

Unfolding a Unique Tongue: A Morphological Formation of Swardspeak in a State University

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Article Info:

Received: 25 July 2024

Revised: 17 January 2025

Accepted: 27 May 2025

Published Online: 30 June 2025

Keywords:

Gay lingo,

Key rules,

Morphological formation,

Swardspeak

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ABSTRACT

Swardspeak is a unique language with distinct linguistic characteristics. This study examined the morphological formation processes of swardspeak or gay lingo, utilized in a state university. Using qualitative research, specifically discourse analysis, the morphological formation of the swardspeak used by gays at Quirino State University was investigated. The study included 80 participants who were identified as gay guys and enrolled from the three campuses, along with two gay interraters and a language teacher who assisted with data processing. The study gathered the participants' gay lingo, which served as data to examine its morphological formation processes. The findings revealed that key rules are employed in each morphological formation process, such as acronym, blending, borrowing, clipping, clipping with affixation, coinage, compounding, derivation or affixation, association, and substitution. Recognizing the specific morphological rules and incorporating various languages into their swardspeak increases the sense of belonging and shared identity among gay individuals at Quirino State University.

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INTRODUCTION

Language manifests in several forms that assist individuals in recognizing their social identities. An example of this is homosexual language, commonly referred to as swardspeak or gay lingo, utilized by the gay community. It is a popular, creative, and unique variant of language that is commonly used nowadays by an increasing number of people and serves as the gays' distinguishing feature.

Swardspeak's emergence as a sociolect is part of a larger worldwide phenomenon in which gays speak diverse languages all over the world. For example, the gay language in Bali incorporates lexical elements derived from Bahasa Indonesia, English, and Balinese (Susandi et al., 2018). Furthermore, Gayle or Gail is the name given by Cage (2003) to a homosexual lingo used among South African gay men.

Accordingly, swardspeak or gay lingo is regarded as pidgin because it lacks a standardized vocabulary or established grammatical rules. It is also considered a register because a specific speech community speaks of gays (Dang, 2013). This language appears to be limited to non-speakers, as only individuals identified as gay can understand it. However, millennials nowadays adopt this language as one way of communication (Papua et al., 2021). Many people think it is a brand-new language that is easy to learn, fascinating, lively, and thrilling. It can be used in offices, salons, on sidewalks, in media, at comedy clubs, and even in classrooms.

In the Philippines, gay lingo has gained respect and acceptability, and is witty, colorful, and humorous (Co-Tortogo et al., 2021), utilizing lively language (Romero, 2022). This new variety of language is interesting, trending, intriguing, funny, and easy to acquire. Moreover, it has also been noticed that swardspeak or gay lingo evolves with time and varies across different provinces or cities. This suggests that slang terms, which are the result of people's creative expression, may differ from generation to generation and from one geographical area to another. This is because slang terms continue to evolve to reflect advancements in humanity (Budasi & Bhuwana, 2020).

Furthermore, languages develop. New words are produced, while others disappear. Gay language is the most flexible and adaptable of all languages (Cantina, 2020). Various local scholars shed light on its evolution as a dynamic language that reflects and shapes the experiences of gays. Dacanay (2014) emphasized swardspeak's ability to bring together aspects of the Philippines' rich linguistic diversity, combining major languages like Tagalog and English and regional dialects such as Cebuano. This linguistic combination illustrates the inclusivity of swardspeak, allowing people from other locations and social backgrounds to participate in its vibrant discourse. Furthermore, Oficiar's (2019) research examined the evolution of gay lingo in the academic community, exploring the reasons behind its use and analyzing its linguistic features.

Swardspeak exhibits a fascinating interplay with morphological word development. It creates hilarious and subversive phrases by artistically manipulating existing linguistic elements. Prefixes and suffixes, for example, can be added to ordinary words to alter their meanings or create new words. Borrowing from English, Spanish, Tagalog, and other regional languages broadens the vocabulary, demonstrating cultural diversity and linguistic fluidity. This dynamic process demonstrates language invention and emphasizes swardspeak's importance as a tool for identity, making it a fascinating study of morphological development and cultural expression. Furthermore, Cantina (2020) noted that the gays use sound association, picture association, and proper and common names to build their language.

Nevertheless, few studies have been conducted on the rules governing swardspeak, or gay lingo formation. Language development can be attributed to the process called word formation, which refers to the act of creating new words from existing ones (Plag, 2003). This study examined the morphological formation of gay lingo, grounded in Derivational Neologism, a key aspect of contemporary word formation characterized by creating new complex words based on established and productive patterns. This theory investigates the morphological formative processes of English words, including compounding, prefixation, suffixation, conversion, acronym, borrowing, affixation, backformation, and clipping (Szymanek, 2005).

