

### Synthesis Assignment 3: Big Idea Emoji Proposal

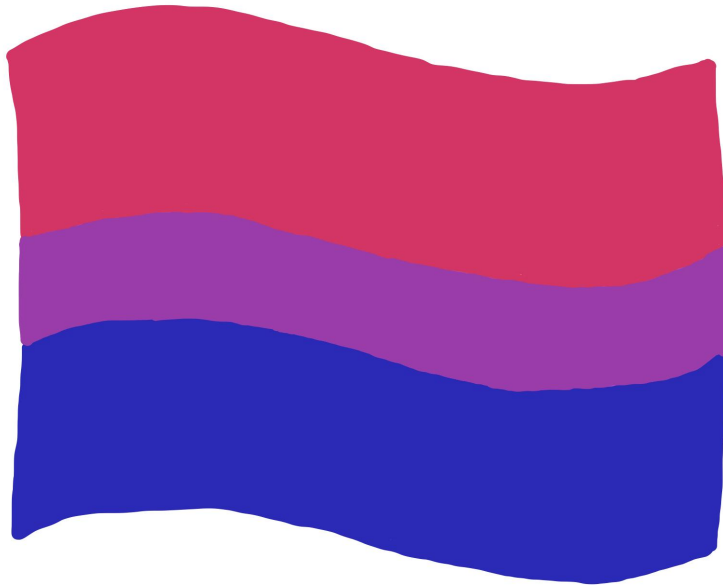
#### Bisexual Flag Emoji & Classification/Categorization

#### 1. Identification

CLDR short name: bisexual flag

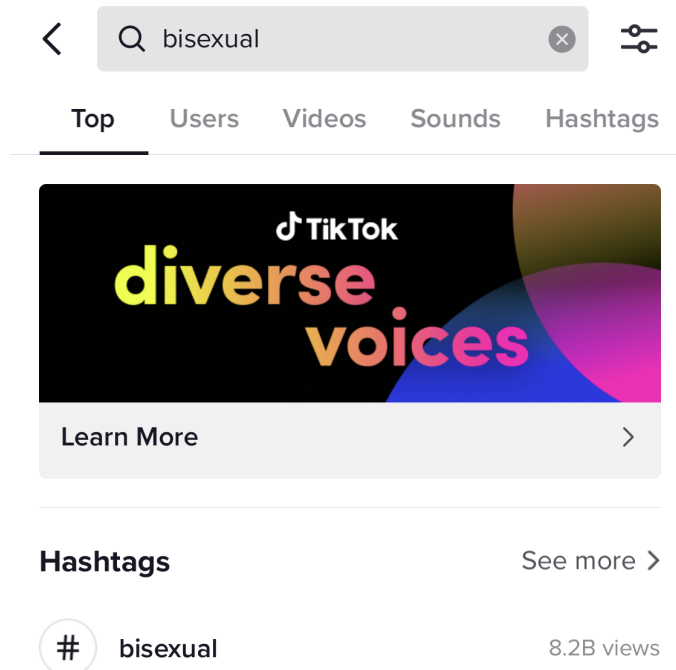
CLDR keywords: flag, bisexual, bi, pink, purple, blue

#### 2. Images



#### 3. Selection Factors - Inclusion

- a. **Compatibility** - The bisexual emoji fits well with existing emojis, as it takes the same shape as many of the other existing flag emojis. Recently, Apple added the rainbow flag and transgender flags. These are both flags to represent LGBTQ+ identities. The bisexual flag is very similar to these, so I believe it fits well.
  - i. Recently, the TikTok app has taken the world by storm, and many celebrities and public figures now rush to tiktok to promote themselves because of its incredible influence with both younger and older generations alike. Some of the top creators on TikTok are bisexuals. I had never seen so many individuals who identified as bisexual before joining the app. It is a great platform that provides so many individuals with increased visibility. The bisexual emoji could definitely be heavily used on that application. Below, I have provided a screenshot of the results I get when searching “bisexual”. There are over 8 billion views under the bisexual tag.

