



# The representation of the LGBT community through lexicon and in the Netflix series Sex Education

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*The representation of the LGBT community through  
lexicon and in the Netflix series Sex Education.*

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## **Abréviations**

Adj : *adjective*

Adv : *adverb*

CE : compréhension écrite

CO : compréhension orale

EE : expression écrite

E.g. : *exempli gratia*

EO : expression orale

EOC : expression orale en continu

EOI : expression orale en interaction

Ex : exemple

N : *noun*

Num : *numeral*

WAFC : *We Are Family Charleston*

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## Introduction

Back in the early 1970s, the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) activists of the United States of America created the GLF (Gay Liberation Front), building radical gay and lesbian activism. The 1970s were a time of major social change. The Civil Rights movement, Black Power movement, white student movement, antiwar movement, and feminism thrived at that time. The LGBT activists drew inspiration from these liberation initiatives.

Many other activist groups were created in the same years like the Redicalesbians and the Street Transvestites Action Revolutionaries. One of their main goals was to feel accepted, so they had to fight against the systemic oppression of LGBT members, thus making common cause with all the other oppressed communities and committing to a larger project of political change. To achieve that goal, they decided to lead public demonstrations and to put an emphasis on visibility. Many achievements were therefore made: a new exposure of pride and affirmation, political, social, and cultural organizations that helped to create a movement and – more importantly – a community. A community can be defined as “a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society” (Source: Merriam-Webster). Undoubtedly, with every fight for tolerance comes discrimination. To this day, the LGBT community still struggles to be fully accepted.

However, one particular acquisition was achieved and carried by this community - from the 1970s to nowadays – which is language enrichment. Through the use of some specific words, expressions, recurrent grammatical markers or syntactic structures, the community may have managed to establish itself as part of the general social landscape.

As mentioned before, the LGBT acronym stands for “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender” individuals. However, there are many more identities behind these four letters – as I will depict in this essay. These other identities are included in another meaning of the acronym LGBT defined by Transgender activist Stephanie Mott<sup>1</sup>: “not everyone fits in an ‘L’ box, a ‘G’ box, a ‘B’ box, or a ‘T’ box. None of the people I know truly fits in any box. (...) The words ‘love,’ ‘grace,’ ‘beauty,’ and ‘truth’ apply no matter where someone might find themselves in the spheres of sexual orientation and gender identity”.

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<sup>1</sup> Source : Huffpost [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/lgbt-what-does-it-really-mean\\_b\\_3971192](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/lgbt-what-does-it-really-mean_b_3971192).

All of this made me question whether the LGBT lexicon was understood and understandable by everyone or not. Moreover, I asked myself if it had an inclusive impact or rather an exclusive one. Indeed, some words may not be understood by every English-speaker (e.g., “Do you know if Andrew has had his G.R.T?” / “I don’t know, but he told me he had bought a new binder the other day”). How does the LGBT community represent itself through lexicon and, to some greater extent, how is it represented onscreen?

My first part will focus on examining a corpus of different lexical units belonging to the LGBT community. I will first present what lexical units are, referencing to the work of the lexicologist Jean Tournier<sup>2</sup>. I have established a list of LGBT lexical units, mixing a glossary from the website *We Are Family Charleston* (a non-profit organization created to provide resources for the LGBT community) and another one presented by Scottish writer Paul McGrath in his *LGBT+ Glossary and Guide* [2016]. From these two sources, I have ended up listing 40 lexical units.

My essay mainly focuses on gender identities and sexual orientations. Consequently, the lexical units that I selected are the ones that are claimed by the LGBT community. For instance, I will not review words which belong to the medical field (e.g., *gender reassignment surgery*), objects (e.g., *cincher*) or curse words. After a brief presentation of every lexical unit, and after reflecting upon them, I will analyze how these LGBT words become part of the English language and what the most frequent lexical process from this list is.

The study of the words that, in my opinion, best represent the LGBT community opened many doors onto more general means of representation. That is why I have decided to then focus on the linguistic, but also the non-linguistic representation of the community onscreen (mise-en-scène, editing, costumes, etc). I have chosen to more particularly work on the Netflix TV show *Sex Education* (2019-2022), as I believe it realistically addresses the complexity of sexual orientations and stages various gender identities. Even though the TV show is set in Great Britain, it is not too specifically anchored in time and space<sup>3</sup>. It can therefore resonate well with youths from any country in the world. Additionally, it seemed like an interesting resource that

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<sup>2</sup> I will define what lexicology is in my first part.

<sup>3</sup> Actress Gillian Anderson interviewed for CNN: “It’s so broad. It’s gotten no specific time, place, era. It’s both American and British.” (Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2071RiTcjA>)

I could actually work on with one of my groups this year and create a *séquence* around it. This lesson plan will be presented in the third and last part of this dissertation.



# 1 The LGBT lexicon: a lexicological approach

## 1.1 LGBT lexical units

### 1.1.1 Definitions (lexicology, lexicography, lexical units)

First, it is important to define the terms ‘lexicology’ and ‘lexicography’ as my research essay deals with the two subjects.

Lexicology is the science of the study of words. As explained by Jean Tournier [1998] in his work *Précis de Lexicologie Anglaise*, the English lexicon is always in evolution: it constantly enriches itself and so it is not fixed. It collects lexical units which are flexible units, just like the lexicon, and which are learnt “as a whole” [1998 : 11-12] while learning a language, whether it be a native language or a foreign language. A lexical unit is a single word, a part of a word, or a chain of words which is considered one of the main elements of a language's lexicon.

Lexicography is the theory and practice that involves compiling, writing or editing dictionaries. It is also a subfield within linguistics, as lexicography aims to “represent the meaning of words and their associated usage to either native speakers or learners of a language”<sup>4</sup>.

In his precis, Jean Tournier differentiates and classifies lexical units – simple, composed, prepositional and complex lexical units. Below are listed Jean Tournier’s definitions, followed by personal examples.

Simple lexical units: “les lexies primaires comportent un seul élément lexical autonome” [Tournier, 1998 : 11]. Tournier distinguishes between simple primary lexical units (*unités lexicales simples primaires*), which do not have an affix (e.g., *gender*), and derived lexical units (*unités lexicales dérivées*), which contain a prefix and/or a suffix (e.g., *agender*).

Composed lexical units: “les lexies composées sont formées d’au moins deux éléments lexicaux autonomes et se comportent comme une unité du point de vue de la classe des mots” [Tournier, 1998 : 12] (e.g., *drag queen*).

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Merriam-Webster; Martin Weisser, website.

Prepositional lexical units: “les lexies prépositionnelles sont constituées d’un syntagme prépositionnel lexicalisé, c’est-à-dire un groupe introduit par une préposition” [Tournier, 1998 : 12] (e.g., *out of the closet*).

Complex lexical units: “on groupe sous la rubrique des lexies complexes toutes les autres lexies, y compris les phrases lexicalisées, comme les proverbes ou certaines citations passées dans l’usage” [Tournier, 1998 : 13] (e.g., *fish and chips*<sup>5</sup>).

To sum up, a lexical unit is the most correct, scientific approach to describing the basis of lexicon that most people usually recognize as ‘words’. Yet, Paul McGrath’s *LGBT+ Glossary and Guide* [2016] prefers to use ‘term’.

For a better understanding, I have chosen to refer to ‘LGBT lexical units’ simply as LGBT ‘words’ or ‘units’, and from a wider point of view, as the ‘LGBT lexicon’.

### 1.1.2 A selection of LGBT units

After having read both glossaries<sup>6</sup> and having established a list of LGBT words, I looked them up in the O.E.D (Oxford English Dictionary), which is the most reliable record of the English language<sup>7</sup>. As many units of my list are recent, I had to browse the online O.E.D in order to make sure every piece of information was properly updated.

In my list, there are 26 adjectives, 12 nouns and 2 pronouns. However, this list is not exhaustive. Indeed, in regard to pronouns only, there are new ones emerging that come from neologism<sup>8</sup>. The creation behind those pronouns is so vast that it could have been a separate research

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<sup>5</sup> “pejorative 90s British slang for the spouse and children of a married ‘heterosexual’ lover” (Source: <https://thoughtcatalog.com/nico-lang/2013/09/51-gay-slang-phrases-youve-never-heard-before/>)

<sup>6</sup> Glossaries from the *We Are Family Charleston* website and Paul McGrath’s work.

<sup>7</sup> The O.E.D’s very first ancestor was produced during the XIII<sup>th</sup> century - then called *Dictionarus* – a gathering of Latin words. Three centuries later, a list of correspondence between Latin and English words was made, in alphabetical order. By 1857, the project of the O.E.D was launched. It would be a complete dictionary, containing each nuance of each word, each spelling variation, each possible pronunciation and each literary quotation. More than 70 editors contributed to the project and it is lexicographer John Murray who brought the project to fruition, making him the first editor of the O.E.D. Nowadays, the O.E.D has up to half a million of entries. (Source: O.E.D, website)

<sup>8</sup> « L’incorporation d’éléments nouveaux dans le lexique d’une langue » (Source : La néologie lexicale et sémantique en anglais, Lexis n° 12).

question. Also, as some research works in lexicology have stated: lexicon is always moving. Words enter the English language<sup>9</sup> while some exit it all the time.

On the one hand, I will first present the units that are lexicalized. In other words, I will present those which have a preexisting meaning and which took a LGBT meaning later on and compare their definitions. On the other hand, I will present the units that only have an LGBT meaning and that have not been registered in the O.E.D.