The utilization of gay lingo extends beyond the gay community at Quirino State University. It is already a phenomenon in Quirino State University that non-gays, such as students, instructors, use some of the gay vocabulary words like "itey", "chaka", "charot", "wit", "flang", "bongga", "waley", and more in their regular conversations, hence providing the setting for the present study, which examined the morphological formation processes of gay language. The study sought to investigate the morphological formation processes utilized by participants in the development of gay language. It explicitly aimed to identify the key rules underlying the morphological formation of swardspeak or gay lingo.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Swardspeak/Gay Lingo

Language is the process of expressing one's ideas, beliefs, cultures, and experiences. Because of the embarrassment and intimidation experienced by gays, they decided to create their language, referred to as

swardspeak or gay lingo (Pascual, 2016). It is a sociolect or social dialect spoken by the gay community. It is a secret language that is inaccessible to others. It keeps the conversation lively by allowing one to communicate messages and express oneself without being understood (Amante, 2021).

Budasi and Bhuwana (2020) refer to the invented and meaning-shifted terms most commonly employed in informal contexts or daily discourse as slang phrases. Swardspeak, gay lingo, gayspeak, baklese, bekimon, and beki language are all terms for the same language spoken by Filipino gay men (Nuncio et al., 2021). The Filipino gay community began coining words related to the original word, either by its literal meaning or denotation, or by employing different shades of meaning or connotation (Amante, 2021). Furthermore, gay language is a dynamic lexicon that requires preservation for future generations (Cantina, 2020).

Morphological Formation

The evolution of language is associated with the process known as word formation. In the book *The Study of Language*, Yule (2010) categorizes English word formation processes into nine methods, which include coinage, the invention of completely new terms; borrowing, the adoption of words from other languages; compounding, the combination of two separate words to produce a single word; blending, the merging of two separate forms to create a single new form; clipping, reduction of a word or syllable; conversion, a change in the function of a word; an acronym, the formation of new words from the initial letters of a set of other words, while derivation involves the use of small elements of the English language which are not usually listed separately in dictionaries.

Although slang is never stable and continually changing, the processes of producing slang terms are identical to changing the form and meaning of other words. In linguistics, these processes are known as word formation processes. If the process of producing slang is the same as the process of forming words in a language, it is possible to monitor the meaning of slang by determining its word formation process (Budasi & Bhuwana, 2020). Moreover, the morphological formation of words refers to the process by which new words are generated and invented. As such, the gay language has its vocabulary (Cortez, 2017).

Several local and foreign experts have investigated the morphological formation of gay language. Dacanay (2014) investigated the swardspeak in Cebu, which is closer to Cebuano than English, and discovered that its formation involves inversion as a lexicographic process of reading words from last to first. For example, "day" (girl) is pronounced "yad(s)." Cong and Silitonga (2018) emphasized in their study that the word formation processes used in slang formation are based on Yule's (2010) processes, such as coinage, borrowing, compounding, blending, clipping, backformation, conversion, acronym, and derivation. Still, they discovered another reduplicative process: the repetition of a syllable or word.

In Kenya, Kinyua (2017) reiterated that the main word formation processes involved in the gay lexicon mainly include: the same word acquiring different meanings, borrowing, coinage, compounding, acronyms, abbreviations, blending, and clipping. Gay people create their language using simple reversal, simple reversal with affixation, substitution, letter insertion, clipping, clipping with affixation, clipping with repetition, a straight word with affixation, stylized reversal with affixation, proper and common names, sound association, image association, metathesis, and camp names (Cantina, 2020).

Just like the previous research, Susandi et al. (2018) investigated the linguistic features, derivation, and function of language used by homosexual and bisexual men in Bali, Indonesia. The findings revealed interesting facts about the features of gay language, particularly the lexicon. It was created in a very creative

way with semantic alteration to the original words. However, Vietnamese gay speech, according to Dang (2013), is formed by adding suffixes to other words or morphemes and by using taboo words, feminine personal pronouns, and female names, high-pitched tone, rising intonation, and word lengthening.

Furthermore, Nuncio et al. (2021) found that swardspeak is produced from phonological similarities based on the resemblance of syllabic sounds. In association, the meaning of gay words is derived from the features and characteristics of the individual, place, event, etc., to which they refer. Similarly, Casabal (2008) discovered how the phonetics of words, names, and expressions in gayspeak are used to convey meaning.

Silvano (2018) identified various morphological processes in the Tandaganon gay language. First, the gays employ allusion to convey meaning in their talks. Second, creative letter reversal involves reversing the last letters of a word and adding originality to it by providing a prefix. Oficiar (2019) also emphasized the morphological construction of gay language in Tagum City, such as gay word affixation, which is the addition of an affix to a gay term. Rosales and Caretero (2019) reported adding or substituting prefixes to the initial syllable or suffixes to the final syllable.

