Analyzing LGBTQ2S+ Jokes in *30 Rock* and *Schitt's Creek*

A Qualitative Comparison Study in Sitcom Humour

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Abstract

As LGBTQ2S+ representation increases in the media, it is important to discover if these increased narratives are also becoming more positive. Utilizing a combination of Critical Discourse and Textual Analysis, this study analyzes LGBTQ2S+ sitcom humour in *30 Rock* and *Schitt's Creek* to understand what patterns are found in the jokes and how findings compare. After examining connotations drawn from word choice, the presence of power dynamics, body language, and tone, findings indicated that *30 Rock* contained an alarming number of negative LGBTQ2S+ jokes, with jokes fitting into three categories: using the term "lesbian" to denote frumpy appearance, using LGBTQ2S+ jokes to create a power imbalance, and erasing identity with LGBTQ2S+ negative jokes. In opposition to this, *Schitt's Creek* demonstrated positive representation of LGBTQ2S+ characters and few LGBTQ2S+ specific jokes. LGBTQ2S+ stereotypes were sometimes inverted for humour, but no negative jokes occurred.

Introduction

LGBTQ2S+ representation in the media has been historically negative. Look no further than S 3.22 of *30 Rock*: "There's no such thing as bisexual — that's just something they invented in the '90s to sell hair products." Erasing LGBTQ2S+ identities, relegating LGBTQ2S+ characters to the flamboyant "best friend role", and only framing LGBTQ2S+ story arcs as a struggle to be overcome are common forms representation takes in the media (Waggoner, 2018). This can be extremely harmful because representations of characters in TV can impact how we view ourselves/society, how we act/treat others, and even perpetuate power dynamics, stereotypes, and assumptions commonly held by audiences (Raley and Lucas, 2006).

Gerbner and his colleagues proposed that "TV is the most universal mass medium in the history of American culture and as such, has tremendous power to affect the ways people think and behave [by] creat[ing], confirm[ing], and cultivat[ing] TV viewpoints and values" (as quoted by Raley and Lucas, 2006). Since television is one of the main avenues for learning information about LGBTQ2S+ identity (McInroy and Craig, 2017), creating accurate and positive content is vital. In this study, I will analyze two sitcoms: *Schitt's Creek* (2015-2020) and *30 Rock* (2006-2013) to investigate: (1) if there are jokes with LGBTQ2S+ content; (2) what patterns are found among the jokes (including character reactions, purpose of the joke, situations where LGBTQ2S+ jokes are used); and (3) how these findings differ in *30 Rock* and *Schitt's Creek*.

The Shows

30 Rock is a satire which stars Tina Fey as Liz Lemon, the head writer for an NBC sketch comedy show *TGS with Tracy Jordan*. It delves into her romantic blunders, the ridiculous antics she has to deal with to keep the actors of her show in line, and the relationship she has with her

boss/mentor, Jack Donaghy (Alec Baldwin). Liz Lemon and Jack Donaghy are the main characters of the show.

Schitt's Creek follows the lives of the wealthy Rose family (Dan and Eugene Levy, Catherine O'Hara, and Annie Murphy) who suddenly go broke and are forced to relocate to their only remaining asset: a small town called Schitt's Creek that they once bought as a joke. Small town life brings out the best in them, and the family make lasting relationships, embark on new business opportunities, and begin to outgrow their pampered lifestyle throughout the course of the show.

Literature Review

LGBTQ2S+ narratives in the media have been negative and infrequent compared to heterosexual narratives (Edwards, 2020; Waggoner, 2017). Representation is increasing, albeit slowly, with the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) reporting 90 series regular characters on television in 2019-2020 (GLAAD, 2019). This amounts to 10.2% of all television characters, a number that still needs improving, but one that shows a dramatic increase in representation from 2005/2006, where only 1.4% of all television characters identified as LGBTQ2S+ (Monaghan, 2020; GLAAD, 2019). However, increasing visibility in television does not mean that LGBTQ2S+ narratives are more positive (McInroy and Craig, 2017; Edwards, 2020; Monaghan, 2020; Waggoner, 2017), and it is too soon to say that we are living in a post-gay society, one where those who identify as LGBTQ2S+ are embraced wholeheartedly (Monaghan, 2020). While considerable progress has been made in portraying more balanced and positive LGBTQ2S+ characters (McInroy and Craig, 2017; Monaghan, 2020; Waggoner, 2017), and these characters have progressed beyond the non-representation stage of Clark's four stages of media representation for minority groups (Raley and Lucas, 2006; Edwards, 2020),

LGBTQ2S+ characters are still mostly stuck in the second stage, ridicule. This means that although LGBTQ2S+ storylines are present, their experiences are used for comedic effect rather than meaningful representation, the humour is more derisive, and stereotypes — like the effeminate male and butch female — are still very obvious (Raley and Lucas, 2006).

