

**“SI BEAU MA QUEEN”:
THE SPEECH CONSTRUCTION OF QUEER IDENTITY
PERCEPTION IN FRENCH SOCIAL MEDIA**

**“SI BEAU MA QUEEN”: KONSTRUKSI TUTURAN PERSEPSI IDENTITAS QUEER
DI MEDIA SOSIAL PRANCIS**

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ABSTRACT

Queer as a gender identity draws varying responses globally. In French the representation of Queer in various social media has raised a number of public's perceptions, both in positive and negative manners. This perception does not only concern about French linguistic issues, but also its socio-cultural issues. This study puts an emphasis on the widely-used speech patterns showing the public perception on both French queer and immigrant queers posted on French social media. Further, it also examines the socio-cultural context that influences the social contact and relation between the public and the phenomenon of Queer as a subject in social media. This study uses interactionist approach and gender-based critical discourse analysis based on the theory of interpersonal contact between groups proposed by Gordon Allport. In explaining the phenomenon, the researcher employs qualitative content analysis and uses critical discourse analysis and gender-based criticism. The data are collected from both French and immigrant queers' posts on social media in 2020. The results show that French queers are perceived to have equal standing position with other French people as they are considered as a part of French society. The result also shows that unlike French queer, the immigrant-descent queer are considered to have unequal position with French society due to the immigrant's negative stereotype as the trigger of social problems in France.

Keywords: *queer; identity; representation; social media; French.*

ABSTRAK

Queer sebagai identitas gender telah mendeskripsikan berbagai response secara global. Di Prancis, representasi subjek queer di media sosial Prancis memunculkan beragam persepsi oleh khalayak, baik yang positif maupun negatif. Persepsi terhadap queer tidak hanya menyangkut masalah linguistik Prancis yang bersifat gender, tapi juga menyangkut masalah sosial budaya. Penelitian ini membahas mengenai pola-pola bentuk tuturan persepsi khalayak terhadap queer warganegara Prancis dan queer keturunan imigran di media sosial Prancis dan konteks sosial budaya yang mempengaruhi kontak dan relasi sosial antara khalayak dan subjek queer di media sosial. Analisis penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan interaksionis dan analisis wacana kritis berbasis gender dengan dasar teori konsep kontak antar kelompok yang dikemukakan oleh Gordon Allport. Penelitian ini menggunakan data penelitian

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kualitatif melalui analisis isi, dengan pendekatan analisis wacana interaksionis dan kritik berbasis gender. Data diambil dari unggahan queer Prancis dan queer keturunan imigran di media sosial pada tahun 2020. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan khalayak queer Prancis dalam kedudukan yang setara dengan rakyat Prancis, karena mereka dianggap bagian dari rakyat Prancis, dan sebaliknya khalayak menganggap queer keturunan imigran dalam kedudukan yang tidak setara dengan rakyat Prancis karena mereka dianggap sebagai bagian dari imigran yang sering memunculkan permasalahan sosial di Prancis.

Kata Kunci: *queer; identitas; representasi; media sosial; Prancis.*

INTRODUCTION

Queer does not only concern identity issues but also social issues. In this case, identity issue is related to queer representation outside the binary gender classification, while identity issue is related to the community understanding and acceptance towards the queer existence. Queer, pansexual or fluid are identities that refuse to adopt any sexual identity. This shift from lesbian or gay identity is in line with sexual fluidity which indicates an individual's openness to changes in sexual desires, behavior, and identity (Stets and Burke, 2005). Social research shows that there are negative and positive attitudes of society towards individuals whose gender identity is contrary to the sex they were born with (Nicholas, 2019). These new identity representations sometimes give rise to negative perceptions, because they are perceived as 'unclear' or 'abnormal' conceptualizations, not due to any form of transphobia (Nicholas, 2019). In contrast, few people accept their presence with a positive view and value them as the individuals entitled to the equal rights as the inseparable part of the community.

France, a country that adheres to the motto *liberté, égalité, fraternité* 'freedom, equality and brotherhood', is quite careful in dealing with the queer people existence in the eyes of the law and the constitution. Besides,

France is a secular country in that it does not oppose any religions. However, when

the religion's teachings begin to interfere the public space and the citizens' freedom, the government will oppose them. Thus, queer in France is a matter which should be understood by considering the political aspect (d'Anglure, 2012). In fact, political life in France is marked by a long historical journey, in which the state and French collective community seek to control queer subjects (Reeser, 2013). On the other hand, the increasing presence of queer in the public sphere also raises positive and negative public views. The statistics shows that the sexual orientation of the French population in 2019 was presented in following proportion : heterosexual 82.7%, heterosexual attracted to the same sex 5.6%, bisexual 4.8%, homosexual 3.2%, undefined but attracted to the opposite sex by 2.8%, unconfirmed bisexual by 0.9% (Statista Research Department, 2019).