### 1.1.2.1 Lexicalized LGBT units

The words I will first present are units that have all been lexicalized. They all have a preexisting meaning and later adopted an LGBT one. These words are, in the alphabetical order: *agender*, *ally*, *androgynous*, *asexual*, *bisexual*, *cisgender*, *gay*, *gender fluid*, *gender neutral*, *heterosexual*, *homosexual*, *intersex*, *lesbian*, *LGBT*, *pansexual*, *polysexual*, *queer*, *transgender*, *two spirit*. I will present each of them and compare their definitions. I have chosen to introduce them in chronological order, using their O.E.D entry dates. This choice is important as I will comment on the dates at the end of this sub-part.

*Ally* (noun) has been lexicalized since 1292, its definition being “to combine, unite or join in affinity, companionship, amity, or association for a special object; now chiefly of marriage, friendly association of sovereign states, and union of nature or spirit”. The definition from WAFC is quite different with “someone who is a friend, advocate, and/or activist for LGBTQ people”<sup>10</sup>.

*Straight* (adjective) was lexicalized in the O.E.D in 1400 with its definition being “extended at full length”. The glossary from WAFC offers a highly different definition as it defines it as a “pop culture term used to refer to individuals who identify as a heterosexual, meaning having a sexual, emotional, physical and relational attraction to individuals of the ‘opposite’ gender/sex”<sup>11</sup>.

*Lesbian* (adjective) entered the O.E.D in 1601 with its geographical definition: “of or pertaining to the island of Lesbos, in the northern part of the Grecian archipelago”. Paul

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<sup>9</sup> English language as words officially registered in the O.E.D.

<sup>10</sup> Source: <https://wearefamilycharleston.org/lgbt-glossary-az>.

<sup>11</sup> Source: <https://wearefamilycharleston.org/lgbt-glossary-az>.

McGrath's definition [2016 : 56] is obviously very different from it: "this term refers to a female who is either romantically or sexually attracted to someone of the same gender".

*Androgynous* (adjective) was lexicalized in the OED in 1651 with: "uniting the (physical) characters of both sexes, at once male and female; hermaphrodite". Paul McGrath [2016 : 22] defines it as a "term used to describe an individual whose gender expression and/or identity may be neither distinctly 'female' nor 'male', usually based on appearance". While most of the original definition seems to be in line with McGrath's one, the term 'hermaphrodite' is purely used as a medical term and does not function with someone's appearance (his or her gender expression).

The 1793 entry of *Bisexual* (adjective) states: "of two sexes". Paul McGrath's definition [2016 : 56] is quite different, as he explains that "this term refers to someone who is either romantically or sexually attracted to people of two genders; it is most commonly used to refer to an attraction to both cisgender males and females". It seems that the key word to the understanding of the word here is "attraction", and that it was clearly missing from the original definition.

*Asexual* entered the OED in 1830 and is defined as "not sexual, without sex". Paul McGrath [2016 : 57] elaborates with: "this term refers to a person who does not feel any form of sexual desire".

*Heterosexual* (adjective) entered the O.E.D in 1892 with: "characterized by a sexual interest in members of the opposite sex". Paul McGrath [2016 : 53-54] confirms this definition with his own, but he adds a reference to romantic feelings: "someone who is either romantically or sexually attracted to someone of the opposite gender".

*Queer* (noun) has been lexicalized since 1894. Its definition in the OED is: "a (usually male) homosexual". Paul McGrath's definition [2016 : 22] is: "traditionally a pejorative term, queer has been appropriated by some LGBT people to describe themselves. However, it is not universally accepted even within the LGBT community and should be avoided unless someone self-identifies that way".

*Intersex* (noun) has been lexicalized since 1910 and is defined by: "in a dioecious species, an abnormal form or individual having characteristics of both sexes; the condition of being of this type". While this term seems to focus on its medical aspect in the OED, the definition from WAFC seems more human-like with: "people who naturally (that is, without

medical intervention) develop primary and/or secondary sex characteristics that do not fit neatly into society's definitions of male or female"<sup>12</sup>.

*Pansexual* (adjective) was lexicalized in 1917 with: "of or pertaining to pan-sexualism, the view that the sex instinct plays a part in all human thought and activity and is the chief or only source of energy". Paul McGrath [2016 : 57] defines it as a term that "refers to someone who is either romantically or sexually attracted to someone of any gender and feels they have the potential to have a romantic connection with them".

*Polysexual* (adjective) was also lexicalized in 1918 with its definition being "encompassing or characterized by many different kinds of sexuality". Paul McGrath's definition [2016 : 56-57] is: "this term refers to someone who is either romantically or sexually attracted to people of multiple genders". A noticeable change can be observed here as well.

*Gender fluid* (adjective) has been lexicalized since 1927 and has two definitions in the OED. They are: "not clearly or wholly male or female; androgynous" and "designating a person who does not identify with a single fixed gender; of or relating to a person having or expressing a fluid or unfixed gender identity". Here, Paul McGrath's definition [2016 : 20] is simpler with: "used by individuals who alternate between genders". It is possible that McGrath offers a shortened definition so that anyone who reads this unit can easily understand it.

The entry of *Gay* (adjective), from 1953, defines the word as "homosexual person". Paul McGrath [2016 : 54-55] goes into more details with: "people whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex". The word "homosexual" (lexicalized since 1892) does not appear in McGrath's definition. I have chosen not to add it to my list as WAFC explains that it is an "outdated term considered derogatory and offensive to many lesbian and gay people".

*Gender neutral* (noun) has been lexicalized since 1963. Its definition in the OED is: "suitable for, applicable to, or common to both males and females; not specifying gender". The definition from WAFC is a word that "refers to how an individual expresses their socially constructed gender"<sup>13</sup>. With this definition, WAFC reminds their reader that gender does not refer to a person's genitals, but to the "socialized aspects of femininity and masculinity"<sup>14</sup>. Thus, people 'perform' their gender by how they want to be recognized by society.

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<sup>12</sup> Source: <https://wearefamilycharleston.org/lgbt-glossary-az>.

<sup>13</sup> Source: <https://wearefamilycharleston.org/lgbt-glossary-az>.

<sup>14</sup> Source: *The Psychology of Gender*, 2004.

*Transgender* (adjective) was lexicalized in 1974 with: “of, relating to, or designating a person whose identity does not conform unambiguously to conventional notions of male or female gender, but combines or moves between these; transgendered”. Paul McGrath’s definition [2016 : 18-19], here, is simpler, as he defines it with “all gender identities that are not cisgender”. Consequently, the term is an umbrella term in both definitions.

*Two Spirit*<sup>15</sup> (noun) has been lexicalized since 1991 in the OED and its definition is “having a dual gender identity”. Paul McGrath [2016 : 62-63] gives more details about the word’s cultural background: “term that originated with Native Americans. It was believed that members of the LGBT+ community were of two spirits and were considered by some to be sacred”. It is interesting to note that this culture seems to honor LGBT people. We’wha<sup>16</sup> is a famous two spirit individual who is famous for having taken part in masculine tribal matters and feminine ones and for having participated in a delegate in Washington DC.

*LGBT* (noun) entered the O.E.D in 1992, with the simple definition: “lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered”. Paul McGrath [2016 : 8-9] makes two differences: “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender”. Capital letters are used for each word and “Transgendered” has lost its -ed suffix. ‘Transgendered’ is an adjective, which means that its role is to give information on an attribute of the noun whereas ‘transgender’ is a noun. Nouns are used to identify something. Here, the noun ‘transgender’ seems to be a better option in order to highlight the importance of justifying one’s identity.

The word *Cisgender* (adjective) was lexicalized in 1997 with: “designating a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds to his or her sex at birth; of or relating to such persons. Contrasted with transgender”. Paul McGrath’s definition [2016 : 18] is very similar: “term used to describe a person whose gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth as determined by their biological sex; used to describe the majority of the population”. The main difference in McGrath’s definition is the mention of a ‘majority’ of people. As cisgender people are more numerous, they most likely have more privilege than the smaller fraction of transgender people.

*Agender* (adjective) entered the O.E.D in 2000, with its definition being “without gender”. Paul McGrath [2016 : 20] brought more details to his definition, explaining that it will be used in order to discuss a “person who does not consider themselves to have a gender as

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<sup>15</sup> Also lexicalized as “two-spirited.”

<sup>16</sup> Source: <https://womenhistory.org/>.

such; the person will usually but not always prefer gender neutral pronouns, clothing and accessories”. Here, McGrath’s definition adds a notion of ‘choice’ that one can have, which is undoubtedly empowering.

It is interesting to note that the very first lexicalized words from my list are not fundamentally LGBT (*straight, ally*). To me, this highlights the fact that LGBT representation took a long amount of time until it was finally worded and listed in the OED. In other words, it must have mirrored the fact that society considered LGBT themes a taboo for a long time. The first word from this list that reveals the existence of LGBT individuals is ironically *heterosexual* (1892) as it hints at the fact that there may be a contrary or another way of living one’s life. Two years later, *queer*<sup>17</sup> is covered by the letter G (*gay*) in LGBT. Moreover, as one scans the list, it is notable that the 1900s were a time of change as more LGBT representation and diversity (*pansexual, polysexual, gender fluid*) were gradually added. From the 1970s onward, the letter T in LGBT seemed to finally find its place (*transgender, cisgender*) which is undeniably linked to the activism that happened at that time<sup>18</sup>.

### 1.1.2.2 Unlexicalized LGBT units

Now, I will present the lexical units that have not been lexicalized, but that are used by members of the community. In the alphabetical order, these words are:

*androsexual, bigender, demiboy/demigirl, gender expression, gender nonconforming, grey A, gynosexual, LGBT+, LGBTQIAAPPD2S, MOGAI, MLM, non-binary, polygender, sexual behavior, sexual minority, sexual preference, S.G.L, skoliosexual, zie/hir.*

Because these have not been lexicalized, every definition will either be taken from Paul McGrath’s glossary or the WAFC website. I will present them in alphabetical order and comment on the differences with the words of the previous section. I will also review the pronouns *zie/hir* separately.