Moreover, Ulla et al. (2024) revealed unique features of gay language in the Philippines, such as affixation, appropriation, clipping, association, mutation, neologism, recontextualization, and stylistic reversal with affixation. Silvano (2018) found different morphological processes of the Tandaganon gay lingo wherein allusion conveys meaning in their conversations. In Iligan City, the major morphological processes used in the word formation of the mochas (gay prostitutes), such as prefixation, suffixation, circumfixation, blending, and coinage reduplication, were observed by Crisol and Parungao (2016). Similar to the findings of the previous researchers, attaching or replacing prefixes to the first syllable or suffixes to the last syllable was noted by Rosales and Caretero (2019).

METHOD

The study employed qualitative research that generated analytical procedures. Creswell (2012) defines qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. A discourse analysis design was used. Discourse analysis is a research method for studying written or spoken language in its social context. It seeks to understand the application of language in practical contexts (Taylor, 2013). Moreover, discourse analysis includes the examination of utterances, interactions, texts, and written documents analyzed to uncover implicit and explicit meanings (Abd Rahim, 2018). The analysis of discourse depends on the actual writings and speech of the group being studied to ascertain prevalent usage. This research design is suitable as the current study examined gay lingo in terms of morphological formation processes with data sourced from the gay speech of the three campuses of Quirino State University.

There were 80 participants selected using purposive sampling from Quirino State University's three campuses: Diffun, Cabarroguis, and Maddela. The participants spoke Iloko and Tagalog, the two most widely spoken languages in the locale of the study. To be chosen as participants, they must be Quirino State University students for the first semester of the school year 2022-2023, identified as gay guys by the program chairs of the three campuses, 18 years or older, proficient in speaking swardspeak and willing to engage in the study. Two gay interraters and a Filipino language teacher proficient in the gay language assisted in the analysis of the collected data.

The study included ethical considerations. A request letter asking permission to conduct a study was addressed to the University President, the University Director for Instruction, and the Program Chairpersons of the three

campuses. Before participating in the study, all students provided informed consent. Students participated in the research voluntarily. Furthermore, full confidentiality of student information and collected data was maintained.

Upon approval, the participants from each campus were convened in a room. They were instructed to identify and record the swardspeak or gay lingo utilized in their regular discourse. The collected data was analyzed and categorized using Yule's (2010) morphological formation processes, which were limited only to acronyms, blending, borrowing, clipping, coinage, compounding, derivation, or affixation. Backformation and conversion were not used because other formation processes, such as association, substitution, and clipping with affixation, were found in the study. To attain word construction accuracy, gay interraters, and a Filipino master teacher collaborated on the examination of gay language.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gay language, like other languages, evolved through varied morphological information processes. This makes the gay lingo or swardspeak dynamic since it changes over time, resulting in a more innovative and original vocabulary. Because of the complexity of its morphology, it may be difficult to comprehend its meaning right away, but that could be part of its charm.

Table 1. Swardspeak formed through an acronym

| Rule of Word Formation | Swardspeak/Gay Lingo | Meaning |
|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Initial Letters | <i>NBSB</i> | No Boyfriend Since Birth |
| | <i>FO</i> | Friendship Over |
| | <i>KSP</i> | "Kulang sa Pansin" (attention seeker) |
| | <i>OPM</i> | Oh, Promise Me |
| | <i>SC</i> | Social Climber |

Table 1 presents the rules, the swardspeak created through an acronym, and their meanings for better understanding. Acronym is a process in which new words are formed from the initial letters of a set of other words (Yule, 2010). Instead of expressing the words, an acronym exemplifies creativity in speaking gay lingo. This morphological formation rule pertains solely to the utilization of the initial letters of the words. Examples of swardspeak in acronyms include *NSBP*, which stands for No Boyfriend Since Birth; *FO* for Friendship Over; and *OPM* for Oh, Promise Me. In this sense, swardspeak or gay lingo is characterized by its uniqueness and artistry. Similarly, Cong and Silitonga (2018) found the acronym as one of the word formations used in their study of slang formation.

According to Kinyua (2017), the emergence of gay lexical words is similar to that of other mainstream languages. As a result, the primary word formation processes in the gay lexicon include the acquisition of several meanings for the same term, acronyms, borrowing, coinage, compounding, abbreviations, blending, and clipping. However, Nuncio et al. (2021) stated in their study that a limited number of words were formed using acronyms.