France is ranked at the 5th position among European countries in the number of queer. However, the secularism in France and the motto *liberté, égalité, fraternité* it adheres make the queer phenomenon existing in France becomes an interesting topic to discuss.

A survey conducted by Ifop in 2019 showed that 85% of French public state that queer is "another way to experience sexuality". However, according to François Kraus, director of Ifop, increasing tolerance for the queers presence should not be equated with 'accepting' them completely. In other words, the high tolerance still fails to dispel the old cliché concerning the queer figure. In fact, four out of five French public agree that there is a ban on queers from engaging in a profession that has permanent contact with children. In fact, 27% of respondents states that honestly they felt uncomfortable with the existence of queer among them (France24 and AFP, 2019). The positive and negative views of French public on queer can be seen in social media, for example on the accounts of French celebrities. As the title suggests, one of the netizens commented on one of the queer celebrities appearance with the lingual form of *beau ma queen* 'really handsome my queen'. This utterance is in stark contrast to

the sexist French. *Beau* 'handsome' is a masculine adjective that should be attached to a masculine subject, but in this speech, *beau* is attached to a feminine subject, namely *ma queen* 'my queen'; *ma* 'my' is a possessive adjective that refers to a feminine subject. In this example, there is an intersection between gender in French and subject identity. This assumes that there is a relationship problem between speech construction and queer identity representation.

The relationship issue is also assumed to be influenced by public socio-political context in which the subject is located. It can be taken as an example, in Indonesia, queer presence is still considered as something deviant which has not been accepted by the Indonesian people. This perception can be inferred in the comments from the public on one of the uploads of a queer celebrity on social media Instagram, for example: "syar'i man", "this is a beautiful boy", "mamas wears a cap instead of a veil'. These evidences lead to the assumption that public perception of the queer existence is influenced by the socio-cultural context where the queer and the audience belong to. Thus, these problems rise the inequality of power relations between public and queer subjects.

Phenomena related to linguistic and social aspects serve as the research objects needing further discussion. In order to examine the relationship between subjects, in this case public and queer subjects, this study will use Gordon Allport's view which puts forward social contact between groups theory (Allport, 1954). According to Allport, an individual's self-identity is influenced by his behavior. Furthermore, individual behavior will affect the relationship between groups. Allport puts forward contact between groups concept which is considered to be able to influence attitudes between groups in a more positive direction, and can influence attitudes towards out-groups (members of other groups) by reducing perceptions that are 'threatening' (Zuma, 2014). This study will view public's perception towards queer subjects behavior (which is considered an out-

group) on social media is assumed to represent their identity.

To figure out the extent to which French audience perceives queer behavior based on the identities viewed from socio-political aspect, the researcher compares the perception of French public on French queer and immigrant-descent queer. The comparison between these two queer subjects results from the hypothesis that the public have developed two different point of views on both subjects. It is assumed that the difference is greatly influence from a negative stereotype of the immigrants. French society always think that the immigrants are responsible for the existing socio-political disputes in France as the number of the immigrants coming to France has been increasing since 2017.

From the above background, it can be assumed that public perception on social media towards queer identity is not only influenced by the representation of queer on social media but also by the socio-cultural context in which queers and the public are bound to be in one community. Rabb et al., (2019) state that the process of representing something has a consequential relationship and is collective, meaning that individuals accept according to the truth and belief in something due to of the influence of other individuals. In other words, individual beliefs depend on the beliefs of other individuals around him. From this assumption, this study will derive two research questions, namely: first, what are the speech patterns of public perception toward queer in French social media? second, how does the socio-cultural context affect social contacts and relations between public and queer subjects on social media?

In order to obtain a comprehensive analysis, this research will use an interactionist approach and a gender-based critical discourse analysis. By using these two approaches, the researcher sets two main goals of this research. First, it aims to identify public perception, both lingually and socially, on the existence of queer, and second, this research examines the factors that influence this perception.

This research is an explanatory discursive research and does not intend to criticize the construction of public discourse on the identity of queer subjects. This study will also not explain the use of speech by French queers but will look at the relevance of contact and social relations between public and queer subjects both French queer and immigrant queer on social media. Therefore, theoretically this research will discuss public perception expressed in lingual form from the situational context point of view, including: social, cultural, and gender. In addition to theoretical benefits, this research also has practical benefits. It is expected that the research serves as a model of identity politics conducted in discourse analysis approach which combines the observation on queer identity and discourse construction. Furthermore, the previous studies which have been carried out by other researchers will also be explained in order to provide clear flow of thought and present more focused explanation.