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<sup>17</sup> ‘Queer’ used to be a pejorative term, often linked to ‘queer-bashers’ – homophobic people (Source: *The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Slang*, 1992).

<sup>18</sup> As mentioned in my introduction.

*Androsexual* (adjective) is defined as “someone who only experiences attraction to male individuals or individuals who present with more masculine genders (cisgender men, transgender men or masculine non-binary individuals)” [McGrath, 2016 : 60].

*Bigender* (adjective) is defined as “used by individuals who identify as having two genders at once” [McGrath, 2016 : 20-21].

*Demiboy* or *Demigirl* (adjective) is defined as a “term which refers to a form of asexuality where a person will only experience sexual attraction if they have first formed a romantic attraction towards a person” [McGrath, 2016 : 26].

*Gender expression* (adjective) is defined as “how someone appears to others regardless of how they identify” [McGrath, 2016 : 12-13].

*Gender Nonconforming* (adjective) is defined as “a person who is, or is perceived to have gender characteristics that do not conform to traditional or societal expectations”<sup>19</sup>.

*Grey A* (adjective) stands for grey area and it is defined as “often used to describe those who feel that their identity falls somewhere in the grey area between those who experience sexual desire and those who consider themselves asexual” [McGrath, 2016 : 59].

*Gynosexual* (adjective) is defined as “someone who only experiences attraction to female individuals or individuals who present with more feminine genders (cisgender women, transgender women or feminine non-binary individuals)” [McGrath, 2016 : 60].

*LGBT+* (adjective) shares the same definition as *LGBT*<sup>20</sup>, yet Paul McGrath [2016 : 9] explains that the addition of the ‘+’ sign is “a way of including all other identities”. Those identities include the ones that are lexicalized (*gender fluid*, *polysexual*) and unlexicalized (*androsexual*, *gynosexual*). I have chosen not add the + sign to my essay title because the T (*Transgender*) can be used as an umbrella term for all those identities as well. Therefore, *LGBT* and *LGBT+* can be considered interchangeable.

*LGBTQQIAAPPD2S* (adjective) is an acronym which stands for all of the other initials that “different individuals and groups can use (...) to represent themselves” [McGrath, 2016 : 9-10]. However, as it is quite a long acronym, it is rarely used. Regardless, I would not have chosen to put it in my essay title because as one can see in this part of my essay, new lexical units emerge and thus, this acronym may – one day – add even more letters. Yet, with such a

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<sup>19</sup> Source: <https://wearefamilycharleston.org/lgbt-glossary-az>.

<sup>20</sup> As explained in my introduction: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender.



long acronym, one can see how the growth of the community. The community's wide spectrum is also better highlighted.

*MOGAI* (adjective) is also an acronym which stands for "Marginalized Orientations, Gender identities and Intersex". Paul McGrath [2016 : 11] clarifies that it is a "new term that is gaining popularity" and it is also an alternative to *LGBT*.

*MLM* (adjective) stands for "Men Loving Men". According to WAFC, it is "commonly used by communities of color to denote the attraction of men to men"<sup>21</sup>. Therefore, it seems that this word is more inclusive than the word 'gay' as it can also refer to bisexual or pansexual men.

*Non-binary*<sup>22</sup> (adjective) is defined as "people who do not feel they identify completely as one gender or the other" [McGrath, 2016 : 21-22].

*Polygender* (adjective) is defined as "people who feel they identify as multiple genders either simultaneously or at different times". [McGrath, 2016 : 21].

*Sexual behavior* (noun) refers to "an individual's sexual activities or actions. Though often an individual is in line with their sexual behavior, it is not always the case"<sup>23</sup>.

*Sexual minority* (noun) refers to "an all-inclusive, politically oriented term referring to individuals who identify with a minority sexual orientation, sex identity, or gender expression/identity"<sup>24</sup>.

*Sexual preference* (noun) refers to "an individual's choice in regard to attraction. Sexual preference can be based on gender/sex, physical appearance, or emotional connection"<sup>25</sup>.

*S.G.L* (noun) stands for "Same Gender Loving". It is defined by Paul McGrath [2016 : 10] as "people who do not feel comfortable using labels such as gay or lesbian but still identify as having an attraction to people of the same gender".

*Skoliosexual* (adjective) is defined as a "person who only feels attracted to people who do not identify as cisgender" [McGrath, 2016 : 61].

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<sup>21</sup> Source: <https://wearefamilycharleston.org/lgbt-glossary-az>.

<sup>22</sup> Also spelled 'nonbinary' and 'non binary'.

<sup>23</sup> Source: <https://wearefamilycharleston.org/lgbt-glossary-az>.

<sup>24</sup> Source: <https://wearefamilycharleston.org/lgbt-glossary-az>.

<sup>25</sup> Source: <https://wearefamilycharleston.org/lgbt-glossary-az>.

*Third gender* (noun) defines “people who don’t feel they identify as either male or female, by people who feel they identify with both male and female, by people who feel they identify as somewhere between male and female and by people who feel their gender is completely other” [McGrath, 2016 : 25].

As one can see, all of these – unlexicalized – units mostly belong to the T<sup>26</sup> in LGBT. They either refer to non-cisgender identities (*non-binary*, *gender nonconforming*) or sexual orientations that are not often discussed (*skoliosexual*, *gynosexual*). Only one of them fits the G in LGBT, which is MLM (Men Loving Men). However, it is used by another community in particular – the black community. It is safe to say that even though there is some LGBT representation in the O.E.D – and consequently within the English language – it currently lacks diversity and modernity.

Yet, these marginal units may reflect something else when not officially entering the English language. An article from the website *The Conversation*<sup>27</sup> questioned their readers about the pressure that the LGBT community may feel as they try to live under heterosexual terms<sup>28</sup>. Using unlexicalized LGBT units could be a way to stand up against ‘heteronormativity’, to unapologetically define and be oneself. By using such words, it would mean that the LGBT community is not waiting for any external approval or confirmation<sup>29</sup>.

### 1.1.2.3 Pronouns

*Zie* and *hir* are gender neutral pronouns that WAFC also present in their glossary. They are both third-person pronouns. Indeed, the website explains that *zie* is “subjective”<sup>30</sup> - which means that it can be used instead of ‘he’ or ‘she’. As for *hir*, it is “possessive and objective”<sup>31</sup> – which means that it can be used instead of ‘his’ or ‘her’. According to the author, these pronouns are

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<sup>26</sup> The T as the umbrella term for all other LGBT identities.

<sup>27</sup> Source : Nyx McLean <https://theconversation.com/the-trouble-with-making-lgbtiaq-people-live-on-heterosexuals-terms-98392>.

<sup>28</sup> What the general public would consider “normal” or “traditional” terms.

<sup>29</sup> “*We are here! We are queer! Get used to it!*” is a popular slogan of the Queer Nation, an LGBT organization founded in 1990 (Source: Alessandra Stanley, *The New York Times*, 1991).

<sup>30</sup> Source: <https://wearefamilycharleston.org/lgbt-glossary-az>.

<sup>31</sup> Source: <https://wearefamilycharleston.org/lgbt-glossary-az>.

the most popular form of gender-free pronoun in the online Gender Nonconforming community.

Since December 2021, the social network Instagram allows its users to display their preferred pronouns<sup>32</sup>. Both pronouns (*zie* and *hir*) can be added to an Instagram bio. However, the most selected LGBT pronouns are *they* and *them*. It is possible that LGBT people may prefer *they* and *them* to be better understood by others. Also, *zie* and *hir* might look and sound too much like female pronouns to some people, as *zie* sounds like ‘sie’ when pronounced (German pronoun for ‘she’) and *hir* was a feminine pronoun in Middle English.

Nevertheless, whether the LGBT community chooses *zie* over *they* or not, these new pronouns are openly about breaking the rules from traditional English and asserting one’s individuality.

## **1.2 Entering a language**

### **1.2.1 Lexical processes**

A lexical process is the mechanical process which a word goes through when entering a language. Tournier [1998 : 18-22] lists 12 lexical processes in the second chapter of his precis. There are “prefixation, suffixation, back-formation, compounding, blending, onomatopoeia, conversion, metaphor, metonymy, truncation, initialism and borrowing”.

### **1.2.2 The most frequent lexical process**

In my list, the dominant lexical process is compounding<sup>33</sup>. It is a process where two autonomous elements of a language are juxtaposed (e.g., two, adj + spirit, N > two spirit, N) to create one lexical unit.

There are two different types of composition that I think are important to recognize. I will also comment on this lexical process in relation to my subject.

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<sup>32</sup> Source: <https://www.fastcompany.com/90635735/instagram-profile-pronouns-heres-how-to-display-your-gender-identity>.

<sup>33</sup> Also known as composition by juxtaposition.

### 1.2.2.1 Compounding units (with combining forms)

From my list, the compounding units with combining forms are *androsexual*, *bigender*, *bisexual*, *gynosexual*, *heterosexual*, *pansexual*, *polygender* and *polysexual*.

It is rather difficult to find clear definitions on what a combining form is. It also seems to have been an ongoing debate within the field of linguistics. For example, some linguists may consider 'bisexual' to have been made from prefixation, while others recognize it as compounding with a combining form.

Interestingly, it seems that combining forms concern many nominal and verbal morphemes<sup>34</sup> of Greek and Latin origins, which were previously identified as affixes (e.g., 'gyno-' in *gynosexual* is borrowed from Greek).