Blending combines two words to create a new one (Yule, 2010). Table 2 lists the rules used to form blending, along with samples of swardspeak, their origins, and meanings.

Two rules are employed in the formation of blending, as indicated in Table 2. The first rule combines the first syllable of the first word and the last syllable of the second word. This is illustrated in *suhod*, which is formed

by blending the first syllable of the word “suso” (su) and the last syllable of the second word “tuhod” (hod). Another technique is merging the initial and last syllables of the second word, as in *boytle*, derived from the terms boy and little.

Table 2. Swardspeak formed through blending

| Rule of Word Formation | Swardspeak/Gay Lingo | Origin | Meaning |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------|
| First Syllable + Last Syllable | <i>Suhod</i> | “suso at tuhod” | big bust |
| | <i>Wasok</i> | “walang pasok” | no class |
| First Word + Last Syllable of the Second Word | <i>Boytle</i> | boy little | little boy |
| | <i>Uwihi</i> | “uwi ihi” | to pee |

The study's findings are consistent with the prior research undertaken by Crisol and Parungao (2016) on the morphological processes of mochas and by Cong and Silitonga (2018) on slang creation. The present study identifies specific rules adhered to by the participants in forming gay lingo that are not recognized in other research. They are the first syllable + last syllable and the first word + last syllable of the second word.

Table 3. Swardspeak formed through borrowing

| Rule of Word Formation | Swardspeak/Gay Lingo | Origin | Meaning |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Borrowing the Form and Its Meaning | <i>Afford</i> | English | manage to pay |
| | <i>Bebot</i> | Tagalog | a young, sexy, and attractive girl |
| | <i>Bibyang</i> | Iloko | I don't care |
| | <i>Dako</i> | Hiligaynon | big |
| | <i>Sight</i> | English | to see |
| Different Spelling but Same Pronunciation | <i>Bet</i> | English (bet) | like |
| | <i>Keri</i> | English (carry) | can manage |
| | <i>Fes</i> | English (face) | face |
| | <i>Sayt</i> | English (sight) | to see |
| Borrowing the Form but with a Different Meaning | <i>Ahas</i> | Tagalog (snake) | traitor |
| | <i>Butirog</i> | Iloko (having a big tummy) | voracious |
| | <i>Kurba</i> | Tagalog (curve) | sexy |
| Borrowing the Form but using Sound Association | <i>Dilemma</i> | English | darkness |
| | <i>Mighty</i> | English | crazy |
| | <i>Takeshi</i> | Japanese | afraid |

Borrowing is a morphological formation process that adopts words from another language (Yule, 2010). Table 3 illustrates that most of the swardspeak or gay lingo used in Quirino State University is borrowed not only from various languages in the world but also from the major languages in the Philippines, specifically Tagalog, Iloko, and Hiligaynon. For instance, the gay *bebot*, a Tagalog word, denotes a young, sexy, and attractive girl in swardspeak. Significantly, numerous swardspeaks are derived from English yet are distinctively worded in Tagalog. Moreover, these terms possess identical meanings to the original terms. This is demonstrated in the following samples of gay lingo, such as *keri*, *fes*, and *sayt*.

An additional rule in the borrowing process is carried out through borrowing the form; however, the meaning differs. To understand its meaning, one has to associate it with its characteristics, features, and usage. For instance, *kurba* is a swardspeak that means sexy and is linked to its Tagalog meaning of "curve". Furthermore, loanwords can be understood by the phonetic association of the initial one or two syllables of the terms. This rule is exemplified in the following gay lingo: *dilemma*, which is associated with the sound of “dilim”, a Tagalog word signifying darkness; *mighty* resembles the Tagalog phrase "may titling", which means crazy.

The current study is corroborated by Dayon (2017), who examined the English variety available in print media, billboard advertisements, digital communication, and student compositions. Dayon (2017) underscored that borrowing and affixation are the most salient morphological characteristics employed. Crisol and Parungao (2016) indicated that the incorporation of gay language was the primary morphological process that enhanced the lexicon of the mochas' hidden language. In Region 2, Philippines, Pascual (2016) identified that the swardspeak or gay lingo variant in Cagayan is characterized by loanwords from several languages and dialects, including Iloko. Likewise, the current investigation identified the incorporation of Iloko uttered by the participants. It is important to acknowledge that Cagayan and Quirino, being adjacent provinces in the Philippines, may mutually affect each other's swardspeak or gay lingo.

The current study not only presents samples of borrowing utilized in gay language but also delineates various rules employed by the participants. This finding makes the present study different from other studies. The following are the rules utilized by the study participants: borrowing the form and its meaning, borrowing the form with a different spelling but the same pronunciation, borrowing the form but with a different meaning, and borrowing the form but using sound association.