This study employs qualitative research method with an identity politics discourse approach and gender-based criticism. The data are taken from queer French subjects uploads on Instagram (8 posts or 179 references) and YouTube (4 videos or 87 references), both immigrants queer or French queer or francophones in 2020, including Billal Hassani, Gabrielle Marion, Océan, Christine and the Queens. The posts selected are those getting over one hundred thousand likes and more than one hundred comments. Instagram was chosen due to pictures and upload facilities, thus it will be easier when analyzing comments from the public regarding queer subjects identity. In addition, Youtube was chosen because it contains innumerable videos and has comment section in which people can record their reaction on the uploaded videos.

This study does not intend to analyze caption content. However, the caption is used as a parameter to analyze public perception based on their comments. Public comment patterns will be classified with the assistance of NVIVO tool, based on the categories. For

example, positive comments on masculine references: *si beau* 'handsome', *trop beau* 'very handsome', *le transexuel* 'transexuel masculine (with article *le*), feminine reference positive comments: *ma queen* 'queen', Ariana Hassani (quoting the name Ariana Grande). On the other hand, there are also negative comments, for example: *tu m'supporte, je trouve que tu la pète au fond* 'I can't accept you, you're like a fart'.

After classified based on predetermined categories, the data will be processed in a coding system, which is divided into two parts, namely pattern coding (which leads to patterns and conclusions) and focused coding (which explains the process/phenomenon/participant/context to reduce a lot of codes into multiple codes). Furthermore, the results of the coding will be compared in order to look for similarities and differences, which are then evaluated before the conclusion is taken. The results of data analysis will be presented in the form of tables, charts and explanations.

DISCUSSION

In order to discuss the relationship between subjects between public and queer identity in linguistic and social contexts, it is necessary to understand identity concept and queer and public perceptions on social media first. After understanding queer identity concept, we will discuss queer in the context of linguistics in French social media and social contacts and relations between public and queer subjects on social media.

Queer Identity in French Social Media.

Regarding identity concept, according to Calindere (2010) identity is based on two different elements, namely image and sentiment. The two elements are interdependent. The image creates a strong sentiment while the sentiment creates an image through symbols. Therefore, identity is embedded in the image of each individual and is the result of elaboration based on region, culture, institution, which is accompanied by very strong sentiments.

According to Costelloe (2014 : 321) identity is a socially negotiated construction with discourse playing a central role. Referring to the opinion of De Fina et al., (2006 : 3), Costelloe argues that "identity can be done, enforced and realized through various linguistic and non-linguistic means". In addition, discourse on social media plays an important role in this identity construction process. Therefore, the social construction of identity that occurs in and through social media discourse is a very interdiscursive process. In the process, identities can be claimed or disputed, ratified or rejected, displayed or disguised, depending on the social-interactive process of identity production in discourse.

Furthermore, taking the opinion of Hardt-Mautner (1995), Costelloe assumes that identity and national identity emerge as relational concepts. In other words, the construction of "self" is highly dependent on the construction of "other". Therefore, identity can be considered as relational, and emphasizes the history, nature and characteristics of a group, which specifically distinguishes it from other groups (Costelloe, 2014 : 322).

Related to queer, this term can mean 'crooked' or 'weird' which appeared around 1985-1990. This term is assumed to be an 'insult' for those whose habitus reveals an uncertain sexual identity (identity indecision). However, the increasing prominence of queer culture makes them feel that the politicization of their identity must end. They feel that labeling themselves as 'homosexuality' makes them only in an essentialist position, and is limited only in relation to sex. In fact, according to psychoanalyst Robert Stoller, the difference between sex and gender lies in analytical circles, particularly in transsexuals study. A person can be biologically male and female basically due to the initial relationship that was maintained with the parents. At present, individuals are faced with the idea not only as individual biological beings, but also cultural beings (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 2005). How does a French queer present himself on social media?

Starting in 2015, social media begin to be used as a means for public or the younger

generation to show their identity. The social norms that bind to a community are starting to go unnoticed. The public begin to reveal their private sphere including their sexual orientation openly in public without hesitation. They think that it is not a taboo in society. It also happens with the queers as a minority. They show their existence freely and openly.