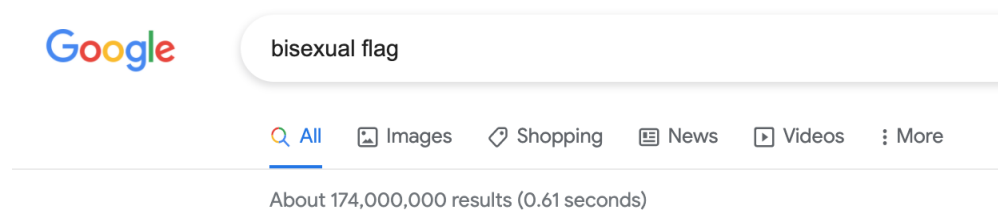


**b. *Breaking new ground***

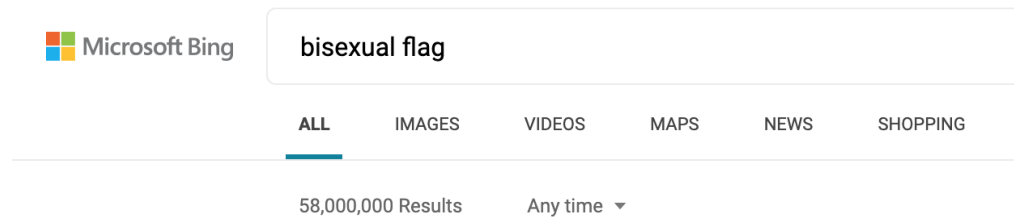
Though this emoji looks similar to many other existing flag emojis, it brings visibility to an entire group of people, making it very new. It is not simply a new facial expression, or object, but a symbol of something much bigger. One counter argument is that “there is already a rainbow flag and a trans flag, which should encompass all other LGBTQ+ identities.” While some may believe this to be true, I’m sure there are many bisexuals who would disagree. Many have embraced the rainbow pride flag as their own, but others don’t due to the fact that they resonate more with their own specific flag that represents their identity, because not all stories and experiences are the same, and thus LGBTQ+ identities can’t be considered as monolithic. Due to this, it is unfair to group them under one flag. Bisexuals have fought a constant struggle, walking a tightrope between the life of heterosexuals and homosexuality, and are constantly told to “pick a side.” However, their preference is not something that should be debated or scrutinized. Bisexuals deserve to use their own flag, one that most accurately describes their personal experiences.

**c. *Frequently requested & Expected usage level***

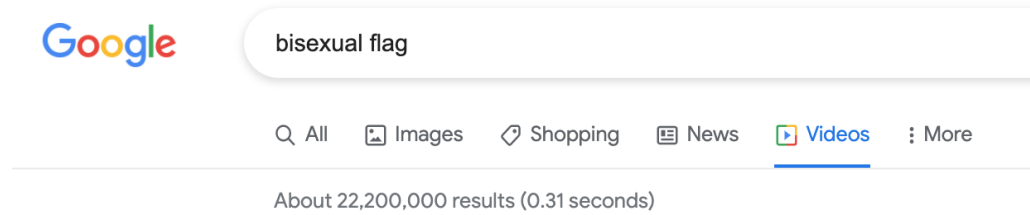
Google Search: 174,000,000 results for “bisexual flag”