Some common tropes present in television frame LGBTQ2S+ characters as victims of violence, mentally unstable individuals, villains, and sources of comic relief (McInroy and Craig, 2017; Waggoner, 2017; Raley and Lucas, 2006). This can contribute to a homophobic worldview and the idea that heterosexual relationships are not only the norm, but the only possible way to have a healthy relationship (McInroy and Craig, 2017). Failing to show LGBTQ2S+ characters, or only showing them in a negative/stereotypical way continues to deny them recognition or respect (Raley and Lucas, 2006).

"Plain gay folks" are a rarity in television, since the media tends to focus on the struggle of identifying as LGBTQ2S+ (Waggoner, 2017). Negative situations are frequently highlighted such as the disappointment of parents, death of an LGBTQ2S+ character after they have become intimate with a partner, and closeted LGBTQ2S+ individuals receiving wider acceptance than those who have come out. LGBTQ2S+ tropes and stereotypes send the message that people who identify as LGBTQ2S+ "may find happiness, but it is short-lived and perhaps requires a bulletproof vest" (Waggoner, 2017; McInroy and Craig, 2017; Raley and Lucas, 2006).

While the above studies are very useful, their research tends to be more theoretical. Concrete examples about LGBTQ2S+ representation in the media are usually only provided from one show. The studies focus on the potential narratives have to be harmful, or, in McInroy and Craig's study (2017), how media representation in general impacts LGBTQ2S+ youth, not how specific jokes or situations impact them.

These sources provide a valuable framework for my research by explaining LGBTQ2S+ tropes and stereotypes, and by providing an history of LGBTQ2S+ representation on TV. However, these studies focus on how representation impacts viewers, rather than breaking down the specific word choices and phrasing that contribute to meaning. Research tends to be more quantitative by counting the number of times LGBTQ2S+ characters were intimate throughout the series, and the number of stereotypes present. I was unable to find any studies which used grammar to understand how meaning was negotiated, and I also did not find any studies that compared patterns in LGBTQ2S+ jokes between present and older sitcoms in the 21st century. My research will build on this framework and analyze the jokes with LGBTQ2S+ content in two sitcoms.

Research Method

The findings of this qualitative comparison study are drawn using a combination of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and textual analysis. CDA includes being sensitive to context and non-literal meaning, as well as examining explicitly stated dialogue (Antaki, 2008). Wodak and Meyer explain that CDA looks at relationships that exist between power and language regarding gender, politics, racialized groups, and other areas of controversy (2010), and also how power constructs or reconstructs reality (Mikos, 2018). These power dynamics can be discovered in grammar choices, and frequency of interruption (Mills, Durepos, and Wiebe, 2010). In visual mediums, power dynamics are seen through nonverbal communication and images (Wodak and Meyer, 2008). I chose CDA for my research because it allows me to critically examine the power dynamics created around LGBTQ2S+ jokes and how language is used to accept or dismiss LGBTQ2S+ identities. Language is interrelated with the world views and values individuals hold, and analyzing the less obvious connections between power and language will help me

understand how jokes can "sanction or prohibit ways of thinking… and thereby establish and entrench social norms" (Mikos, 2018). I use CDA to break down power discourses in TV episodes, but I won't focus on how societal norms lead to the construction of negative/positive LGBTQ2S+ jokes, or how they influence audiences to adopt particular views.

Textual analysis is similar to CDA, but it focuses on how grammatical features contribute to meaning in a specific context (Mills, Durepos, and Wiebe, 2010). Tense, word order, agreement, voice, etc. are analyzed to draw conclusions about attitudes, beliefs, and prejudices that characters hold (Mills, Durepos, and Wiebe, 2010). Understanding character motivation is an important aspect of my analysis and will help me better understand how language is used to support a viewpoint while marginalizing others. For my research, I will focus on how jokes demean or encourage LGBTQ2S+ viewpoints primarily through tone and word choice, rather than through an in-depth linguistic analysis with semantic-syntactic interface.

