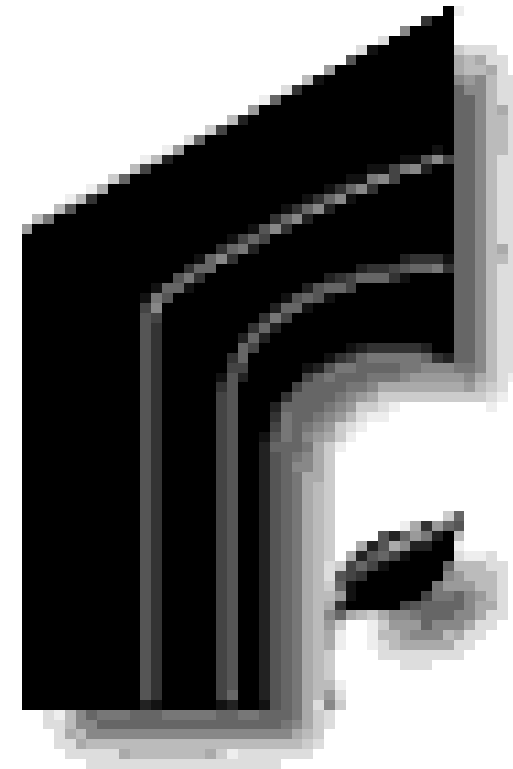


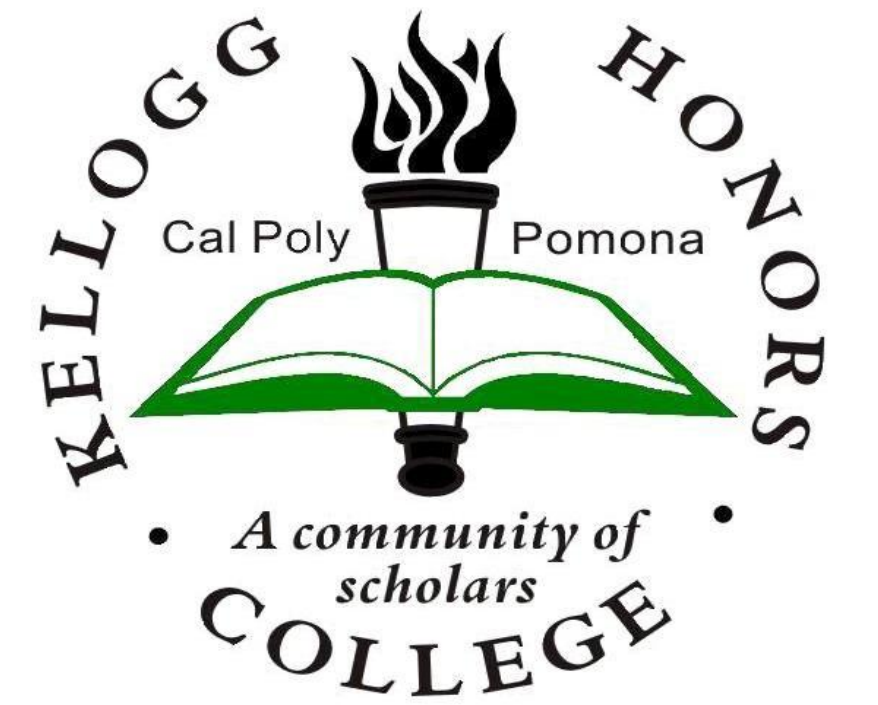
# What's Up With "Dude"?



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## Introduction:

Since language is crucial in identity construction and performance, the words we use to mark and code our relationship to others can say a lot about our own identity as well as our perception of others. Many linguistic scholars have contended that language is vital in our performance of gender and sexuality in particular, explaining that we use certain language in order to fulfill our position in certain socially-determined and social-driven categories, such as heterosexuality and masculinity. Inspired by Scott Kiesling's 2003 work on the function of the word "Dude" to maintain male solidarity through marking a cordial, yet non-heterosexual stance towards other men, I have decided to investigate whether his findings are still valid.

## Methods:

- Step One: Research literature on the use of "dude" and the role of language in performance of identity, particularly one's gender and sexuality
- Step Two: Formulate a survey to examine one's use of the word "Dude" in correlation with one's gender
- Step Three: Gather data and look for trends

## Results:

Is your use of the word "dude" gendered?

Yes	No	Mostly Yes	Mostly No	Depends on Context/Somewhat
F 55	F 21	M 60	F 23	M 25
F 57	F 50	M 66	M 27	F 34
F ?	F 22		F 19	M 26
F 50+	F 22			M 22
F 59	F 20			F 23
F 22	M 21			F 21
F 30	M 33			F 22
M 28				F 23
F 23				
Total: 8; Age Range: 22-59	Total: 7; Age Range: 21-50	Total: 2; Age Range: 60-66	Total: 3; Age Range: 19-23	Total: 8; Age Range: 21-34
F: 8; 22-59	M: 2; 21-33	**Only Male	M: 1; 27	M: 3; 22-26
M: 1; 28	F: 5; 21-50		F: 2; 19-23	F: 2-34

Summary: Both men and women consider that the way that they use "Dude" is gendered (this could be due to the perceptiveness of the population sampled), with almost all older females describing their use/understanding of the word as gendered. Except for one exception, all persons, regardless of gender, stated that their use of "dude" is gendered, or mostly gendered. The persons who considered their use not to imply gender, or mostly not involving gender were younger persons. Younger persons were also more likely to say that their use of dude was only somewhat gendered, or that gendered use depended on context. Interestingly though, the context in which gendered versus non-gender "dude" usage occurred varied.