Table 4. Swardspeak formed through clipping

| Rule of Word Formation | Swardspeak/Gay Lingo | Formation | Meaning |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------|
| One-Syllable Only | <i>Los</i> | clipped from loser | loser |
| | <i>Pal</i> | clipped from the Tagalog word "palamunin" | a jobless person |
| | <i>Sis</i> | clipped from sister | sister |
| | <i>Wa</i> | clipped from the Tagalog word "wala" | nothing |
| Two Syllables | <i>Anda</i> | clipped from "Andalusian horse" | money |
| | <i>Beki</i> | clipped from <i>bekimon</i> | gay |
| | <i>Keme</i> | clipped from <i>kemerut</i> | not true |
| Change in Form Retaining the Initial Letter of the Original Word | <i>Bufra</i> | clipped from boyfriend | boyfriend |
| | <i>Fudra</i> | clipped from father | father |
| | <i>Mudra</i> | clipped from mother | mother |
| One syllable + Morpheme | <i>Daks</i> | clipped from Hiligaynon word "dako" | big |
| | <i>Lafs</i> | clipped from <i>lafang</i> | to eat |
| | <i>Noms</i> | clipped from <i>nomo</i> | to drink |
| | <i>Was</i> | clipped from "wala" | nothing |

Clipping occurs when a word or multiple syllables are reduced to a shorter form (Yule, 2010). The data in Table 4 reveal that a word in English, Tagalog, Iloko, or even an existing swardspeak or gay lingo can be shortened to form the shortcuts of the word. One method to achieve this is by dropping some of the syllables and retaining only one, giving the same meaning as the original word. Examples include *los* for a loser, *pal* for the Tagalog word "*palamunin*," *sis* for sister, and *wa* for "wala." Next, two syllables are retained from the original words after deleting some syllables, as illustrated in the following: *anda* (Andalusian horse), *beki* (*bekimon*), and *keme* (*kemerut*). Another rule is the change in form, retaining only the initial letter from the original word. This rule is apparent in the swardspeak, such as *bufra* for boyfriend, *mudra* for mother, and *fudra* for father. The bound morpheme "s" is added to the reduced syllable. An example is *daks*, which is clipped from the Hiligaynon word "dako" plus the addition of "s".

The present study found clipping as another morphological formation process, which is similar to the findings of Cortez (2017), Pascual (2016), and Rosales and Caretero (2019), who revealed that, aside from the different

ways of forming gay lingo, clipping is used by gays in the Philippine context. In addition, Drake's lyrics primarily use slang generated through clipping, coinage, compounding, reduplicative, variation, borrowing, mixing, acronyms, initialism, inverted forms, and onomatopoeia (Budasi & Bhuwana, 2020). However, the present study generated rules on clipping gay lingo based on the data gathered. They are as follows: one syllable only, two syllables, change in form, and one syllable + morpheme.

One of the morphological formation processes commonly used by the participants is clipping with affixation. This process entails cutting off a part of an existing word and attaching it to one or more affixes (Cantina, 2020). The table below presents the rules, a list of swardspeak produced by clipping with an affix, and their meanings.

Table 5. Swardspeak formed through clipping with affixation

| Rule of Word Formation | Swardspeak/Gay Lingo | Formation | Meaning |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Clipped Syllable + Prefix | <i>Mimosa</i> | prefix mi + “tsimosa” clipped to mosa | gossiper |
| | <i>Mokot</i> | prefix mo + “takot” clipped to kot | scared |
| | <i>Ogogtit</i> | prefix ogog + Iloko term “bagtit” clipped to tit | crazy |
| Clipped Syllable + Suffix | <i>Kalerki</i> | “kaloka” clipped to kal + suffix – erki | something that makes one crazy |
| | <i>Akenas</i> | “ako” clipped to ak + suffix -enas | I or me |
| | <i>Bobita</i> | “bobo” clipped to bob + suffix -ita | stupid |
| Clipped Syllable + Prefix and Suffix | <i>Qyurabels</i> | prefix qyu + “mura” clipped to ra + suffix –bels | cheap |
| | <i>Eclavu</i> | prefix ec + in love clipped to lav + suffix -u | in love |
| | <i>Nuhala</i> | prefix nu + “mahal” clipped to hal + suffix -a | expensive |

The present study identified three rules for forming swardspeak using clipping with affixation. One is extracting the syllable or syllables from the existing word, such as the Tagalog word “mimosa”, which is clipped to “mosa”, to which the prefix mi- is affixed to form the swardspeak *mimosa*. The second rule involves the addition of suffixes to the clipped syllable or syllables, such as the swardspeak *kalerki*, which is formed by clipping “kaloka” to kal + suffix –erki. Then, the attachment of both prefixes and suffixes to the reduced word is another rule in this process. This is demonstrated in the gay lingo *qyurabels*, where the Tagalog word “mura” is shortened to ra, combined with the prefix qyu- and the suffix -bels.