My research is also situated in a framework of Queer Theory, which is concerned with identifying power and oppression in areas where oppression may seem normal (eg. using LGBTQ2S+ stereotypes in sitcoms). The theory also analyzes the way heterosexuality pervades society (Grzanka, 2019) to dissect the connotations behind LGBTQ2S+ identities and criticize the way society forms identity (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008). It also notes differences in the way heterosexual and queer identities are developed. Queer theory is useful for my research because, yet again, it focuses on the connotations that exist behind a character's sexuality and how their identity is viewed by others.

Situating *30 Rock* and *Schitt's Creek* in Queer Theory

In *30 Rock*, LGBTQ2S+ identities are shown in stark opposition to heterosexual identities. Terms such as "gay" and "lesbian" are often used as insults, and there is little effort to

include positive LGBTQ2S+ story arcs. The power differences between the LGBTQ2S+ narratives and heteronormative ones highlight the stereotypical problems of portraying gender identity in the media.

Situating *Schitt's Creek* in Queer Theory produces different results: there are indistinguishable differences between LGBTQ2S+ and heterosexual relationships. Characters who identify as LGBTQ2S+ are not defined by their sexuality.

Method of Data Collection

For this study, I analyzed seven episodes of *30 Rock* (2006-2013) and seven episodes of *Schitt's Creek* (2015-2020). I watched *30 Rock* on Amazon Prime, and *Schitt's Creek* on Netflix. Instead of selecting episodes randomly for analysis, I chose episodes that had prominent LGBTQ2S+ narratives, meaning that a character who identified as LGBTQ2S+ was present during the episode's story arc, characters frequently made LGBTQ2S+ jokes, or the episode heavily featured reactions to an LGBTQ2S+ character's sexuality/relationship. I watched episodes ranging from the first to final seasons of the shows (*30 Rock* has seven seasons and *Schitt's Creek* has six). I transcribed dialogue, noted tone, context, body language of characters, and the reactions characters had regarding LGBTQ2S+ jokes. I also recorded my own opinions of the LGBTQ2S+ jokes.

Data Analysis

In this study, I analyzed both negative and positive jokes with LGBTQ2S+ content. For the negative jokes, I examined which characters made offensive jokes about the LGBTQ2S+ community, what the character's relative importance in the hierarchy of the show was, how other characters responded to these jokes, and if the jokes were meant to be offensive to the person they were directed toward or if they were intended for comic relief alone. For positively framed

LGBTQ2S+ jokes, I examined which characters introduced them, the overall importance of the character, the content of the joke, and if the punchline focused on the character's personality or their sexuality. The context surrounding jokes, the nonverbal behaviour of the characters, and the purpose of the joke was also examined. Phrasing of jokes (if characters use the passive voice or not), and hedging (the number of filler words used that can convey the confidence of the speaker) were considered as well.

Discussion

30 Rock contained no shortage of jokes about LGBTQ2S+ identities, especially jokes pertaining to gay, lesbian, and trans individuals. In the episodes of *30 Rock* that I analyzed, several patterns in LGBTQ2S+ jokes emerged: associating the term "lesbian" with poor appearance, using LGBTQ2S+ jokes to create a power dynamic, and erasing LGBTQ2S+ identities.

Lesbian and Frumpy Appearance

In *30 Rock*, the term "lesbian" was almost always used derogatively to express Liz Lemon's frumpy appearance. In S 1.03, after Jack (Liz's boss) sets her up with a woman on a blind date, Liz confronts him, asking accusingly: "What made you think I was gay?" Jack replies, "Your shoes. Those shoes are definitely bi-curious." Jack has made his feelings about Liz's fashion sense clear throughout the episode: at one point he hands her a wad of cash and tells her to buy something "from a *women's* clothing store." The subtext of the "bi-curious" joke is negative: it implies that because Liz dresses poorly, she must be gay. The connotation behind "bi-curious" isn't positive, instead it implies that this characteristic should be avoided rather than embraced, perpetuating heteronormativity. Jack's nonchalant tone and confident, unapologetic demeanor provide the illusion that there is nothing wrong with his comment, while Liz responds

defensively: “Well, I’m straight. 100% completely *straight*” with her hands on her hips. Her emphasis on “straight”, sharp tone, and angry posture imply that Jack has offended her by assuming she is gay. The joke was likely not meant to be offensive toward Liz or toward the audience, but to establish Jack’s ignorant and conservative personality instead. However, since Jack is a main character in the show, and Liz’s boss, he occupies an authoritative position. This can give the impression that the joke is acceptable, while in reality, it perpetuates stereotypes and can give viewers the wrong message.