Furthermore, a combining form has clear meaning in itself and appears as an autonomous element. Indeed, 'andro-' means 'man, male'; 'bi-' means 'two'; 'demi-' means 'half'; 'pan-' means 'all', etc. However, *cis-* (of *cisgender*), meaning 'on the side of' and having Latin origins, would not be understood by people not specialized in lexicology if it were to be used as an autonomous element (e.g., you are *cis\**). Thus, *cisgender* is made from prefixation and not by compounding.

Finally, it is striking that all of these words are adjectives (e.g., I am *polysexual*, we are *polygender*). I will comment on this at the end of my next sub-part.

### 1.2.2.2 Compounding units (with compound nouns)

From my list, the compounding units with two different units are *gender fluid*, *gender neutral*, *gender expression*, *gender nonconforming*, *grey A*, *sexual behavior*, *sexual minority*, *sexual preference*, *third gender*, *two spirit*.

All of these rely on a well-known pattern in linguistics: compound nouns. Jean Tournier studied many types of compound nouns, not only those that are formed by two nouns but every option that is possible in order to make a compound noun. So, in *Introduction descriptive à la*

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<sup>34</sup> A morpheme is defined as the smallest unit of meaning ("la plus petite unité douée de sens") by Jean Tournier [1998 : 10].

*lexicogénétique de l'anglais contemporain* [1998 : 115], Tournier made a list of more than 50 possible schemes. I will only mention the four patterns that are present here:

N + N: *gender expression*.

N + adj: *gender neutral, gender fluid*.

Adj + N: *sexual behavior, sexual minority, sexual preference, third gender, two spirit*.

N + prefix + deverbial -ing: *gender nonconforming*.

Judging from my list, compounding with combining forms only create adjectives and compounding with compound nouns can create either adjectives or nouns. Through compounding, the LGBT lexicon borrows from established ideas that speakers who are not members of the community are able to recognize and to understand (combining forms or lexicalized nouns). It is the meaning itself that might cause misunderstanding (e.g., *two spirit* would need a historical context).

I have mentioned how the representation of the LGBT community lacks diversity and modernity within the LGBT lexicon. I have chosen to develop my work further and analyze a modern TV show with LGBT themes and characters. My goal was to see if the lexical units from my list were shared onscreen and if they happened to be lexicalized or unlexicalized. As the definition of 'representation' is "the act of presenting somebody/something in a particular way; something that shows or describes something"<sup>35</sup>, it felt important to me to analyze a visual representation of the community and what messages were broadcast to a worldwide audience.

## **2 Representation onscreen**

*Sex Education* is a TV show created by Laurie Nunn. It currently has three seasons available to watch on Netflix. The story mainly centers around a teenage boy named Otis Milburn (played by Asa Butterfield) and his mother Jean (played by Gillian Anderson) – who happens to be a sex therapist.

In the first season, Otis and his friend Maeve decide to run an informal sex clinic for students in need who are too afraid to get professional help from adults. Otis takes notes and inspiration

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<sup>35</sup> Source: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/representation>.

from his mother's work in order to help his classmates. As explained by the website *The Daily Beast*<sup>36</sup>, *Sex Education* “acknowledges the harsh truths and pains of growing up amidst modern sensibilities—which is to say, hysteria and confusion—about identity, sex, and sexuality.”

As most of the episodes are set in a high school, the viewer follows other students going through their everyday life problems. For this research essay, I have chosen to first focus on five of these characters because they embody different LGBT identities. On the one hand, I will introduce each character and analyze how they are depicted to the viewer. I have thus considered every official episode script<sup>37</sup> in order to see which LGBT lexical units appeared. On the other hand, I will study LGBT representation as purely ‘on screen’ where other elements than words were used to bear LGBT representation.

## **2.1 LGBT characters (and LGBT lexical units)**

### **2.1.1 Eric Effiong (*gay*)**

Eric Effiong (played by Ncuti Gatwa) is Otis's best friend. The two of them share several scenes, which makes Eric a recurrent character ever since the first season. Eric identifies as gay and is very open about it.

Out of the 24 episodes available, the word *gay* appears 27 times. While it is used to describe Eric most of the time, it is used as insults twice: “he's not doing that gay Shakespeare shit”<sup>38</sup>, “you gay fuck”<sup>39</sup>. In fact, Eric experiences what most members of the LGBT community deal with on a regular basis – which is violence and discrimination. It is a reminder for the viewer that words have different meanings and that they can sometimes be harmful in some contexts.

Eric is also very proud of his Nigerian and Ghanaian background. Before going on a trip to Nigeria with his family, Eric and his boyfriend Adam have an important conversation<sup>40</sup>: “Isn't it illegal to be gay in Nigeria? It's dangerous to be gay there,” Adam says. “It's dangerous to be gay anywhere”, Eric replies.

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<sup>36</sup> Source: <https://www.thedailybeast.com/>.

<sup>37</sup> The official scripts were all available to browse on the website *8flix*. There are 24 episodes in total.

<sup>38</sup> Season 2, episode 6, from 00:25:56 to 00:25:58.

<sup>39</sup> Season 1, episode 5, from 00:31:51 to 00:31:52.

<sup>40</sup> Season 3, episode 3, from 00:35:26 to 00:35:31.

Consequently, the character of Eric is another reminder that the LGBT community has yet to be fully accepted. Yet, Eric proves that nobody should have to hide their sexuality in order to please others.

### 2.1.2 Adam Groff (*bisexual*)

Adam Groff (played by Connor Swindells) is depicted as Eric's bully throughout the first season of the show. In the following two seasons, he and Eric develop a romantic relationship. While Eric is comfortable with his sexuality, Adam has a harder time accepting himself. He eventually verbalizes his sexuality to Eric near the end of the second season: "I'm scared. And I think I'm bisexual."<sup>41</sup> The word *bisexual* only appears twice in the series. For both instances, it is Adam who pronounces it while referring to his sexuality, the second instance being: "Well, I know that I'm bisexual, but I don't like you like that."<sup>42</sup>

It is striking how – from one episode to the next – Adam has changed from using the verb 'think' to the verb 'know'. The way that the character talks about himself shows his character's growth as well as his acceptance of his sexual orientation.

### 2.1.3 Ola Nyman (*pansexual*)

Ola Nyman (played by Patricia Allison) is the daughter of Jakob Nyman, Otis's step-father in the second season of the series. Ola initially dates Otis but she then falls in love with Lily. Before officially dating Lily, Ola realizes that she is *pansexual* by completing an internet trivia and finally verbalizes it: "I'm a pansexual, apparently."<sup>43</sup>

By using the indefinite article A, it seems like Ola puts some distance between this word and herself. The article A also indicates an analytic process, as it extracts one entity from a group, which means that Ola starts identifying herself as part of a group – the LGBT community. The distance is typographically represented by the lexical verb 'be', which separates the subject 'I' from the noun phrase 'a pansexual'. However, 'be' is also a linking verb which enables to give

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<sup>41</sup> Season 2, episode 6, from 00:39:23 to 00:39:24.

<sup>42</sup> Season 2, episode 8, from 00:29:02 to 00:29:05.

<sup>43</sup> Season 2, episode 5 from 00:23:13 to 00:23:14.

the subject an identity or a characteristic, so it also represents the link that Ola is creating between herself and this sexual orientation, in discourse as well as in her personal life. In some way, ‘be’ indicates a movement towards the discovery of her true identity. This identification to pansexuality is also visible in the placing of the adverb of doubt “apparently”. The speaker could have placed it between the subject and the verb (I apparently am a pansexual.), which would have created a break between the two, but she placed it outside the subject/predicate relationship, enabling the subject to be put directly into relation with its linking verb and complement. Ola embraces the term a few seconds after and reads the full definition out loud: “Pansexual means that you're attracted to the person, not the sex or gender. Uh, it's about the connection you have with the human being, not with their genitalia. Huh. Kind of makes sense, actually.”<sup>44</sup>

The onomatopoeias ‘uh’ and ‘huh’ express a feeling of uncertainty, as if what Ola is reading on her smartphone<sup>45</sup> were completely new to her. However, they might also express a feeling of relief. The viewer watches and listens to Ola as she comes to term with her sexual orientation. The fact that Ola also shares a definition of the word pansexual is an educational moment for Adam – who is in the same scene and has not come out either – but also for the viewer. Also, Ola’s way of thinking reveals her self-acceptance and it is similar to Adam’s journey, as mentioned previously. Indeed, the young woman first expresses uncertainty with “apparently” and then affirmation with “makes sense, actually”. Consequently, both characters finally embrace their sexual orientation.

#### **2.1.4 Cal Bowman (*non-binary*)**

Cal Bowman (played by Dua Saleh<sup>46</sup>) is a non-binary character who appears in the show’s third season. At the beginning of the season, a new school uniform is forced onto students and Cal chooses to wear a traditionally male uniform instead of the female one that she was given. Cal also refuses to choose between ‘male’ or ‘female’ when her classmates are split into two groups.

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<sup>44</sup> Season 2, episode 5, from 00:23:28 to 00:23:43.

<sup>45</sup> The internet is described as important for the LGBT community as it is a space “to explore identity”, “to feel part of something”, “for help, guidance and education”, “for change” and “where they are represented”. Source : *Safer Internet*, <https://saferinternet.org.uk/blog/lgbt-history-month-why-is-the-internet-important-for-lgbt-young-people-and-what-can-parents-and-carers-do-to-help-them-stay-safe>.

<sup>46</sup> Dua Saleh also identifies as “non-binary, trans and queer” as mentioned in an article for *Gay Times* magazine.