The findings of this study revealed that these word formations violated and defied word formation principles by extensively utilizing affixes connected to a word to create a new term. The current study also highlighted that affixes are added to English, Tagalog, or Iloko words to form another word with a similar meaning.

These findings are reinforced by Ulla et al. (2024), who discovered distinct elements of queer language in the Philippines, such as affixation. Oficiar (2019) also noted that Tagum City's swardspeak, or gay lingo, was predominantly produced by adding affixes to gay words. Additionally, Susandi et al. (2018) investigated the linguistic features of the gay language in Indonesia. They found that the new words they used were formed by adding affixes to existing morphemes or words. Amante's (2021) research on gay language expressions revealed that new terms are formed by cutting and adding affixes to existing words, a process known as clipping with affixation. However, the rules the participants follow in forming gay lingo through clipping with

affixation distinguish the present study from the prior research. The rules are clipped syllable + prefix, clipped syllable + suffix, and clipped syllable + prefix and suffix.

Table 6 presents two rules employed to form swardspeak, which are enumerated below.

Table 6. Swardspeak formed through coinage

| Rule of Word Formation | Swardspeak/Gay Lingo | Meaning |
|------------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Invention | <i>Chaka</i> | ugly |
| | <i>Bona</i> | innocent |
| | <i>Gelatin</i> | jealous |
| | <i>Bebang</i> | big body |
| | <i>Burot</i> | liar |
| | <i>Charot</i> | joke |
| | <i>Eklabush</i> | whatever |
| | <i>Hawlin</i> | foul odor |

The participants commonly use coinage since it is simply the invention or creation of new words (Yule, 2010). The table shows that most of the swardspeak or gay lingo that use coinage lack obvious structure and origin. They are all invented without any basis to cover the conversations of gay guys. Gay lingo, such as *chaka* (ugly), *bona* (innocent), and *gelatin* (jealous), emanates from the inventiveness, creativity, and uniqueness of the gay community. Other examples are illustrated in the following: *bebang* means big body, *burot* means liar, and *charot* means joke.

Consistent with these findings, Dacanay (2014) found that when the coinage procedure was applied in Cebu, the gay language deviated far enough from the original Cebuano word. Also, Pandong (2015) underlined the use of association in word construction in numerous international studies. Amante (2021) also emphasized that gays use existing terminology that is similar to the connotation they intend to convey.

Table 7. Swardspeak formed through compounding

| Rule of Word Formation | Swardspeak/Gay Lingo | Formation | Meaning |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------|
| Closed Compound Words | <i>Jellyfish</i> | jelly + fish | jealous |
| | <i>Earlywean</i> | early + wean | punctual |
| | <i>Joinforce</i> | join + force | classmate |
| | <i>Thundercats</i> | thunder + cats | old person |
| Open Compound Words | <i>Justice League</i> | Justice + league | prostitute |
| | <i>Bet akis</i> | bet + akis | in love |
| | <i>Crying ladies</i> | crying + ladies | to cry |
| | <i>Kyotang oms</i> | kyotang + oms | young boy |

Compounding is a morphological formation process involving combining two words to produce a single word (Yule, 2010). The spelling of the two words remains unchanged, but the definition varies from the two original words. Compounding is demonstrated in the subsequent rules found in the study. A closed compound word merges two distinct words into a single written entity. The combined words consist of either solely English terms or a mixture of English and Tagalog. Examples of swardspeak formed are *jellyfish*, *earlywean*, and *joinforce*. The next rule pertains to open compound words, wherein two words are combined to create a new idea with a specific meaning. This rule is similarly applied to certain swardspeak or gay lingo, combining two English words or Tagalog words, and even existing gay lingo, such as *crying ladies*, meaning to cry, and *bet akis*, meaning in love.

As demonstrated in the preceding examples, compound words are created when two distinct words are combined to convey a new concept with a precise meaning. Budasi and Bhuwana (2020) corroborated this conclusion by demonstrating that the compounding procedure in their study employed two terms that convey another meaning. This finding parallels the current study, which highlighted the use of the said processes in the swardspeak utilized by the participants. The rules for constructing compounding are closed compound words and open compound words.

Derivation or affixation as a morphological formation process is accomplished by utilizing numerous minor components of the English language (Yule, 2010). Table 8 presents the rules, a list of swardspeak, formations, and their meanings.

