



# Martin Stegu

## **“Queer”**

On the meaning and the use of a term in  
(language) research and society

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- Queer
  - pejorative expression for
    - persons with non-normative sexual orientation and / or gender identity
      - effeminate men
  - positive (“pride”) – neutral expression for
    - gay, lesbian -> gay + lesbian
    - -> LGBT → LGBTQIA → LGBTQIA+ / LGBTQIA\* / LGBTQIA\_
- LGBTQIA...
  - questioning ?

- **LGBTQIA...**
  - questioning ?
  - queer (-> as "hyponym" of a more generic usage of "queer"?)
- Generic usage:
  - non-normative sexual / gender related behaviour and identities
- Queer theory: problematising / questioning (!)
  - the (binary) categorisation of gender / sex identities (male vs. female), of sexual orientations (gay vs. straight),
  - against heteronormativity

- Word “queer” (without disambiguating context):
  - “strange”?
  - just a synonym of gay / lesbian ...?
  - poncey, effeminate (= tuntig)?
  - containing a “critical (queer theoretical) aspect”?
  - containing “activism” related connotations?

- Queer in “research” vs. in “society” →
- “scientific / academic / expert”  
vs. “folk” views / beliefs / theories (??)
  - formal, content related, intrinsic quality *and / or* (?)
  - extrinsic, social status related judgment: “uttered” by a “scientist”
  - exchange and continuum between “folk” and “scientific” views
  - there is no “one and homogeneous folk view”, there is no “one and homogeneous scientific view”

- But:
- folk views are still more essentialist
- folk beliefs assume a static character of categories, of identities, etc.
- (a certain type of?) scientific theories are often more (de)constructionist, more complex, more detached

- One of the main tasks of Applied Queer Studies / Applied Queer Linguistics:
- to make understandable and to show the everyday relevance of Queer Theory
- to explain that talking about “men” and “women” may have a certain sense in certain contexts, while in other contexts it is more than problematic ...

- normally:
  - folk semantics: fuzzy, contradictory elements
  - scientific semantics → “terminology”: exact definition
- but: queer?



- The meaning(s) of the word „queer“:
  - in an academic vs. in an every day context
    - in which kind of ...
      - in a gay / queer context vs. in a straight context
  - in an English (L1 / ELF ...) vs. a non-English context

- Planetromeo (ex-Gayromeo)
  - international gay internet dating forum
  - “gay” vs. “queer”
  - which beliefs and “norms” in the GR community?
  - not very tolerant to other community subgroups

- *\*NO FEM*
- *\*no instant sexdates*
- *\*no instant photo exchange*
- *\*only skype*
- *\*no **queer**, cd etc...*

- *"Queer as folk"*

- *I like Marx, but I like Judith Butler too. :)*
- *I think I am very well educated, intelligent and creative (Instead "I think" perhaps I should say "I hope"). Emotionally very sensitive, sometimes too much. Rather eccentric, humorous and campy. Queer and into queer art and theory.*

- *Volim umjetnost. **Queer**. Ne zanimaju me površni i tipični pederi. (HR)*
- *Now that we got the basics out of the way, let's talk more about me. For starters, I'm plain wonderful. Seriously, no bullshit. I've got excellent music taste ranging from 80's goth rock, postpunk, and industrial, through lovely pop one hit wonders, alt rock, and various indie rock artists. I'm well read in social movements, **queer theory**, sociology and philosophy, and am currently working my way through classic and contemporary literature. And if that wasn't enough, I'm also bloody good looking. (HR)*

- *Bywam sarkastyczny i cyniczny, za co z góry przepraszam :>*
- *Miewam specyficzne poczucie humoru...bez skojarzeń proszę...*
- -----
- *So...I'm not "normal", "fine" , "typical", "manly", "laddish" or what you can devise more for the great partner...*
- *I'm rather characteristic...idiosyncratic...*
- *If you wanna knowing me, you must be prepare to:*
- *my loud laughter - like a hoofbeat made by herd of horses*
- *cynical, sarcastic sense of hummour*
- *odd, aberrant look...**queer** look ;P*

- *I'm currently in Edinburgh for a few days. If you know any **queer**/alternative places in town, or you'd like to go for a drink or something, I'd love to hear from you. (NL)*
- *Young **queer** guy looking for some hot action or even meaningful relationship.*



- *So, here we are. An online dating site. Dating, of course, in it's most loose meaning. And by being here, i guess we're gay. Or gayish, fruity, fairy, **queer**, pansy, poofy, fudge-packin' bender rodriguez, queens and homos, sods and butt pirates, man dykes and ass bandits. And all that jazz.*

- Linguistics and Queer – Queer Linguistics
- The semantics (and use) of the word « queer »
- Gay / lesbian ... speak (?)
- The presence of heteronormativity in language structures
  - Gender-neutral language: Studenten → Studentinnen und Studenten; StudentInnen, Student\_innen, Stude\_ntinnen, Student\*innen, Studierende
- The presence of heteronormativity in discourse
- The presence of anti-heteronormativity in discourse

## Queer semiotics?

- Queer linguistics explores how language enables (and at times disguises) the **intersections** of sexuality, gender, race, class, and other forms of social inequality (Leap 2012; Motschenbacher 2010)

- Queer: questioning / deconstructing norms
  - gender related norms? other norms? all kinds of norms?
  - Are only gender related categories problematic?
  - Queer linguistics <-> “poststructuralist linguistics”
  
- Queering the queer?
  - → pre-queer linguistics?
  - → post-queer linguistics?

Meaning and use of the word *queer*:

In society and in research:

Still used in many different ways.

Or ...

(at least by many speakers in non-English speaking contexts): not used at all.

Thank you very much!

Danke für Ihre / eure Aufmerksamkeit!

Большое спасибо!

Щиро дякую!!

Hvala I[ij]epa!

Děkuji vám!

Dziękuję bardzo!



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