This pattern is also evident in S 5.07 where Liz wears shorteralls (shorts/overalls) and a striped blue and white t-shirt. When Jack sees her outfit, he gasps, and chokes out, “Lesbian Mario Brothers”, seeming genuinely in pain. “That is the most unflattering item of clothing I have ever seen you wear,” he tells her. Liz’s response to this joke is different: she smiles confidently because she has made the conscious decision to dress in unflattering shorteralls instead of wearing unethically manufactured jeans.

In this case, Jack means the joke to be offensive. Liz’s frumpy appearance is juxtaposed with the expensive suit Jack wears, theoretically putting her in a position weakness. However, because Liz has chosen to dress ethically instead of looking good, she is the one who wins the struggle for power in the end. While Liz might occupy the moral high ground, this doesn’t change the fact that the joke still associates LGBTQ2S+ identities with negative characteristics. It isn’t enough for Jack to say, “Mario Brothers.” That’s not offensive enough. In order to make the joke really derisive, he has to add “lesbian” which, in this context, is synonymous with ugly or disgusting.

Other lesbian references referring to Liz in the series include: “All passengers, including any lip-less middle-aged women in lesbian clown shirts, should please take their seat at this

time," "Lemon, lesbian Frankenstein wants her shoes back," and referring to Liz as "Lesbian Yellow-Sour-Fruit" on a translated cover of her book. In his article, Rosen notes that "'lesbian' has become [*30* Rock's] go-to shortcut for a frumpy, undesirable woman" and asks why the writers couldn't frame these jokes in a way "that didn't seem to insult lesbians" (2011).

Using LGBTQ2S+ Jokes to demonstrate Power

In S 2.15, Jack transfers from NBC to work in Homeland security; however, once he realizes how useless and underfunded the department is, he and Cooter Burger, another employee, work together to get fired. Their plan involves the creation of a "gay bomb" which an official government form describes as "a non-lethal chemical weapon that would, quote, 'reduce enemy soldier's combat posture by making them totally gay bones for each other.'" This joke is very problematic, largely because it associates the term "gay" with a weapon, evoking connotations of violence, death, tragedy, and horror. The government using phrases such as "totally gay bones" on an official form establishes a narrative that making fun of the LGBTQ2S+ community is acceptable.

Jack concludes that a "gay bomb" would be "offensive to both the red states and the gayer blue states." This joke is meant to emphasize Jack's staunch Republican views, but the only term used to represent the blue states as being worse is "gay," which, again, likens the term to an insult.

At the end of the episode, Jack and Cooter attend a top-secret meeting in the Pentagon. Jack starts, seriously: "Gentlemen, I regret to inform you that the gay bomb could not be effectively weaponized. The chemical dissipates harmlessly in open tactical environments and, frankly, could only work if somehow we could get the enemy into a closed, unventilated space." This joke belittles the concept of being closeted, a very personal experience, by referring to that

situation as a place the enemy occupies. Jack's formal grammar and high-level vocabulary situate him as an authoritative figure, and his joke could once again be interpreted as acceptable. When Cooter reaches across the table for a pen, he knocks the "gay bomb" over, into said closed, unventilated space, and it breaks open. The men immediately start petting each other's hair and massaging each other's shoulders, while smiling knowingly at each other. The negative joke here is seeing Jack, a macho, heterosexual man known for being a womanizer, "become gay." The fact that he wants to be intimate with another man is supposed to be funny and implies that being gay is demeaning and a sign of weakness.

In S. 7.09, Liz calls Bev, her adoption agent, to ask if her marital status had been updated in the system. Bev responds: "Oh yes, congratulations. You've moved from the well-meaning lesbian pile to 'found a man', comma, 'living a lie.' That brings your wait time down to only four years." While this joke is meant to be comic relief, it is said in a very superior tone, and comes from a woman who controls whether or not Liz can adopt a baby, thus creating a power dynamic. Liz is understandably distressed; however, she is more upset about the wait-time for adoption than she is about the negative lesbian joke. The underlying text in this joke, that women who identify as lesbian shouldn't be able to adopt children, or that heterosexual individuals should receive a child before lesbians do, is very negative. This kind of back-handed homophobia perpetuates stereotypes, and frames homophobia as a joke.