Table 8. Swardspeak formed through derivation or affixation

| Rule of Word Formation | Swardspeak/Gay Lingo | Formation | Meaning |
|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Prefix + English Word | <i>Jojoin</i> | prefix jo + join | to join |
| | <i>Iget</i> | prefix I + get | to get |
| Prefix + Tagalog Word | <i>Bunanak</i> | prefix bun + “anak” | daughter |
| | <i>Jominsan</i> | prefix jo + “minsán” | sometimes |
| English Word + Suffix | <i>Bigalu</i> | big + suffix -alu | big |
| | <i>Bagelya</i> | bag + suffix -elya | bag |
| | <i>Carsung</i> | car + suffix -sung | car |
| | <i>Hairlalo</i> | hair + suffix -lalo | hair |
| Tagalog Word + Suffix | <i>Baliwebweb</i> | “baliw” + suffix -ebweb | crazy |
| | <i>Gandacious</i> | “ganda” + suffix -cious | beautiful |
| | <i>Pagoda</i> | “pagod” + suffix -a | tired |
| Iloko Word + Suffix | <i>Ulbodes</i> | “ulbod” + suffix -es | liar |
| | <i>Kuradey</i> | “kurad” + suffix -ey | skin disease |

Affixation is a component of derivation, the most utilized process at Quirino State University. The present study found five rules in this process. The root word may originate from English, Tagalog, Iloko, or even existing gay lingo. Examples of swardspeak formed in this process include *jojoin* (join), *bunanak* (anak or daughter), *bagelya* (bag), *carsung* (car), *baliwebweb* (baliw or crazy), *pagoda* (pagod or tired), and *ulbodes* (ulbod or liar).

The findings reveal that suffixes outnumber prefixes attached to the root word. The affixes lack structure and meaning in comparison to the English affixes. Hence, they do not alter the meaning of the root word. They are affixed to make new words colorful and artistic. To further explain the use of affixes, these rules are employed in data analysis: prefix + English word, prefix + Tagalog word, Tagalog word + suffix, English word + suffix, and Iloko word + suffix.

The results illustrate the participants' inventiveness by using prefixes at the beginning and suffixes at the end of words, enhancing their innovation and appeal. The results of the current study are supported by the findings of Oficiar (2019), which indicates that the gay language in Tagum City predominantly emerged through the incorporation of affixes to gay terms. In addition, Susandi et al. (2018) investigated the linguistic features of the gay language in Indonesia and found that new words are created by appending affixes to existing morphemes or words. Cantina (2020) noted that an interesting method of forming swardspeak is the modification of existing words or the addition of affixes to them. This approach parallels the current study, highlighting affixes being appended to English, Tagalog, or Iloko words to create another word with the same meaning.

The present study identified the utilization of association in gay language. Below are the rules employed in association.

Table 9. Swardspeak formed through association

| Rule of Word Formation | Swardspeak/Gay Lingo | Sound Association | Meaning |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Sound Association | <i>Inang Letty</i> | “inanglit” (Iloko) | having a body odor |
| | <i>Hagardo Versoza</i> | haggard | haggard |
| | <i>Julie Andrews</i> | “huli” (Tagalog) | late |
| | <i>Baliwag</i> | “baliw” (Tagalog) | crazy |
| | <i>Columbia</i> | “kulong” (Tagalog) | imprison |
| | <i>Eskuala Lumpur</i> | squatter | squatter |
| Image Association | <i>Lilia Cuntapay</i> | | slender |
| | <i>Betina Magsaysay</i> | | short |
| | <i>Chokoleit</i> | | dark-skinned |

The table above illustrates that the names of celebrities and popular places here and abroad are also references in forming swardspeak or gay lingo. Their meanings are derived from sound association with another word, where at least one syllable rhymes with the intended word spoken by the speaker. This is exemplified in examples such as the name *Hagardo Versoza*, which sounds haggard, and the town *Baliwag*, which phonetically resembles "baliw" (meaning insane/crazy). It also uses image association regarding physical appearance; for example, the gay lingo *Lilia Cuntapay* characterizes a slender individual, and *Chokoleit* describes a dark-skinned person.

The results align with those of Ulla et al. (2024), who found that by association, the meaning of swardspeak is derived from the attributes, traits, or information related to a specific individual, location, or occasion. Amante (2021) also asserted that gay language serves as a source of humor and encompasses specific underlying connotations, especially when it incorporates names of renowned individuals, places, and other common nouns, obscuring the meanings of phrases through phonetic similarities to existing terms. Nuncio et al. (2021) further asserted that the gay lexicon is created through phonological commonalities derived from syllabic phonemes.