On social media, queers not only show their 'physical' existence by wearing women's or men's clothing and accessories but also express their thoughts and opinions in the form of captions or utterances in their posts or videos, for example Gabrielle Marion's post in one of the captions on Instagram: *quel point un processus de recherche de soi-même implique beaucoup! Vous le comprenez peut tre pas moins ces de passer par tout chemin psychologique et physique. Y'en a qui dise dans ma propre communauté trans parce-que j'ai fait "chop-chop" mon engin genital que ca va pas dans ma tête, et pourtant elle vivent la même dyshorie que moi.* "The process of self-discovery leads to many things! You need to understand that much needs to be done to get through this psychological and physical journey. Some say, in my own trans community, that "cutting off" my genitals is a wrong, wrong thought."

The utterance shows that a queer dares to express his opinion, even explicitly telling the process or desire to transform. In the example above, he even uses the lingual expression *chop-chop mon engin genital* 'cut the genitals' openly. Thus, it can be assumed that he wants to show his changing identity in front of the public. In addition, statements accompanied by arguments and reasons also aim to invite the public to give support to him.

This becomes one of evidences that shows that nowadays queers are free to express their thoughts and ideas on social media without any restrictions on social norms. Social media is a place of expression for minorities, without any ideological pressure from media owners, like the mass media (Dawson, 2014). Of course, in line with this, the readers or public perception are also manifested in comments without the limitations of social norms. Public reactions in the form of praise,

scolding, and insults become a natural thing in every post of these minorities.

Public Representation and Perception Toward Queer

The cognitive aspect is an important element in the process of producing and perceiving discourse between speakers and speech partners. Cognitive aspects are related to memory, which is divided into short term memory or working memory, such as perception, discourse understanding, discourse production, etc., and long term memory, such as knowledge. Furthermore, long-term memory is divided into episodic memory and semantic memory or social memory. Van Dijk (2002 : 116) further argues that episodic memory is used to store personal experiences experienced by individuals, while semantic memory is used to store general, abstract, social information, and knowledge of language.

The information contained in long-term memory can be realized in various types of representations, including social knowledge, general knowledge, ideology, norms, and values. According to Van Dijk (2002), each knowledge can be arranged according to the schema structure and its respective categories: place, time, participants, and others. Therefore, "knowledge" can be defined as a mental structure, consisting of "beliefs/views/opinions" of a community or culture, which are organized, trustworthy, and historically verified by certain social communities. "Knowledge" is factual and objective, while "belief/view/opinion" is evaluative and intersubjective. Therefore, something that is considered "knowledge" by one community, may only be considered "belief/view/opinion" by another community.

Based on the explanation above, it can be assumed that theory regarding cognitive aspects is relevant to this research. Due to the research discussion, the process of producing and consuming representations of the identity of queer subjects on social media is also considered. The use of language used in the process can be analyzed cognitively using the theoretical framework of T. A. Dijk as mentioned above. Therefore, through a cog-

nitive approach, social contacts and relations between public and queer subjects on social media can be identified, both in the linguistic and social domains.

In discourse production, speakers start discourse production process from their perception of the situation or event they experience. Therefore, this is subjective since it is possible to produce different discourses from one speaker to another. The same process occurs in understanding discourse. Through the decoding process in discourse consumption, audiences as speech partners will digest and build subjective understanding of the statements of queer subjects on social media. If they agree, later the public will accept the statement as true. However, if they do not agree, the public will make alternative statements according to their own episodic memory and semantic memory.

This shows the relationship between discourse and cognitive aspects, the relationship between individuals and their communities, between episodic memory and social memory. As explained above, "knowledge" is factual because a group of people consider it true according to their respective criteria of truth. On the other hand, "beliefs/views/opinions" are not judged based on truth, but based on evaluative criteria, such as good, bad, and others. Like "knowledge", the range of "beliefs/views/opinions" can be wider, meaning that opinions are no longer subjective but become social.

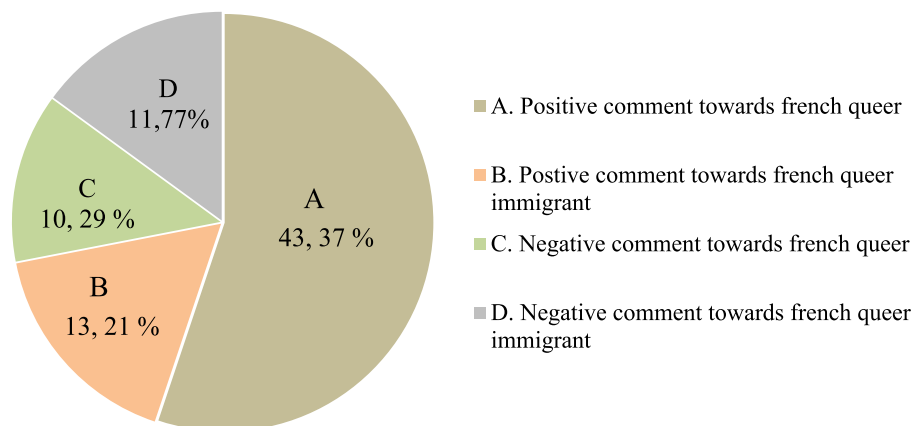
Social opinion contains the attitude of a group or community concerning a problem. In other words, social opinion contains more than one individual opinion. Therefore, it is possible for individuals to have personal opinions that differ from the group social attitude. However, if there is no difference, individual opinions should be formed on the basis of the social attitudes of the group. Furthermore, the knowledge and attitudes of a social group (called social representation) are governed by ideology. In other words, ideology is the foundation of social representation that can provide a group's social identity. Therefore, to become a member of an ideo-