Throughout the season, Cal uses *they/them* pronouns and they politely correct others if they were to use *she/her* pronouns: “my pronouns are they/them, but no worries. I’m Cal.”<sup>47</sup> However, Cal gets more defensive when the new school headmaster seems to favor Layla, another non-binary student who does not ask questions about the headmaster’s new school policy: “so Layla’s a good NB, and I’m a bad one. Am I right? (...) NB. Like, a non-binary person”<sup>48</sup>. Through the character of Cal, the writers question if there is a ‘right’ way to be non-binary and, to an extent, LGBT.

The term *non-binary* is pronounced twice by this character only. Cal also uses other LGBT words such as *queer*, *trans*<sup>49</sup>, and *gender-neutral*: “I was wondering if I could talk to you about getting a gender-neutral changing room on campus? I think it would really help the trans and queer students here.”<sup>50</sup> In this scene, Cal tries to warn the headmaster about how their school can be more inclusive to the LGBT community. It is also a reminder to the viewer that it is important to discuss these societal topics – from the importance of transgender people to feel safe in public bathrooms to the well-being of LGBT youth in universities. Therefore, Cal expresses and represents LGBT activism.

### 2.1.5 Florence (*asexual*)

Florence (played by Mirren Mack) is a small character who appears in the second season of the show. Despite not being a recurring character, Florence shares an important scene with Jean and confides in her that something may be wrong with her because she does not wish to have sex. As a sex therapist, it is Jean who will shed light on the subject:

“Do you know what asexuality is? It's when someone has no sexual attraction to any sex or gender. Sex just... doesn't do it for some people (...) some asexual people still want romantic relationships but they don't want the sex bit. And others don't want either. You know, sexuality is fluid. Sex doesn't make us whole, and so, how could you ever be broken?”<sup>51</sup>

By giving a full definition to what an *asexual* is and by explaining to Florence that she is not “broken”, Jean also reassures viewers who might feel the same way as Florence.

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<sup>47</sup> Season 3, episode 1, from 00:18:27 to 00:18:31.

<sup>48</sup> Season 3 episode 6, from 0:11:27 to 00:11:39.

<sup>49</sup> *Trans* being short for *transgender*.

<sup>50</sup> Season 3, episode 6, from 00:10:54 to 00:11:04.

<sup>51</sup> Season 2, episode 4, from 00:46:38 to 00:47:13.

Therefore, through these characters and how they express themselves, it is safe to say that the LGBT lexicon is relatively understood and understandable by non-members of the community. Indeed, the words *gay*, *bisexual*, *pansexual*, *queer*, *gender-neutral* and *asexual* are all lexicalized units. The show does not use many unlexicalized units (such as *skoliosexual* or *MLM*) apart from *non-binary* and *trans*. Both of these units remain comparatively understandable as *trans* is short for *transgender* (a lexicalized unit) and *non-binary* is a compound noun between two lexicalized units ('non' and 'binary'). To me, the show could bring out even more LGBT diversity with – possible – future characters with various identities<sup>52</sup>.

Since the lexical representation of the LGBT community in *Sex Education* could be more diversified, it is interesting to turn to its visual representation, which may give more visibility to the community than the words themselves.

## **2.2 LGBT representation onscreen: beyond words**

### **2.2.1 Lily Iglehart (*lesbian* and *pansexual* representation)**

Lily Iglehart (played by Tanya Reynolds) is introduced in the first season of the show as a character full of imagination as she likes to write alien stories with sexual connotations. Lily finds out that she might not be heterosexual in the second season after experiencing sexual and romantic attraction to another character – Ola Nyman.

Throughout the series, the word *lesbian* appears seven times. Yet, Lily never uses this word to describe herself. Her sexual orientation is cunningly 'teased' to the viewer near the end of the third season. As the viewer discovers Lily's world in cartoon-like style, Lily is seen wandering in an extraterrestrial desert and the colors around her mimic the lesbian flag.

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<sup>52</sup> According to one of screenwriter Krishna Isha's tweets, two new "trans" characters will be cast: <https://twitter.com/krishnaistha/status/146111137802416129>.



Season 3, episode 7, 00:00:17.<sup>53</sup>

A few seconds after<sup>54</sup>, the colors shift to mimic another particular flag – the pansexual flag. This could either mean that Lily hesitates between defining herself as a lesbian or pansexual, or that Lily is a lesbian and that she is about to meet her significant other, Ola, who is pansexual.



Season 3, episode 7, 00:00:21.<sup>55</sup>

Here, viewers that are not part of the LGBT community may not catch these details. These flags are often used in demonstrations as they serve as LGBT symbols. Consequently, it seems like the showrunners decided to craftily give a message to members of the community, as if to state that Lily is indeed a member herself too.

### 2.2.2 Allusions to the LGBT community

As mentioned earlier, Ola finds out that she is pansexual in the second season. However, there are early signs pointing at the fact that Ola is going to be a member of the LGBT community ever since the first season.

In the season 1 finale, Ola wears a rainbow top – which is an allusion to the LGBT flag – under her workwear:

<sup>53</sup> Source: <https://www.netflix.com/watch/81191732?trackId=200257859>.

<sup>54</sup> Season 3, episode 7, from 00:00:21 to 00:00:24.

<sup>55</sup> Source: <https://www.netflix.com/watch/81191732?trackId=200257859>.



season 1, episode 8, 00:42:28.<sup>56</sup>

According to the website *History*, “the different colors within the flag were meant to represent togetherness, since LGBT people come in all races, ages and genders, and rainbows are both natural and beautiful”.

Also, in the episode before, Ola can be seen wearing a masculine tuxedo at the graduation ball.



Season 1, episode 7, 00:14:32.<sup>57</sup>

It may not seem important as none of the characters address it. Yet, to LGBT viewers, Ola conveys the idea that not wearing a dress to prom is not an issue and perhaps, being *gender nonconforming* or *gender fluid* is not either. Interestingly, Ola’s father is said to be Swedish and ‘Ola’ is a male name in Sweden<sup>58</sup>.

### 2.2.3 Overcoming difficulties and self-doubts

As mentioned previously, accepting one’s gender or sexual orientation can be challenging. In the show’s second season, Eric gets mad at Adam for hiding their romantic relationship.

When he is home alone, the mise-en-scène seems to mirror Eric’s thoughts:

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<sup>56</sup> Source: <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80224547?trackId=200257859>.

<sup>57</sup> Source: <https://www.netflix.com/watch/80224546?trackId=200257859>.

<sup>58</sup> Source: <https://nameberry.com/babynome/ola/boy>.



Season 2, episode 5, 00:50:45.<sup>59</sup>

This establishing shot displays Eric lying in bed with different pictures above him. In the middle, there seems to be a painting of Jesus Christ which may indicate that Eric is a believer and that Jesus is watching over him.

On the left, there is a poster with lifeless faces and dull colors. This set of faces may represent a time when Eric had not come out to his family. It could also represent Adam's situation, where no one knows about his true sexual orientation and he blends into the masses.

On the right, there are two posters. The first poster has the words 'shake it' on it and what seems to be the LGBT flag underneath. The second poster has a human hand with long nails and the words 'paws up' underneath. These words are a reference to singer Lady Gaga's song "Born This Way"<sup>60</sup> which is a song about embracing one's difference. Consequently, all of these elements appear to be part of Eric's life or thoughts.

In the next season, when Adam and Eric are sitting on Eric's bed and they start kissing, the camera zooms in on the painting of Jesus Christ:



Season 3, episode 2, 00:46:42 and 00:46:53.<sup>61</sup>

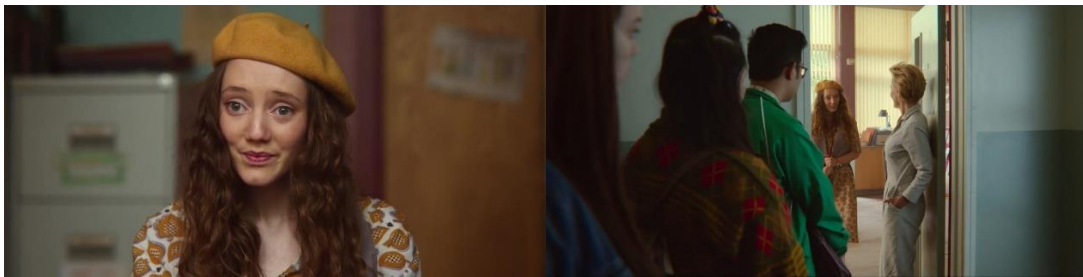
<sup>59</sup> Source: <https://www.netflix.com/watch/81084782?trackId=255824129>.

<sup>60</sup> "Born This Way" by Lady Gaga starts with the following lyrics: "It doesn't matter if you love him or capital H-I-M, just put your paws up, 'cause you were born this way, baby."

<sup>61</sup> Source: <https://www.netflix.com/watch/81191727?trackId=200257859>.

At the same time, organ music can be heard. The organ is the typical instrument used in churches. It could mean that these two young men are blessed in their union. It gives a sacred dimension to their relationship. Also, the shot does not exclude the poster with the LGBT flag. Thus, this shot is important as it conveys the message that being part of the LGBT community does not exclude one from being a Christian.

There are other shots with positive and reassuring messages to the viewer. When Florence comes to understand that she is asexual after talking to Jean, one can see her face light up thanks to a middle close-up shot. Before that, Florence seemed anxious and ill at ease. In the next shot, she is smiling again as she is about to exit Jean's office. On the left, we see three other students with their backs facing the camera. Even if it is not mentioned, the viewer may get a feeling that, like Florence, these young people will also find their identity. Their faces cannot be seen but they will cheer up after overcoming whatever struggle they are going through.



Season 2, episode 4, 00:47:15 and 00:47:16.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Source: <https://www.netflix.com/watch/81084781?trackId=255824129>.