Who Uses "Dude"?

Never	Rarely	A Few Times	Daily	Many Times Throughout the Day
F 55	M 66	F 34	M 25	F 22
F 57	M 62	F 50+	F 23	F 22
F 59	M 60	F 50	F 27	F 22
	F 59	M 26	F 21	F 20
	F 30	F 60	M 22	F 19
	F 22	F 23	F 21	M 33*
	F ?	F 23	M 21	
	F 28		F 23	
<b>Total: 3 Only Female; Range 55-59</b>	Total: 8; Range: 22-66	Total: 7; Range: 23-50+	Total: 8; Range: 21-27	Total: 6; Range: 19-33
	M: 3; Range: 60-66	F: 6; Range: 23-60	M: 3; Range: 21-25	M: 1; Range: 33*
	F: 5; Range 22-59?	M: 1; Range: 26	F: 5; Range: 21-27	F: 5; Range: 19-22

\*Described himself as very enthusiastic Dude user

Summary: This study suggests that older women tend to use dude the least; younger women use dude the most. Most men use it at least occasionally, but not describe their use as high frequency.

With which social groups did the participants use "Dude":

- 89.6% said that they used it with their friends
- 65.52% said that they used it with their siblings
- 51.72% said that they used it with their co workers

Most common answers for "Whom would you never use the word "Dude"?:

- Grandparents
- Supervisors
- Professors

\*\*\*Individual interesting responses:

- With other women
- People that they dislike

Summary: tendency to use "dude" with persons of similar social positioning. Persons with higher authority or who are deemed of deserving high respect are not addressed or described as "dude".

Most Common Synonyms for "Dudes":

Guy/Guys (12 times)  
Men (4 times)  
People (4 times)

Most Common Synonyms for "Dude":  
Bro/Brother (9 times)  
Guy (9 times)  
Person (5 times)  
You/You All (4 times)  
Bud/Buddy (4 times)

With whom do you use the word Dude as a descriptor?

Men	Women	Both/All	N/A
M 25		M 62	M 66#
F 34		F 21	F 55
F ?		F 22	F 59
F 23		F 23	F 50#
M 27		F 20	F 22^
F 50+		F 19	F 30###
F 60		M 21	
M 60		M 33	
F 59			
M 26			
M 22			
F 23			
F 22			
F 21			
M 28			
F 22			
F 23			
Total: 17; Age Range: 21-60; M:6; 22-60	Total: 0; Age Range: 0	Total: 8; Age Range: 19-62	Total: 6; 22-66
F: 11; 21-60		M: 3; 21-62	M: 1; 66
		F: 5; 19-23	F: 5; 22-59

#Use "Dude" only as address, not for descriptor  
##Rarely uses word  
###Rarely uses as descriptor, if so, then with men

Summary: Most participants use "Dude" as a descriptor for men only. Most participants who use it as a descriptor for persons other than men were younger. There was a good amount of people who explained that while they used the word, they did not use or rarely used it as a descriptor.

With whom do you use the word "Dude" as an address?

Men	Women	Both/All	N/A*	Predominantly Men
F ?*		F 34	F 50	M 60
M 27		M 62	F 55	M 22
F 30		F 23		M 66**
F 28		F 60		F 50+
M 25		F 59		
		F 21		
		F 50		
		F 22		
		M 26		
		F 23		
		F 22		
		F 21		
		F 22		
		F 22		
		F 23		
		F 20		
		F 19		
		F 23		
		F 21		
		M 33		
Total: 5; Age Range: 25-30?	Total: 0; Age Range: 0	Total: 20; Age Range: 19-62	Total: 2; Age Range: 50-55	Total: 4; Age Range: 22-66; M: 3; 22-66
M: 2; 25-27		M: 3; 26-62	*** Only Female	F: 1; 50+
F: 3; 28-30?		F: 17; 19-60		

Summary: Most participants use "Dude" as an address for persons other than men; this was especially true for younger participants.

\*Doesn't use "Dude"  
\*\*Only jokingly with women

## Conclusion:

Based upon my research, it appears that young women use "Dude" as frequently, if not more frequently as young men do. This is a major change from Kiesling's finding that young women do not use "Dude" as frequently as young men. However, my study suggests that older women are the least frequent users of the word. Both genders appear to use "Dude" with genders other than their own. Women tend to use "Dude" to address both genders more frequently than men. Men are more likely to use it solely or predominantly with men than they are with other genders. Contrasting with Kiesling's findings, women are less likely to use it solely with other women than they are to use it with all genders, suggesting that the homosocial function of the word may be less potent now than when Kiesling's study occurred. Despite this more equally distributed use of the word "dude" across genders, many women stated that they thought that their use was gendered. That the most frequently suggested synonyms for both "dude" and "dudes" was "guy/guys" or "bro/brother" implies that "dude" is a word that does tend to be gendered, but not necessarily. Like "guy/guys" the word "dude/dudes" tends to be gender neutral when functioning as an address, while used as gendered-male, when it is used as a descriptor. In this way "dude" can be seen as gendered, but its function as an interjection to emphasize shock/disapproval/disbelief and/or to indicate solidarity seems to overpower its function as a gendered descriptor. The shift from the word's more strictly gendered use may indicate a societal shift in male/female identity and performance, suggesting that depending on the context, we're all dudes.