logical group, an individual must be able to accept some of the values of that ideology.

In order to be accepted by each individual and can be applied in all fields, ideology must be abstract and general. Various types of ideology are defined by groups that 'own' an ideology, including social movements, political parties, professions, or churches, and others (van Dijk, 2006). Individuals acquire ideology gradually during their lifetime. Therefore, ideology is stable and not easy to change. It means that individuals cannot change their ideology or other individuals' in just a short time. On the other hand, if an ideology develops gradually, it can also be divided gradually. In this case, the split happens because members of the social group no longer believe in the group, and eventually "leave" the group. In addition, sometimes ideology can also be very broad because society generally accepts these ideologies as way of life, such as human rights and gender

equality (formerly and now the ideology of the feminist and socialist movements). Related to this, this view loses its ideological character and becomes a common ground (mental representation consisting of ideological and cultural knowledge), and Van Dijk (2006 : 116) calls it the end of ideology. The discourse construction and cognitive aspects above are very important to be used for social media discourse analysis. Moreover, the aspect of social representation is related to discourse construction, power and domination. Furthermore, what is public perception of queer's figure and image?

This study uses data on public reactions and perceptions of French queer and immigrant queer found on Instagram and Youtube. From the results of coding data from Instagram (179 references or 45.20% coverage) and data from Youtube (87 references or 47.6%), it can be seen that the comparison of positive and negative comments from the public is as follows:



Graph 1.
 The Percentage of Speech Towards French Queer People on
 Their Social Media's Comment Section
 Source: author's data primer, 2021.

The pie chart above shows that positive public comments outnumber negative comments for both French queers and immigrant queers. The underlying reason is the fact that since 1975 the French public has considered that 'sexual orientation' is the right of every individual. This embodies the French motto, *liberté, égalité, fraternité* 'freedom,

equality and brotherhood'. Queer, LGBT, and trans people who are considered as minorities have started to seek support and advocate for change with the excuse of realizing diversity across sexuality and gender.

Over time, the public support and participation began to form which gave rise to community connectedness that influenced and

belonged to each other. This increase in social support is related to the problem of mental health effects that may be suffered by these minority (Wills and Ainette, 2012; Frost, Meyer and Schwartz, 2016). The public assume that social support will be able to reduce the effect of mental health on them, and strengthen their existence in society.

Even though support is starting to increase, the public perception of these minorities, particularly on social media is not always positive. In other words, people also post negative comments. The chart describes that positive comments are 157 aggregated, and negative comments are 75 aggregated.

Public comments are divided into negative and positive because they are influenced by their perception of queer figures. As previously explained, subjective perception is influenced by the memory of each individual, both short memory and long memory. The memory obtained by the individual is influenced by the

context that forms or makes an object, in this case a queer figure. The context in question is their historical and cultural background. In addition, memory is also influenced by imaginary representations that support an individual's understanding of the context.

From this, it can be seen that public perception toward the queer figures is influenced by the background and culture of the queer themselves. This study attempts to examine the differences in public perception of French queers and queers with immigrant family backgrounds. The difference on public perception stems on the fact that since 2007 until now France has experienced problems with the existence of immigrants. This fact also serves as the starting point of the object of this research.

From these two matters, it can be seen that public different perception as outlined in their comments on French queer and immigrant-descent queer are elaborated as follows:

Table 1.
Public comments coding results on French queer and immigrant Crescent

Code	Number of coding references	Aggregate number of coding references	Number of items coded	Aggregate number of item coded
Codes\\Negative Comment\\immigrant queer	46	46	1	1
Codes\\Negative Comment\\ French queer	29	29	2	2
Codes\\Positive Comment\\ immigrant queer	75	75	1	1
Codes\\Positive Comment\\ French queer	82	82	2	2

Source: author's data primer, 2021.