## Conclusion

Through the study of only a short list of LGBT lexical units, I was able to discern a shift in society, from the 1970s to nowadays. The LGBT community fought and keeps fighting for acceptance and its lexicon seems to evolve concomitantly. However, many units have yet to enter the English language and thus to be lexicalized. Out of the units that were lexicalized, it was interesting to compare the O.E.D's definitions and the ones from WAFC and Paul McGrath's glossary. While some definitions are similar (e.g., *cisgender*), some were shortened as if to appear as simpler (e.g., *transgender*, *gender fluid*). On the contrary, other definitions were made longer (e.g., *agender*, *asexual*, *two spirit*) in order to bring more precisions. Moreover, their definitions appear as more 'human-like' - taking distance from a strict focus on science and sex - to instead concentrate on feelings and romance (e.g., *androgynous*, *bisexual*, *gender neutral*, *intersex*). This is also noticeable in the units that are unlexicalized. By analyzing these lexicalized units, I believe that some members of the LGBT community stand proud of their differences and refuse to live under heteronormative norms. However, by studying the most frequent lexical process (compounding), I have come to the conclusion that anyone can be able to understand these units and therefore to recognize the LGBT lexicon, which gives the latter some legitimacy.

Furthermore, the scripts of *Sex Education* revealed a timidity in using these unlexicalized units that could help display the range and complexity of this community. Indeed, most of the LGBT units that the series uses have been lexicalized. Yet, the TV show succeeds in promoting tolerance and self-love through its visuals. The show's characters grow to accept and love themselves, through the realization of their identities, and it is certainly able to rub off on the viewers – LGBT or not. Finally, the focus that this series puts on 'love' actually connects the two definitions of the LGBT acronym that I had presented in my introduction<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>63</sup> LGBT: 'lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender' and 'love, grace, beauty, truth'.

### 3 Partie didactique

#### Présentation de la séquence

Afin de créer une séquence riche et divertissante pour ma classe de 1<sup>ère</sup> générale (niveau B1 vers B2), j'ai choisi d'élargir le sujet de la représentation de la communauté LGBT et de travailler autour de trois types de discriminations (sexisme, racisme et homophobie) mises en avant par des médias actuels (le documentaire *Citizen Rose*, les séries *The Umbrella Academy* et *Sex Education*).

J'ai donc décidé de créer une séquence centrée sur la tolérance, qui s'intitule *Loud and Proud* et qui s'inscrit dans l'axe « Diversité et Inclusion ». Elle répond à la problématique suivante : *How is fighting against discriminations represented onscreen?* (« Comment les luttes contre les discriminations sont-elles représentées sur nos écrans ? »).

#### Étapes

Chaque étape de la séquence se focalise sur un type de discrimination, puis sur une personne ou personnage synonyme de force et de fierté, faisant écho au titre de la séquence.

- Étape 1 : A loud voice against sexism.
- Étape 2 : Standing proud against racism.
- Étape 3 : évaluation sommative (CE/EE).
- Étape 4 : Proud to say no to homophobia.
- Étape 5 : tâche finale (EE).

#### Tâche finale

EE : *Take part in the “Loud and Proud” screenwriting competition. Choose one type of discrimination and write a movie project on it. First, you will introduce the issue at stake, the actors that you want to cast and the location for your story (40 words). Then, you will write a dialogue between two characters for a scene which has to portray the ideas of broad-mindedness and tolerance (100-120 words).*



## Objectifs

- Culturels : La ségrégation, les droits LGBT autour du monde (carte et données), la légalisation du mariage gay aux États-Unis.
- Linguistiques :
  - Lexicaux : les différents types de violences (*sexual abuse, harassment, to threaten, to bully*), les luttes (*to protest, to stand up for oneself, to riot, to refuse*), les mots de liaison (*furthermore, over and above, on the contrary, besides*).
  - Grammaticaux : rebrassage du présent V-0, BE + -ING et V-ED, rebrassage des modaux *may, must* et *might* (afin de pouvoir exprimer des hypothèses dans les phases d'anticipation de la séquence).
  - Phonologiques : les diphtongues [aɪ] (*right, fight*), [eɪ] (*gay, way*), [aʊ] (*proud, loud, found*) ; le suffixe <-ism> (*racism, sexism, activism*) ; le morphème grammatical -ED (*shamed, harassed, attacked*).
- Pragmatiques : organiser son discours, écrire un dialogue (B1 : « écrire des textes articulés simplement sur une gamme de sujets variés dans son domaine en liant une série d'éléments discrets en une séquence linéaire ». B2 : « écrire des textes clairs et détaillés sur une gamme étendue de sujets relatifs à son domaine d'intérêt en faisant la synthèse et l'évaluation d'informations et d'arguments empruntés à des sources diverses »<sup>64</sup>).
- Citoyens : sensibiliser aux discriminations, promouvoir la tolérance et l'ouverture d'esprit.

## Séance 1 : “A loud voice against sexism”.

Support : document iconographique.

Lors de cette première séance, les élèves vont tout d'abord observer le document iconographique suivant avant de le commenter :

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<sup>64</sup> Source : Le CECRL en un coup d'œil (<https://eduscol.education.fr/1971/cadre-europeen-commun-de-reference-pour-les-langues-cecrl>)



(Source : <https://www.deviantart.com/theamat/art/TOGETHER-WE-RISE-661743867>)

Ce support a été didactisé, puisque j'ai effacé « Together We Rise » qui était originellement écrit au-dessus des poings (mon but étant de ne donner aucun mot ou indice aux élèves et que ce soit bien eux qui soient acteurs de cette anticipation).

Consigne : *Use one word to describe the picture.* (EO)

Production attendue : *Power, colors, USA, slogan, unity, fight, freedom, rights, fist, protest...*

Cette activité de *chainspeaking* permet à chaque élève de s'exprimer à l'oral. Je note au tableau les propositions d'élèves pour former un nuage de mots. Il est également possible de rappeler en même temps la prononciation de certains mots (les diphtongues dans *power* ou *rise*, par exemple).

A ce stade, il est possible que les élèves déduisent que nous allons parler de la communauté noire et LGBT durant cette séquence, même s'ils ne le formulent pas. J'ai donc choisi de les surprendre en commençant par la discrimination du sexisme.

Support : photographie de Rose McGowan.



(Source : <https://www.reuters.com/news/picture/activist-rose-mcgowan-claims-drug-case-i-idUSKBN1D02EQ>)

Consignes :

1) *Look at this picture. What similarities can you find with the previous one?* (EO)

Production attendue : *The woman is raising her fist in the air, similarly to the previous picture. It symbolizes power.*

2) *In pairs, make three suppositions about the woman in the picture.* (EE/EO)

Production attendue : *She may be related to politics. She must be a famous person. She might give a speech about ending discriminations.*

Après avoir écouté plusieurs propositions, les élèves vont ensuite regarder une vidéo pour infirmer ou confirmer leurs hypothèses.

Support : bande-annonce de *Citizen Rose*, documentaire réalisé par Rose McGowan.<sup>65</sup>

Script de la vidéo :

Today, it broke in the news, someone that hurt me. It was in the news all over the world. And it's a very strange sensation. And it's... been a long time coming.

I was really famous. Like, the height of TV fame from *Charmed*. I'm in the middle of my second movie for his company. And I get assaulted.

Having grown up in a cult with deep programming, I saw how they would do it. And it's no different from what they do here. You wore a short skirt, you deserved it. I grew up with injustice. I grew up with seeing my mother harassed. I decided not to stay silent.

'I see what she's doing and I'm so grateful'. I knew others were out there and I knew it was a lot of us [...]. 'Nobody believed that it would change the world'. Being brave doesn't mean your ankles don't shake and that you're not scared.

I've been silenced for twenty years. I have been slut-shamed. I have been harassed. Just like you.

Les élèves sont libres de prendre des notes ou non lors du premier visionnage. Après le premier visionnage, ils doivent présenter le document et son sujet (CO/EO).

Production attendue : *The document is a trailer for a documentary/series called "Citizen Rose". It presents actress Rose McGowan as she fights for women rights along many other women. She denounces sexual abuse in Hollywood.*

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<sup>65</sup> Source : [https://youtu.be/8cd5F\\_HBhuM](https://youtu.be/8cd5F_HBhuM).

Puis, lors du deuxième et troisième visionnage, les élèves ont comme consigne : *pick out examples of abuse made on Rose or other women* (CO).

Production attendue : “*You wore a short skirt, you deserved it*”, *she was “assaulted” and “slut-shamed”*, *her mother was “harassed” for years*.

Cette courte activité de compréhension orale permet aux élèves d’acquérir du lexique en lien avec le harcèlement, qui leur sera utile pour leur tâche finale.

Homework (EE) : *Go on tweetgen.com and create a (fake) tweet to show support to Rose’s fight (180 characters). Be original!*

Exemples de productions :



Cette première étape d’expression écrite invite les élèves à prendre position sur le combat de Rose et sur plusieurs questions actuelles (le sexisme, les maltraitances faites aux femmes, le féminisme...). Les élèves découvriront leurs productions en début de séance suivante et pourront s’inter-corriger (exemple : « *I have just learned* » pour la première image).

**Séance 2 : “Proudly standing against racism”.**

Support : captures d’écrans de la série *The Umbrella Academy*.



(Source : <https://bamsmackpow.com/2020/08/07/umbrella-academy-accurately-highlights-america-1960s/>)

Les élèves découvrent d'abord le document iconographique didactisé en noir et blanc. Ainsi, les élèves pourront penser qu'il s'agit d'une photographie ancienne, avant de comprendre qu'il s'agit d'une série moderne. En outre, le fait de vieillir l'image est une allusion à ce que les élèves découvriront ensuite puisque la jeune femme sur le document a fait un voyage dans le temps.