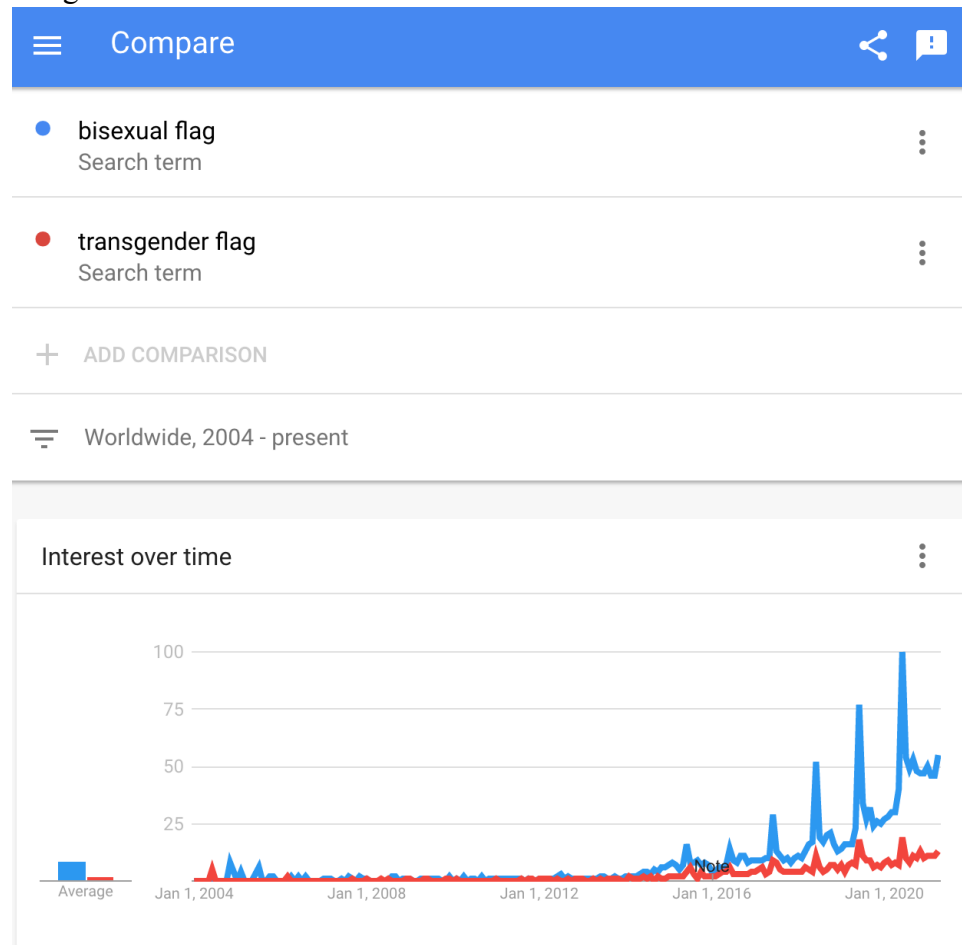
Bing Search: 58,000,000 results for “bisexual flag”



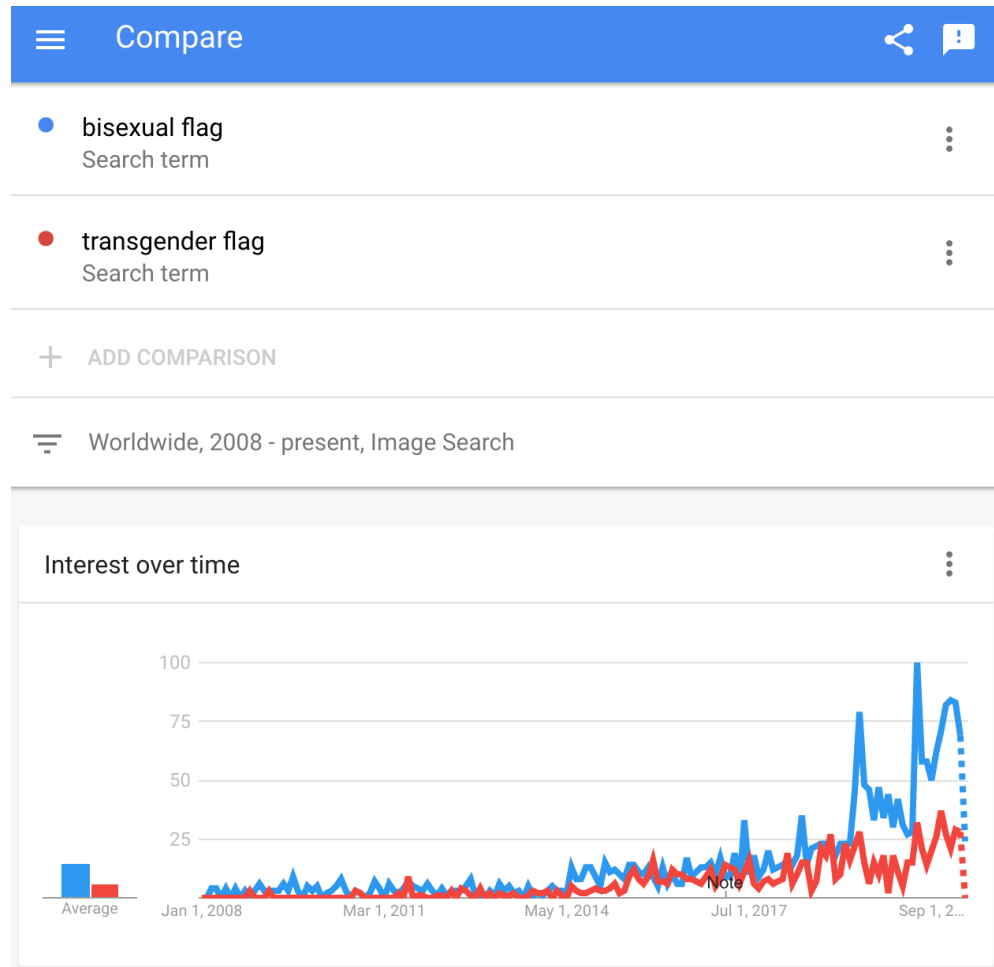
Google Video Search: 22,200,000 results for “bisexual flag”