Table 1 presents the data that more positive comments given on French queers (82 aggregated) compared to those given to immigrant descent queers (75 aggregated). On the other hand, public negative comments concerning French queer (29 aggregated) are lower than that of immigrant queer. The assumption is that French public perceive immigrants as 'other', individuals who are not from their group. In addition, the public is currently facing many problems committed by immigrants and their descendants, particularly the criminal problem. Therefore, it results in a negative sentiment towards queer

immigrants which also manifests French public perception toward immigrants.

Positive comments concerning French queers and immigrant queers take the same form. Both receive a form of praise from the public. The compliments given to them include:

First, their transformation from a man to a woman, for example:

- *arahmayvezeau* : Tu en as fais du chemin depuis la mais j'ai toujours aimé ta personne et je suis heureuse que tu te sois enfin trouvée et que tu sois vraiment heureuse 'You have come a long way since then but I always

love you and I'm glad that you have finally found yourself and that you are truly happy;

- *kelly.robert18* : *Wow, félicitations pour ce parcours* 'kelly.robert18: Wow, congratulations on the trip'; *meg_aventures* *Wow quel sourire travers cette magnifique transformation* 'meg_aventures : wow the smile, what an amazing transformation'.

The public consider that their gender transformation is a courageous effort since they are 'out' from social norms. In addition, the praise is given as a support gesture for them as a minority. Lingual forms such as *magnifique* 'extraordinary', *heureuse* 'happy' are adjectives which have a positive sentiment addressed to the interlocutor. The word *magnifique* 'extraordinary' occupies the position of the most adjectives, which is 0.57%.

Second, positive comments are manifested in the form of physical praise of queers, for example:

- *apomme05* *Trop belle* 'so beautiful'; *kingz1865* *Sexy Queen* 'sexy queen', *davegtx478* *Je suis en amour avec ce outfit j'adore* 'I fell in love with that outfit'.

The word *belle* 'beautiful' is an adjective that is often used by public to show physical admiration for queer. This word also ranks as the second most frequently used adjective, which is 0.53%.

In addition, positive comments are also expressed in the form of non-physical praise, for example:

- *myln.dbte* : *Tu sait que tu inspire énormément de monde* 'myln.dbte: you know that you have inspired many people';
- *stephanie_perreault* : *Belle humain que tu es* 'stephanie_perreault: you are a beautiful human being';
- *t.g.i.fred* : *Belle dedans, belle dehors, belle tout le temps* 't.g.i.fred: beautiful on the inside, beautiful on the outside, beautiful all the time'.

What is interesting concerning these positive comments is the form of support

for them, for example in the following comments:

- *Méroumiel* : *Juste bravo, il faut des gens comme toi pour changer le monde* 'Méroumiel: That's great, it takes people like you to change the world';
- *Pauliplanete* : *Bravo pour ce très bel appel la tolérance et au respect de tous* 'Pauliplanete: Bravo for this beautiful call for tolerance and respect for all'.

In these comments, positive, supportive and encouraging words are found, including: 0.17% *courage* 'dare, spirit', 0.16% *super* 'super', 0.12% *bonheur* 'luck'.

In contrast, the form of negative comments between French queers and immigrant-descent queers are somewhat different. French queers are only rated negatively more to the problem of their transformation from male to female. Some public see that it has no correlation with the norms, destiny of God, civilization, and humanity. They consider the transformation to be disgusting and violate the rules of humans and the state. These comments can be seen in the following example:

- *Kefka Palazzo* : *Trop bizarre pour moi* 'Kefka Palazzo : too weird for me';
- *Sifdine Latri* : *C'est un homme déguisé* 'Sifdien Latri : A man in disguise'.

These comments are more physical to French queers. In contrast to negative comments addressed to French queer, the comments directed at immigrant-descent queers are totally different. In addition to criticizing transformation problem and shifting social norms, public also criticize the queer cultural and religious background of the immigrants, for example:

- *rimo_81* *T ma marocain sal pute t une erreur de dieux* 'rimo_81 T : my dirty moroccan whore, God's fault';
- *teve_joujou23* : *Mais quel pauvre débile dégénéré ca fait pitié et pleurer mais comment on a pu en arriver là mettre en avant un tel animal de foire et tomber si bas en France au nom d'une soit disant tolérance ou d'ouverture autre* 'teve_joujou23 : what a fool, that fool makes you pity and cry,

how do we make animals like that and fall so low in France, whether it's in the name of tolerance, open mind or something else'.