### Consignes :

1) *React and describe the picture.* (EO)

Production attendue : *There is a black man and a black woman. They seem joyful. They are wearing old-fashioned clothes. They must be famous people.*

2) *Focus on the woman. What do you think her job is?* (EO)

Production attendue : *She may be a secretary. She might work at a clothes store.*

Les élèves pourront émettre d'autres hypothèses en découvrant le document en couleur. Ils vont ensuite regarder un court extrait de la série d'où provient ce document. Lors de cette phase d'anticipation, il sera attendu de la part des élèves qu'ils utilisent les modaux *must*, *may* et *might* afin de formuler leurs hypothèses.

Support : extrait vidéo #1 – *The Umbrella Academy* (saison 2, épisode 1)

Résumé : Allison traverse le temps et arrive en 1961. La femme noire comprend soudainement qu'elle ne se trouve plus en 2020, lorsqu'elle entre dans un bar et qu'on lui indique une pancarte contenant les mots : *whites only*.



Cet extrait ne comporte pas de paroles, il sert simplement à anticiper le thème de la ségrégation aux Etats-Unis de façon originale. Après avoir visionné l'extrait, les élèves doivent récapituler ce dernier (EO) pour former une trace écrite.

Production attendue : *A woman named Allison travels through time and ends up in the 1960s. She looks shocked as she discovers that there is a sign that says "whites only" inside a bar. The people around her look angry.*

Un point culturel est ensuite effectué en posant des questions comme : "Is it legal today for bars to say 'whites only'?" ou "Can you connect the time period and the sign that says whites only?" Les réponses des élèves (EO) viendront compléter la trace écrite.

Production attendue : *It takes place during segregation. It was a time when black people were separated from white people. They did not have the same rights. It is completely illegal today.*

Je propose ensuite une activité en binôme afin d'anticiper un prochain extrait. J'ai remarqué que les élèves ne sont parfois pas tous inspirés lorsqu'il s'agit d'émettre des hypothèses. En travaillant à deux, ils sont très souvent plus productifs. Aussi, ils peuvent s'entraider et s'inter-corriger dans l'écriture de leurs hypothèses (ex : bien placer le modal MIGHT entre le sujet et un verbe à l'infinitif).

Consigne : *Talk to your neighbor and make three suppositions about what Allison may/might do. (EOI/EE)*

Production attendue : *Allison might run away. She might confront them. She may explain that she comes from the future and that it is completely illegal.*

Support : extrait vidéo #2 – *The Umbrella Academy* (saison 2, épisode 3)

Résumé : Allison retourne dans le même bar, accompagnée de plusieurs hommes et femmes noirs. Ensemble, ils demandent simplement à se faire servir sous le regard médusé des propriétaires et des clients.



Question : *So, what was Allison's reaction to the 'white only' sign?* (EO)

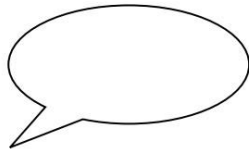
Production attendue : *Allison was not afraid to come back. She actually came back with more Black people. She probably asked her friends for help.*

Homework : une fiche de travail est distribuée aux élèves sur les mots de liaison (*linking words*). Sur celle-ci est écrit la consigne suivante : « Find the title for each category, then add two words or phrases for each category ».

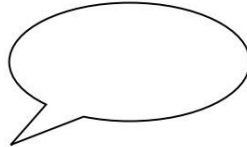
Exemple de fiche de travail :



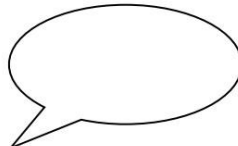
a. What's more...  
On top of that...  
By the way...  
I'd like to add that...  
Besides...  
In addition...



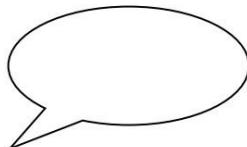
b. For example, ...  
For instance, ...  
That is to say ...



c. It seems to me that...  
As far as I know...  
I suppose/reckon that...  
In my opinion/ In my view/To my mind...  
I strongly believe that...



d. On the other hand...  
Yet, ...  
However, ...  
At the same time...  
Conversely...



### Après mise en commun :

a. What's more...  
On top of that:  
By the way...  
I'd like to add that...  
Besides...  
In addition, ...



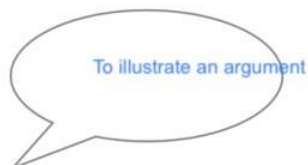
Furthermore

Moreover

Into the bargain = Par-dessus le marché

Over and above = par-dessus le marché

b. For example,...  
For instance, ...  
That is to say, ...



To use a well-known example...

Such as ...

The best illustration of this is...

c. It seems to me that...  
As far as I know...  
I suppose/I reckon that...  
In my opinion/In my view/To my mind...  
I strongly believe that...

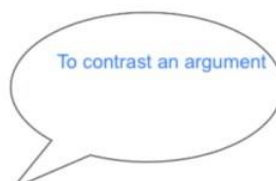


As far as I'm concerned

I'm convinced/sure/positive that...

I have the feeling that...

d. On the other hand...  
Yet, ...  
However, ...  
At the same time...  
Conversely...



On the contrary

Whereas (entre deux propositions)

Nevertheless

Notwithstanding



La mise en commun est faite en début de séance suivante. Le but est principalement de complexifier le lexique des élèves (pour les amener vers un niveau B2) avec des expressions comme « *into the bargain* » ou « *as far as I'm concerned* ». Ces expressions seront valorisées pour leur tâche finale, mais également pour l'évaluation sommative qui va suivre. Après cette évaluation, les élèves devront également la corriger en y introduisant des mots de liaison si cela n'avait pas été fait auparavant.

### **Séance 3 : évaluation sommative de CE et d'EE.**

Support : article internet, tiré du site *bamsmackpow*, écrit et publié par Mark Lynch en 2020.<sup>66</sup>

The Umbrella Academy accurately highlights America in the 1960s.

In episode one, Allison is unaware that she's in a time period that wasn't accepting of Black people. Her first interaction was walking into a diner for help only to be met by a guy pointing to a sign that said 'Whites Only'. This wasn't something anyone expected to see. However, we shouldn't be shocked.

A lot of people will say that Black people need to get over the racism we face by saying it was a long time ago. That isn't close to the truth. The Umbrella Academy points out that this was barely 60 years ago. There are people still alive that went through these atrocities. How can they forget something like this? It may be an uncomfortable reality, but it's one that needed to be mentioned if the show was going to accurately depict the 1960s.

Then there was the sit-in. That was a powerful scene. [I am] too young to have been there for this. However, I've heard the stories. The brave men and women who were bold enough to show up in defiance was incredible (sic.). They were verbally and physically assaulted for fighting for their rights but remained steadfast and committed to their cause.

This scene accurately showcased a movement that should never be forgotten about. It's an important moment in American history – one that reminds us of the work that has been done and, indeed, the work that's still left to do.

Moreover, they highlighted a positive that we don't hear enough about. They put a spotlight on the role Black women played in the movement. Black women opened their shops for meetings, stood by the people when they were in need, and offered encouraging words when things seemed bleak. All of this and they still managed to stand up and physically defend their people when they had to. In addition, it was the Black women who came up with a good portion of the plans – a fact that's not as well-known.

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<sup>66</sup> Source : <https://bamsmackpow.com/2020/08/07/umbrella-academy-accurately-highlights-america-1960s/>.

Dans un premier temps, les élèves vont devoir repérer des informations dans le texte (CE).

1) *TRUE or FALSE. Justify your answers by quoting the text.*

- *Segregation has had no impact today.*

Production attendue : *FALSE. "A lot of people will say that Black people need to get over the racism (...) That isn't close to the truth."*

- *The Umbrella Academy should have skipped this part of history.*

Production attendue : *FALSE. "It's an important moment in American history", "it may be an uncomfortable reality, but it's one that needed to be mentioned if the show was going to accurately depict the 1960s."*

- *Black people had the courage to protest, but they stopped as they were discouraged.*

Production attendue : *FALSE. "They were verbally and physically assaulted for fighting for their rights but remained steadfast and committed to their cause."*

- *Black women had a very important role in fighting against the abuse done to Black people.*

Production attendue : *TRUE. "It was Black women who came up with a good portion of the plans."*

Cet exercice a pour but d'approfondir l'un des objectifs culturels de la séquence (la ségrégation) et de faire comprendre aux élèves la façon dont la communauté noire s'est battue pour ses droits.

Dans un deuxième temps, les élèves doivent s'exprimer sur le sujet de la discrimination raciale, en mobilisant leurs connaissances (de la séance précédente) et leur compréhension du texte (CE/EE).

2) *In your own words, explain how the show succeeds in fighting against racism through the character of Allison. (120 words)*

Cet entraînement à l'expression écrite est essentiel afin que les élèves se familiarisent avec la formulation et l'expression de leurs idées à l'écrit, ce qui leur sera redemandé pour la tâche finale.

Homework : Find at least three similarities between actress Rose McGowan and the character of Allison (EE).

Production attendue : They are both strong women. They fight for what they believe in. They reached out to other people in order to get justice. They care about making things right.

