

A Morphological Analysis of Swardspeak in the Philippines

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Abstract : Swardspeak, as a language, highlights the exclusive identity of the Filipino gay men and the oppression they are confronted in the society. This paper presents a morphological analysis of swardspeak in the Philippines. Specifically, it aims to find out the common morphological processes involved in the construction of codes that may unmask the nature of swardspeak as a language. 30 purposively selected expert users of swardspeak from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao were asked to codify 30 natural words through the Facebook Messenger application. The results of the structural analysis affirm that swardspeak follows no specific rules revealing complicated combinations of clipping/stylized clipping, borrowing, connotation through images, connotation through actions, connotation through sounds, affixation, repetition, substitution, and simple reversal. Moreover, it was also found out that most of these word formation processes occur in all word classes which indicate that swardspeak is very unpredictable. Although different codes are used for the same words, there are still codes that are really common to all homosexuals and these are Chaka (ugly), Crayola (cry), and Aida (referring to a person with AIDS). Hence, the prevailing word formation processes explored may be termed as observed time-specific patterns because the codes documented in this study may turn obsolete and may be replaced with novel ones in a matter of weeks to month, knowing the creativity of homosexuals and the multiplicity of societal resources which can be used to make the codes more opaque and more confusing for non-homosexuals.

Keywords : codes, homosexuals, morphological processes, swardspeak

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