- *junalibaska01: je suis pas homophobe mais respect du moins la religion de dieu et des tes ancêtres mon frère avec les respect change toi de noms tu marche sur le mémoire de Bilal et Hassan va dans des religions ou celà est acceptée voyons 'junalibaska01: I'm not homophobic but at least respect the religion of God and your ancestors, dear you, you have changed your name, you walk on the memory of Bilal and Hassan, go to the religion where you are accepted, let's see'.*
- *Jesyisqlfb: the devil of the dajjal satan 'Jesyisqlfb: dajjal's devils'.*
- *Yass_k : le pire dans tout sa c'est les musulmans qui le soutiennent 'Yass_k: the worst of all are the Muslims who support him'.*
- *Baddack92: Fdp tu fait honte au arabe là vdl sa chien inshaallah tu meurt d'un cancer fdp 'Baddack92: Fdp (fils de putain= child prostitute) you shame the Arabs, dogs, God willing, you die of fdp cancer'.*

From the example above, it can be seen that negative comments towards queer immigrants also concern their origins and family background (Moroccan, Arabic, etc.), and their religion (Islam). In fact, some comments relate the origin, religion and the values of tolerance and openness that are embraced by French citizens. The public considers that tolerance value causes immigrants to be accepted openly in France. In fact, they are given the opportunity to exist and are given the freedom of space, for example by carrying out gender transformation or changing their sexual orientation.

Furthermore, public perception toward queers, both French and immigrant descendants queers, can also be seen from the use of lingual markers to indicate gender identity. Moreover, French recognizes gender differences, masculine and feminine, to name and describe an entity.

Gender Marker in Social Realm

This gender marker has implications not only in linguistic structure realm but also in the social realm. This means that gender implementation in each French speech is not always arbitrary, but is also influenced by the socio-cultural context that influences it (Udasmoro and Nurwidyoehening, 2006). Gender determination in French is carried out by the Académie Française, a French institution, which is in charge of regulating the procedures for using French and upholds the use of French and protects French from anglicism or the absorption of words from English. The emergence of new words often leads to debates to determine whether the word is masculine or feminine.

The debate among French society regarding gender determination in linguistics occurs lately. For example, the debate to decide whether the word "covid" is masculine or feminine. The public uses the word "covid" in the masculine form to *le covid* (*le* is a masculine article). In order to address this issue, the Académie Française has conducted a gender determination for the word "covid" to avoid confusion concerning the use of the word "covid" in French. According to the Académie Française, "covid" is a feminine form of *la covid* (*la* is a feminine article). How does the Académie Française determine gender in "covid"? Thus, the sex of "covid" is determined by the core of the abbreviation for corona virus. According to the Académie Française, "covid" translates as *virus maladie provoquée par le corona* 'virus disease caused by the corona virus'. *Maladie* 'disease' in French is the feminine form or by using the article *la* (Académie française, 2020). In this case, it appears that the problems in the linguistic realm are not solved arbitrarily since some other factors such as social and cultural factors affect them. In short, speakers use certain lingual forms at the level of French linguistics depending on the sociocultural factors evolving around them. It is clearly manifested on the public comments on the queers as the minority.

The analyzed data show that the use of lingual forms of gender identity markers in

public comments can be divided into three parts, those are, queer with feminine markers, queer with masculine markers, and queer

with masculine and feminine markers. Table 2 below presents more-detailed information:

Table 2.
The results of coding gender markers on public comments

Code	Number of coding references	Aggregate number of coding references	Number of items coded	Aggregate number of item coded
Codes\\Gender Marker Identity\\Feminine	0	26	0	2
Codes\\Marker Identity Gender\\Feminine\\immigrant queer	2	2	1	1
Codes\\Gender Marker Identity\\Feminine\\French queer	24	24	2	2
Codes\\Gender Marker identity\\Masculine	0	12	0	2
Codes\\Gender Marker Identity\\Masculine\\immigrant queer	7	7	1	1
Codes\\Gender Marker Identity\\Masculine\\French queer	5	6	1	1
Codes\\Gender Marker Identity\\Masculine and Feminine	0	8	0	2
Codes\\Gender Marker Identity\\Masculine and Feminine\\immigrant queer	4	4	1	1
Codes\\Gender Marker identity\\Masculine and Feminine\\ French queer	4	4	1	1

Source: author's data primer, 2021.

The table above presents the difference in the number of codes between masculine and feminine gender markers. It is worth noticing that masculine markers are used in public responses concerning immigrant-descent queers (7 aggregated) whereas feminine markers are used in public responses to French queers (24 aggregated).