#### Séance 4 : “Proud to say no to homophobia”.

Afin d’anticiper la thématique des problèmes que peut rencontrer la communauté LGBT, et de réutiliser les mots de liaison travaillés précédemment, la classe est divisée en deux. La première partie de la classe travaille sur ce document :

### Most Now Say They Would Not Be Upset If They Learned Their Child Was Gay or Lesbian

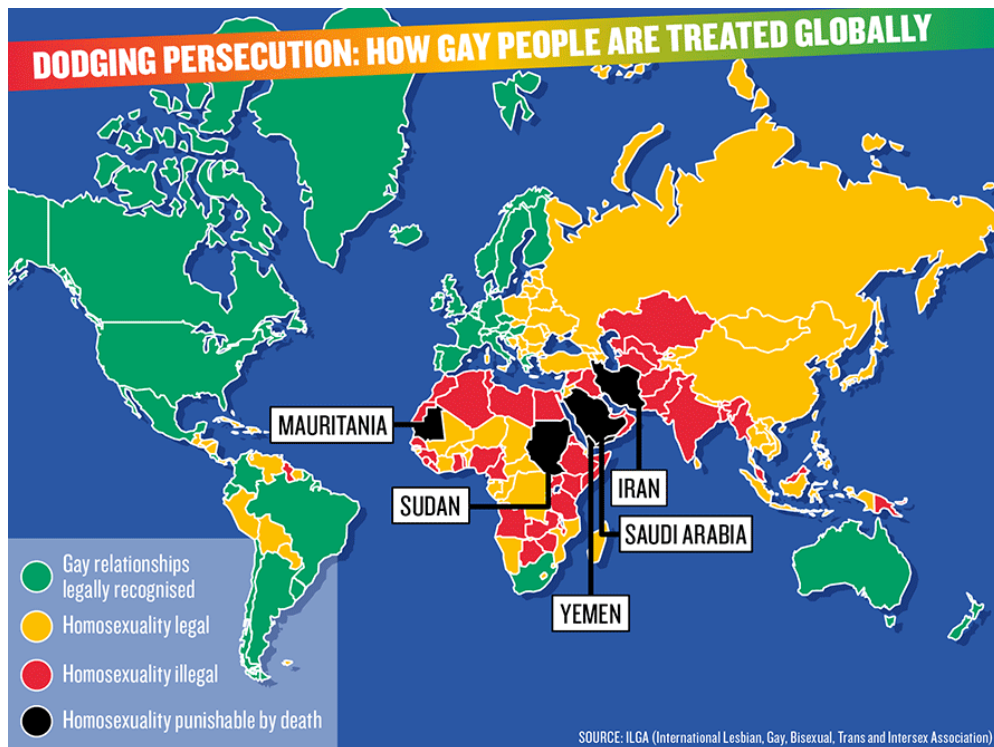
Reaction if your child told you he or she was gay or lesbian...	Dec 1985	June 2000	March 2004	May 2013
	%	%	%	%
Very upset	64	36	33	19
Somewhat upset	25	37	27	21
Not upset	9	23	36	55
Don't know	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER May-1-5 2013. Q63. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.  
1985-2004 from Los Angeles Times.

(Source : <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/06/25/how-lgbt-adults-see-society-and-how-the-public-sees-them/>)

Bien que ce document ne soit pas récent, « 2013 » peut rappeler aux élèves que le mariage homosexuel a été légalisé en France cette année-là, et que cela avait fait polémique. J’expliquerai également aux élèves qu’il est légal depuis 2012 aux Etats-Unis, sous la présidence de Barack Obama.

La deuxième partie de la classe travaille sur ce document :



(Source : <https://ilga.org/>)

Bien que les deux documents ne soient pas les mêmes, les élèves auront les mêmes consignes :

*First, present your document and name the discrimination behind it. Then, write three sentences with the information of your document. Make sure to use linking words to connect your ideas.*

Production attendue : *The document is a survey and the discrimination is homophobia. It presents the opinion of people and a poll to know if they would accept their gay children. We learn that parents in 2013 would be less upset than the ones in 1985. Furthermore, we learn that... Nevertheless, we can read that...*

En divisant la classe en deux (groupe 1 et 2), je peux ensuite demander à un élève du groupe 1 de s'asseoir à côté d'un élève du groupe 2. Ainsi, les élèves devront échanger en anglais et se présenter leur document respectif (EOI).

En fin de séance, les élèves seront libres d'exprimer leur ressenti sur le sujet (EOC), et ils seront valorisés s'ils utilisent des mots de liaison étudiés précédemment (« *to give your opinion* »).

**Séance 5 : “Proud to say no to homophobia, part 2”.**

Enfin, j'ai choisi de terminer la séquence par le document qui suit car le personnage d'Éric représente deux communautés (noire et LGBT), et malgré qu'il puisse être victime de racisme ou d'homophobie, ce personnage est courageux et inspirant à plusieurs niveaux. Cette scène peut également servir de modèle quant aux attendus de la tâche finale (dialogue entre deux personnages).

Support : Extrait vidéo de *Sex Education*.<sup>67</sup>

Résumé : Éric se rend à son bal de promo, il est habillé de façon extravagante et son père lui explique qu'il est peut-être trop différent et qu'il peut encore faire demi-tour. Après avoir rassuré son père, Éric est confronté par son harceleur, Adam, qui le menace. Éric fait preuve de courage et lui tient tête.



Les élèves découvrent d'abord les 30 premières secondes, sans son. En ne montrant que les images, cette activité d'anticipation est libératrice de parole et stimulatrice d'imaginaire pour les élèves.

Consignes :

1) *Describe the characters and the setting* (EOC).

Production attendue : *There are three characters. Two Black men and one white man. The white man is looking at the other two. The youngest Black man is dressed for a party, he is wearing makeup and a colorful suit. The other looks older, he may be his father. The scene seems to take place in front of a high school at night.*

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<sup>67</sup> Source : <https://youtu.be/BHz6mriB-4>.

Les élèves vont ensuite regarder l'extrait avec du son jusqu'à 1 minute 30. Une fiche de travail leur est distribuée avec des questions de compréhension globale.

1) *Pick out the adjectives that you can hear in the extract.*

Production attendue : *proud, strong, different, scared, weak, brave.*

2) *Recap the scene using three of these adjectives.*

Production attendue : *Because Eric is different, his father is scared for him. In the end, Eric's father tell him that he feels proud.*

Les élèves vont ensuite visionner l'extrait jusqu'à 1 minute 55.

3) *With your neighbor, imagine what happens next and write a dialogue between Eric and Adam (the teenager smoking a cigaret).*

Production attendue : *"You look ridiculous, you should go home", "I heard everything, you are quite brave", ...*

Après avoir écouté les scénarios de tous, les élèves découvrent la fin de l'extrait.

4) *Describe Eric's reaction to Adam's words.*

Production attendue : *Eric stands up for himself. He is not scared.*

5) *In your own words, explain how Eric is a symbol of bravery and for the LGBT community.*

Production attendue : *Eric is a symbol for both of these things because he is not afraid of anybody. He just wants to be himself and to have fun.*

## **Séance 6 : tâche finale.**

La tâche finale invite les élèves à choisir un type de discrimination et à inventer un projet scénaristique autour de celui-ci. Les élèves doivent principalement écrire un dialogue, mais il est important de contextualiser en amont : c'est pourquoi je leur demande d'abord d'expliquer en 40 mots les informations majeures (la situation, les personnages et les acteurs qui les joueront ainsi qu'un lieu). En effet, cela rend la lecture plus agréable pour le lecteur, mais cela facilitera

également leur travail et les aidera à visualiser leur scène de dialogue. Les élèves peuvent ensuite s'inspirer des documents et thématiques étudiés durant la séquence pour écrire un dialogue entre deux personnages. Ils sont cependant libres d'ajouter tout élément qui leur semble pertinent à la réalisation de cette tâche finale. Puisque le contexte de cette tâche finale est un concours d'écriture de scénarios, il pourrait également être intéressant de faire lire aux élèves leurs travaux afin de travailler la compétence orthoépique<sup>68</sup> et la mise en voix.

### **Barème**

<b>Points</b>	<b>Réalisation de la tâche</b>	<b>Cohérence du dialogue</b>	<b>Correction de la langue</b>	<b>Richesse de la langue</b>
<b>B2 5 pts</b>	Satisfaisante quant au contenu + touche personnelle ou référence culturelle.	Point de vue clair, éléments pertinents.	Bonne maîtrise des structures simples et courantes (même si erreurs sur les structures complexes qui ne conduisent à aucun malentendu).	Gamme suffisamment large de mots et expressions pour varier les formulations, même si quelques lacunes/confusions.
<b>B1 4 pts</b>	Intelligible et suffisamment développée.	Effort soutenu d'articulation dans le dialogue (même si exemples/arguments introduits de façon maladroite).	Assez bonne maîtrise des structures simples/courantes.	Gamme suffisante de mots et expressions pour pouvoir développer, même si utilisation fréquente de périphrases, de répétitions, de mots incorrects.
<b>A2 2-3 pts</b>	Début de traitement mais développement trop limité/maladroit (lecture qui requiert un effort).	Point de vue perceptible.	Production immédiatement compréhensible, même si fréquence des erreurs sur des structures simples/courantes.	Mots et structures pour la plupart adaptées à l'intention de communication mais limités, ce qui réduit les possibilités de développement.
<b>A1 1-0 pts</b>	Partielle (ou tâche non traitée).	Point de vue difficile à percevoir, pas de cohérence.	Production pratiquement inintelligible, erreurs très nombreuses.	Vocabulaire très pauvre, discours pratiquement inintelligible.
	/ 5	/5	/5	/5

<sup>68</sup> Cette compétence a « rapport à l'orthoépique, à la bonne prononciation » (Source : *La Langue Française*).

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## **Summary**

This essay aims to study and to analyze a short list of the LGBT lexicon, as well as the language, characterization and overall representation of the LGBT community in the Netflix TV show *Sex Education*.

## **Keywords**

LGBT, lexicon, lexical units, representation, onscreen, didactics, discrimination, sexism, racism, homophobia, diversity, inclusion.