Erasing LGBTQ2S+ Identities

In S 4.09, Jack hires a private detective, Len Wozniak, to gather information on his nemesis. Len subsequently goes uncover as Jan Foster, a female drama teacher in a high school. In a meeting with Jack, Len Wozniak comes dressed as Jan Foster, wearing a purple blouse and skirt, black stilettoes, and a red wig. As Jack launches into a speech, Len interrupts to inform him

that: “I’ve decided to continue living as Jan Foster.” Jack continues with his speech, completely ignoring Jan, but she persistently explains her identity: “*Was* a private investigator. *Is* a drama teacher, and, as of last night, engaged to Ms. Siegal.” She holds out her hand to show off her engagement ring, and is perched on the arm of the sofa, legs crossed, exhibiting typical female nonverbal behaviour. She also uses terms of endearment that have been traditionally used by females, such as “honey.”

Jan’s entire story arc is the joke of the episode. Audiences are encouraged to laugh at Len wearing a skirt and insisting to go undercover as a woman. Jack ignores Jan as she comes out as trans, effectively erasing her trans identity. He doesn’t acknowledge or deny her identity — he doesn’t even address it — implying that her identity is not important enough for him to discuss. Jack continues to refer to Jan as “Len” throughout the episode, even when she takes offense to this.

Coming Out

There are considerable differences in the way *Schitt’s Creek* and *30 Rock* deal with LGBTQ2S+ characters coming out. In *30 Rock*, Liz outs her gay cousin while at a New Year’s Eve party. She loudly informs his entire family that “Randy’s gay everybody! He’s gay!” causing shock and outrage. She tries to frame this as a positive experience when she relays it to Jack, saying: “I spent New Year’s Eve with my family, which was actually very special. My cousin Randy, this kid from this rural coal mining town, came out to us! And I think ol’ Liz Lemon had a little something to do with that.” Randy’s parents kick him out because he’s gay, and he comes to New York to live with Liz since he has nowhere else to go. This traumatic incident is relegated to a split-second flashback and the joke is meant for comedic effect. Liz

never once has to suffer any consequences for so carelessly uprooting her cousin's life. The nonchalant way she frames outing her cousin to his family puts her in a position of power.

Schitt's Creek, on the other hand, devotes an entire episode (S 5.11) to Patrick (David Rose's boyfriend) when he comes out to his parents. Johnny Rose (David's father) accidentally reveals to Patrick's parents that their son is gay; however, this is done from a place of love. Johnny is proud of his son and thrilled that he is in such a healthy and loving relationship with Patrick. He only wanted to share his enthusiasm with Patrick's parents. As soon as he realizes his mistake, Johnny spends the remainder of the episode trying to make up for it and ensuring everything goes smoothly. His extreme concern serves as the joke in the episode rather than Patrick coming out: "How are you David? Happy I hope?" Johnny asks nervously as he looks in on his son who is talking to Patrick's parents. "Uh, cause at the end of the day, that's-that's all that really matters, isn't it?" His stuttering and use of qualifiers make his guilt more apparent, and it is very evident that he wants to reverse any damage he caused. Focusing the joke on a straight character instead of belittling LGBTQ2S+ narratives was very encouraging to watch, especially after I had seen so many negative jokes in *30 Rock.*

Positive Jokes in *Schitt's Creek*

While *30 Rock* relies on LGBTQ2S+ stereotypes and insults to create a joke, *Schitt's Creek* uses LGBTQ2S+ jokes very rarely. Their representation of LGBTQ2S+ individuals are more inclusive and thoughtful, and the relationship between Patrick and David is just a relationship, not a struggle for acceptance. The jokes don't frame LGBTQ2S+ identity as an insult and focus more on the personality of individual characters rather than their sexuality.

David Rose and Patrick Brewer meet the requirements of Clark's stage of respect by consistently displaying physical affection: Patrick serenades David with Tina Turner's "You're

Simply the Best" at an open mic night (S 4.06), kisses David after he hits a homerun in a community baseball game (S 5.09), and slow dances with David in the café (S 5.11). The characters are also often shown in bed together (S 5.14 & S 6.02). Both characters experience positive and negative roles in everyday life not limited to their sexuality. While some stereotypes occur, namely David's flamboyant character, his love of fashion, and his ability of have "lengthy conversation[s] about hosiery and menopause" (S 2.03), these characteristics do not define him. His sexuality is an important part of his identity, but not the basis for the show; it is simply one aspect of his personality.

