a fair voice in the society. Especially in the heterosexual society as the mainstream culture, homosexuals are frequently treated as the rejected and frightening parts of the society^[3].

1.2 Internal Communication of Male Homosexuals

Internal communication of homosexual men is much better because it is more private. Due to the fear of exposure of sexual orientation and the doubts about self-presentation and self-identity, more homosexual men tend to conduct necessary interaction through a variety of special ways, such as online communication, to develop a social networking form in culture^[4]. At present, the verbal interaction among gays can be manifested as a regional aggregation, as well as

diversified social purposes and verbal interactions. Many homosexual men engage in social and verbal interactions privately to satisfy their needs of being loved. With the goals of information and emotional sharing, they gradually tend to discuss the issues of self-identification and the gap between imagination and reality. During the process of familiarity, the male homosexuals are going to form a state of healthy coexistence through verbal communication.

2 Self-presentation of Male Homosexuals in Network Speech community

Homosexuals just belong to a group different from traditional heterosexual concepts in love and psychological cognition. They have no physical or mental health problems, and they have normal social abilities and rights in social interaction. The purpose of communication is more to complete a kind of social self-presentation through verbal interaction with others. They hope they can construct deserved identities and express their attitudes and emotions unconstrainedly^[5]. In this part, we will analyze the content, social model, and characteristics of self-presentation in the chat histories of homosexual men from the sociolinguistic perspective.

2.1 Communication Content

The content of verbal communication of homosexual men is similar to that of normal social discourse. It generally involves emotional sharing, communication with the elder, entertainment news, noncommercial announcements, social activities, etc. However, due to male homosexuals' own characteristics, the verbal communication of them also include certain particularities, such as gay dating, derailment, choices of marriage, legalization of homosexuality, local information, etc. Behind these common content of verbal communication, male homosexuals' cognition, attitude to life, emotions, and social behavior are presented^[6]. Due to the similarity in identity, homosexual men can gain more understanding, support and approval when performing verbal interaction within the group, which is effective in promoting verbal social interactions among male homosexuals^[7].

2.2 Social Model

There is a fixed social model for verbal communication of male homosexuals. In verbal social interactions among gays, it is generally based on self-presentation

and contact with peers, as well as self-identification in social verbal communication. The self-identity obtained in the verbal communication for male homosexuals can avoid the psychological loss caused by the lack of connection with the heterosexual world or with the family and parents^[8]. In such a social model, relative verbal activities can bring identity and consolidation to gays, and play an important part in enhancing gays' self-confidence and self-identity.

2.3 Characteristics of Self-representation

Joining in this network speech community means a weakening of their working roles from psychological perspectives. Social roles such as doctors, programmers, engineers, etc. will not be interacted in the verbal interaction, but being a member of the family, a marginal person in the society will be talked about^[9]. Therefore, in self-presentation, the verbal communication will reflect the singularity of one's role, and show too much recognition or exclusion of some extremist emotions. As for the self-presentation of male homosexuals, they prefer to obtain a particular way of self-expression or self-emotional expression. They hope to fit into a similar psychological and emotional environment when conducting a social communication, and to get more chances of satisfying their needs of mental and psychological expression^[10].

3 Dilemmas and Suggestions

In the context of heterosexual society, homosexual men often have to face diversified dilemmas, such as self-identification. These inevitable dilemmas impede the normal social interactions of homosexuals with members of heterosexual community to some degree^[11]. This section will make a further analysis on the dilemmas reflected from verbal communication of male homosexuals.

3.1 Dilemmas in self-identification in social interaction

In the self-identification of verbal interactions in society, the first dilemma is the contradiction and connection between their self-identity and the social identity^[12]. In some way, homosexuals still have dilemmas in self-identification including their gender, sexual orientation, external comments, and emotional changes. Thus, homosexuals are often contradictory in the first period of self-identification, and male homosexuals in China also face gender confusion,

psychological anxiety and emotional instability. After experiencing the first dilemma and entering the second period, gays have a clear understanding of themselves in the verbal interactions, and they will continue to be proud of their integration into social evaluation, cultural traditions, and self-gender. Although the society to homosexuals becomes more acceptable, they are often in a state of making more compromise and suffering pains^[13].

3.2 Suggestions to actively conduct verbal communication

From the social perspective, the verbal communications of male homosexuals aim to achieve positive interactive effects and gradually realize the normal socialization for homosexual men. First, more attention should be paid to remove the single understanding of one's role in verbal interaction, reducing the deliberate shaping of gays' identity and image, and avoiding external bias and criticism, as well as adopting a more authentic, inclusive and ordinary verbal communication mode^[14]. Second, avoiding compromise is necessary. A sincere communication is not compromised, unprincipled support, but tolerant and understanding. By psychological counseling, emotional communication, and mutual comfort, homosexuals can help each other reduce stress. Furthermore, choosing a more ordinary communication approach similar to heterosexuality is important to form a normal verbal communication mode for homosexuals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, with the evolution of society and homosexual subcultures, people's awareness and acceptance of homosexuality are gradually increasing. Homosexual men, as primary members of this vulnerable group, are also struggling to integrate into the mainstream culture and normal social communication. Analysis on the ways and features of verbal communication of homosexual men can provide homosexuals who are lacking in proper self-identification with assistance, and further help the sub-culture develop to a mainstream culture.

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