Table 10. Swardspeak formed through substitution

| Rule of Word Formation | Swardspeak/Gay Lingo | Formation | Meaning |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Consonant Substitution at the Beginning | <i>Jundok</i> | b changed to j (“bundok”) | mountain |
| | <i>Jaba</i> | h changed to j (“haba”) | long |
| | <i>Jembot</i> | k changed to j (“kembot”) | hip swaying |
| | <i>Janggal</i> | t changed to j (“tanggap”) | to remove |
| | <i>Jingit</i> | s changed to j (“singit”) | to insert |
| Consonant Substitution in the Middle | <i>Majirap</i> | h changed to j (“mahirap”) | poor |
| | <i>Ishilit</i> | p changed to sh (“ipilit”) | to insist |
| Consonant and Vowel Substitution in the Middle | <i>Makyoman</i> | ya changed to kyo (“mayaman”) | rich |
| | <i>Makyomig</i> | la changed to kyo (“malamig”) | cold |
| | <i>Makyoba</i> | ta changed to kyo (“mataba”) | fat |
| Vowel Substitution | <i>Gende</i> | a changed to e (“ganda”) | beautiful |
| | <i>Ngayens</i> | o changed to e (“ngayon”) | now |

Substitution refers to replacing a sound or segment of the word with another sound or segment (Yule, 2010). This method is among the most frequently employed morphological processes by the participants. Table 10

presents diverse rules in forming swardspeak through substitution. This includes consonant substitution at the beginning, utilizing b, h, k, l, m, p, s, t in place of j as shown in the following examples, such as *jundok* from “bundok”, *janggal* from “tanggal”, and *jembot* from “kembot”. The second rule of substitution that prevailed in the participants' utterances is a consonant replacement in the medial position. Consonants such as h and l are substituted with j, and p with sh, resulting in swardspeak like *majirap* from “mahirap” and *ishilit* from “ipilit.”

Another rule is consonant and vowel substitution in the middle. Examples are la, ta, ya are substituted for kyo as in *makyoman* from “mayaman”, *makyomig* from “malamig”, and *makyoba* from “mataba”. Lastly, vowels are substituted with different vowels in swardspeak or gay lingo. This rule is evident in the examples like *gende* and *ngayens*.

Silvano (2018) identified a distinctive rule for substitution throughout his investigation. This rule is letter retention, wherein only a single letter from the original term remains as the other letters or syllables have been replaced. His study also employed internal syllabic retention. This result is achieved by retaining the internal syllables and substituting the remaining syllables with inventive affixes. His findings contradict the rules in the current study, as it applies four distinct rules rather than just one. They are as follows: consonant substitution in the beginning, consonant substitution in the middle, consonant and vowel substitution in the middle, and vowel substitution.

The study found ten morphological formation processes in swardspeak or gay lingo utilized by gays at Quirino State University. The processes are acronym, blending, borrowing, clipping, clipping with affixation, coinage, compounding, affixation, association, and substitution. These processes are similar to the word formation processes discovered in previous studies, but they did not specifically identify the method used in their findings. This feature makes the current study different because varied rules for forming gay language are identified, as evidenced by the findings.

CONCLUSION

The swardspeak or gay lingo of Quirino State University is a product of the participants' ingenuity. The morphological processes employed by participants in their gay language, including acronym, blending, borrowing, clipping, affixation, coinage, compounding, derivation, association, and substitution, are governed by key rules. Although there are parallels and distinctions between gay languages across different cultures and linguistic contexts, the study's significant contribution is its precise explanation of the specific and unique rules governing how these processes are employed. These rules, particularly in blending, borrowing, clipping, clipping with affixation, the creative use of affixes in derivation, and the specific types of association and substitution, appear to be distinct, or at least more clearly defined, than what is found in general language studies or even some existing studies on different gay lingo. This comprehensive research sheds light on this particular language variety's distinctive linguistic innovation and rule-governed structure.

Additionally, the swardspeak or gay lingo is a variety that incorporates words such as English, Japanese, Tagalog, Visaya, Iloko, and even existing gay lingo to make it more vibrant, colorful, and unique. Hence, the gay lingo at Quirino State University is distinct in its own right, reflecting the participants' identity. These findings offer significant contributions to sociolinguistics.

This study could also help to create a more inclusive language education environment by encouraging openness, variety, and acceptance within the learning community. This openness reduces discrimination and creates a supportive environment where all students feel valued and empowered to express themselves

genuinely, thus improving the educational experience. Furthermore, incorporating swardspeak and its linguistic flexibility principles into language and culture discussions encourages students to appreciate other forms of speech.

The study suggests that instructors could use the current findings to teach language varieties and as a springboard for teaching morphological formation processes in linguistics. Lastly, other learning institutions could conduct parallel studies on gay language to establish the rules governing it.

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