The masculine gender marker in French is indicated by the pronoun *il* 'he is a boy'. In addition, adjectives describing male subjects are also different from adjectives describing female subjects, for example: *beau* 'handsome', *belle* 'beautiful', *grand* 'big (masculine)', *grande* 'big (feminine)'. The data clearly show that the public use masculine gender markers more frequently when commenting on the existence of immigrant-descent queers (7 aggregated) compared to when commenting on French queers (6 aggregated), for example:

- *griiiiii : Petit on 'griiiiii : little faggot'*
- *uj69_qlf Frero ta rien a caché en haut 'uj69_qlf : Mas, (Frero from the word frère 'brother) you have nothing to hide at the top'.*

The example above uses masculine lingual markers, including *petit* 'small for masculine', *frero* 'brother' to describe the queer figure. It can be assumed that the use of masculine markers highlights how people perceive immigrant-descent queers. They think them as men despite their outer appearance which looks like women. Further, it indicates people's reluctance to embrace the identity transformation of the queers. The change of gender is still considered taboo and violate norms and beliefs people firmly uphold.

The table above also presents the data that people use feminine lingual markers are

commonly used as the gender markers when giving their respond on the appearance of French queers (a total of 24 aggregated), for example:

- *Lavoiejoel : Qui aurait pu dire que tu deviendrait la magnifique et brillante jeune femme que tu est aujourd'hui* 'Lavoiejoel: Who could say that you would be the amazing and brilliant young woman you are today'
- *Smouk Smoukii : Sa poitrine elle est juste magnifique elle devrait faire une vidéo là dessus pour savoir la taille et l'endroit où elle a eu les cicatrices et si elle regrette si elle est tombée malade entre-temps elle a perdu* 'Smouk Smoukki: her breasts are so beautiful, she should make a video to find out the size and place of her scar and if she regrets it if she hurt when she fell'.

The feminine markers in this example include *brillante* 'brilliant', *femme* 'woman', *elle* 'she (feminine)', *poitrine* 'breasts'. The public are able to accept the gender transformation of French queers as women due to the fact that people embrace them as a part of French community although the queers belong to the minority. In other words, in the memory and mental representation on the public, French queers become the part of French history and culture.

The data, in addition to presenting the use masculine and feminine markers to give response to different queer groups, provide the fact that some people use both female and male gender markers at the same time when giving response to queer identity (4 aggregated for French queer and 4 aggregated for immigrant-descent queer). Following comments indicate the use of these two markers:

- *davy.ntr : Meuf ou mec j'ai des doutes* 'davy.ntr : female (*femme - meuf*) or male, I doubt it'.
- *m2n1s3 Jpx savoir il ou elle cache quoi ?* 'm2n1s3: may I know what he (male) or what she (female) is hiding?'

From this example, it can be seen that the public cast doubt concerning the queer

gender identity. By using both gender markers in one utterance, it is assumed that the public put both genders equally. In addition, it also shows that public see that the differences in the identities of women and men are not important. The public indirectly rejects the queer transformation process and considers that their existence on social media is unacceptable or non-existent (Carroll, Barton and Power, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Self-existence is one of individual life necessities. When an individual represents himself, he will show himself and his thoughts in accordance with his ideology. Currently, individuals are freer to represent themselves on social media providing that it becomes a space where the public express their opinions and thoughts freely without being curtailed by certain rules. In contrast, the mass media tend to side with the majority and rarely support the minority. The mass media rarely provide space for minorities to show their existence.

As the minority, the queers use social media as the medium to show their existence.

It is obvious that public also use social media as the medium through which they freely express their opinion on the queer presence. They use a lot of non-standard forms of language in the form of figurative language to praise, insinuate, and even curse. The public responses, both positive and negative, are influenced by the memories and experiences of their history and culture. The discussion emphasizes that the public tend to have positive view on a group of queers originating from their community. Conversely, people develop negative comments on immigrant-descent queers since they do not belong to French community.

In the interactional space on social media, the queer figure is considered the 'other' in the relationship between subjects, or between public (between the author and the readers of comments). This 'other' position gives meaning that has symbolic and imaginary value, allowing equality and inequality between subjects in intrapersonal dynamics.

These possibilities depend on the memory and historical and cultural background of the subject.

The public will regard 'other' (French queer) in an equal position when this 'other' is part of the French people. In contrast, the audience will consider 'other' (immigrant-descent queer) in an unequal position because they are considered part of the French people who often cause problems in France. It means that people think that the presence of 'other' could be equal and unequal depending on their relationship with the subjects. The 'other' have equal position when having close correlation with the subject. When the 'other' do not belong to the same circle to the subjects, their position becomes unequal.

Both relationship forms are manifested in lingual form. What people perceive on queer are vividly shown on the use of masculine and feminine markers as the lingual gender markers in French language. The way how people use these gender identity markers greatly results from their memory and socio-cultural history which in turn shape their perceptions. It could be summed up that the memory and socio-cultural history which certain individuals have gained serve as the significant aspects which build their perceptions, which then lead them to choose their speech.

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