One significant LGTQ2S+ joke appears in S 1.10. After David sleeps with Stevie, she proposes the following metaphor to politely, and humourously, inquire about his sexuality. She was previously under the impression that he was gay.

> Stevie: Okay, uh, I only drink red wine. And up until last night I was under the impression that you too only drank red wine. But I guess I was wrong?"
>
> David: I see where you're going with this. Um… I do drink red wine, but I also drink white wine. And I've been known to sample the occasional rose. And a couple summers back I tried a merlot that used to be a chardonnay, which got a bit complicated.
>
> Stevie: Oh okay. So you're just really open to all wines.
>
> David: I like the wine and not the label.

This metaphor cleverly alerts audiences to the fact that David is pansexual while remaining an organic bit of comedic conversation that is completely unoffensive. The number of qualifiers in Stevie's dialogue alerts viewers that she is being cautious and careful not to offend David. Stevie and David are both main characters, but there isn't a power dynamic that exists in this scene.

Another positive joke occurs in S 5.14., when Patrick and David decide to tell their family and friends that they are engaged. After David tells his best friend, Stevie, the news, she breaks down in tears and then goes missing (right before she is scheduled to play the leading role in a town production of *Cabaret*); David's sister is initially gleefully happy for him until she realizes she won't be able to attend his wedding: "This is like the last think I needed to hear today!"; and David's mother, Moira, ends up shrieking: "What a unanimously disastrous day this is turning out to be!" and breaking into heaving sobs. This effectively dismantles the stereotype of LGBTQ2S+ identity needing to be a struggle because the characters aren't upset that David is marrying a man. In fact, Moira suggests that this is only another step for the happy couple to take: "David, you and your wonderful Patrick have years to celebrate." It is their own personal problems that cause the dramatic and distressed reactions: Moira is worried about *Cabaret* (since she is the director), Alexis is disappointed she won't be at the wedding, and Stevie is sad that everyone is growing up around her while she stays put. Two men getting married is gloriously uneventful in the town of Schitt's Creek.

Conclusion & Further Research

The two sitcoms I analyzed both included jokes with LGBTQ2S+ content, but represented them in very different ways: *30 Rock* frequently used negative LGBTQ2S+ jokes to offend characters or provide comic relief, while *Schitt's Creek* had very few LGBTQ2S+ jokes altogether and only used them for positive humour. The majority of jokes in the *30 Rock* episodes I analyzed used terms like "gay" and "lesbian" to insult characters who did not identify as LGBTQ2S+. These findings supported McInroy and Craig's notion that increased LGBTQ2S+ visibility does not necessarily produce more positive representation (2017). LGBTQ2S+ characters in *30 Rock* have reached the ridicule stage of Clark's minority

representations in the media since they have higher visibility on the show but are relegated to occupying positions of comic relief and derision (Raley and Lucas, 2006). In *Schitt's Creek*, I was surprised to find that almost none of the jokes were about LGBTQ2S+ identity. The LGBTQ2S+ jokes that did exist were always framed positively and usually consisted of character reactions, rather than explicit words. *Schitt's Creek* also dismantled several LGBTQ2S+ stereotypes, such as the reactions of David's family once he told them his engagement news. These jokes were humourous because they deviated from the expected situations. Show creator/writer/producer Dan Levy said in a 2018 interview: "We show love and tolerance. If you [take] something like that out of the equation, you're saying that [love and tolerance] doesn't exist and shouldn't exist." *Schitt's Creek* occupies the respect stage of Clark's minority representation model, with LGBTQ2S+ characters dating, expressing their feelings, and being represented in ways that were, historically, only used for heterosexual characters.

One of the limitations of this study was that I only watched seven episodes from each series. There are 139 episodes of *30 Rock* and 43 episodes of *Schitt's Creek.* I also did not analyze elements of intersexuality such as race and LGBTQ2S+ identity, to see if there were differences in jokes about racialized and white LGBTQ2S+ characters. An in-depth linguistic analysis of the dialogue would also provide more insight into the jokes.

Analyzing features such as tone, and word choice allowed me to better understand the purpose behind negative and positive LGBTQ2S+ jokes.

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