Google Trends: Web Search



Google Trends: Image Search



The amount of search results on both Google and Bing indicate that there has definitely been a rise in interest about the bisexual flag in recent years. This has most likely been due to the general societal shift from homophobia and biphobia to becoming more accepting of different identities, which allows for more individuals to come out and be their most authentic selves. As these individuals are making the incredibly brave decision to come out of the closet, they should be met with support, and including a bisexual flag emoji is one positive step towards that.

#### 4. Selection Factors - Exclusion

- a. ***Already representable*** - Like I addressed above, bisexuality can technically be expressed using the rainbow flag emoji. Currently, I know many bisexuals who use the rainbow pride flag emoji in lieu of a bisexual flag emoji. However, I have also met many who don't use that flag because they feel a disconnect from the gay community. Bisexuals are often categorized as gay or straight depending on their current partner, but that is a harmful generalization. Bisexual individuals are still bisexual no matter who they are currently with. Thus, it can be harmful and invalidating to say that all bisexuals feel represented by the rainbow flag emoji.
- b. ***Transient*** - Many like to believe that bisexuals, especially the current exponential rise in individuals who come out and self-identify as bisexual, is a phase, a fad, or a trend. I've especially seen this as more young people on the popular app TikTok

have come out as bisexual. They are told by both gay and straight people that they're claiming to be bisexual for attention or increased viewership. Additionally, many bisexuals are told at least once in their life that bisexuality is a phase, and it's only so long before they come out as gay or straight, and settle down with a person of the respective gender. This is harmful, and prevents even more people from embracing their sexuality. Bisexuality is not a phase, and it is proven by the many adults of past generations who have identified as bisexual for decades. Bisexuality is a valid identity that will continue to exist for generations. Thus, the bisexual flag has longevity, and I presume that the emoji will have the same demand.

## **5. Sort Location**

I propose that the bisexual emoji be placed in the "Flags" section, because it is a flag, and is shaped like many of the other flag emojis. More specifically, the bisexual flag should be placed between the "rainbow flag" and the "transgender flag." I believe that this would be the best possible place for the bisexual flag emoji because it is very similar to the rainbow and transgender flags. They are all flags that represent LGBTQ+ identities, and it would make sense for it to be placed after the rainbow flag, as often the rainbow flag is used as an all-encompassing flag to represent all members of the community. Thus, the rainbow flag is currently the most heavily used symbol of pride. The bisexual flag should be placed before the transgender flag because if they were switched, the focus of the three flags would swap from sexuality, to gender, and back to sexuality. It would be best to group the two flags representing sexuality together, and then they should be followed by the transgender flag.

## **6. Big Ideas Reflection**

The big idea that bisexual flag emoji represents is classification and categorization. In lecture, we learned that as humans, we use structure to organize data, information, and knowledge into systems of meaning, and that this is not for computational efficiency, but human comprehensibility. When I learned this, I immediately thought of how humans use labels to effectively place people in simple boxes to easily understand them, and how we should treat them. These "boxes" that we place individuals in are formerly known as *categories*. Categories are used to recognize, differentiate, and understand things and their relations. Similar to how knowledge graphs are used to help computers understand information, labels are used to help people express their sexuality, and to determine whether or not someone could be a potential suitor.

For centuries, the only sexuality that was accepted was heterosexuality: relationships between men and women. Eventually, the taboo phenomenon of relationships between two men and two women rose, and suddenly there was a need for classification to differentiate these individuals. Before there were homosexuals, there wasn't really a need for the term "heterosexual," as it could just be replaced with "normal." However, when people realized that not everyone was straight, a new term had to be made: gay. Down the line, there were people who proudly proclaimed that they were attracted to both men and women, and thus a new category was made: bisexual. The term "transgender" was made to understand other people's gender identities. As time passed, hundreds of microlabels were made for individuals who felt disconnected from these other categories. The point in saying all of this is that labels and categories provide people with the ability to understand each other, and to express themselves.

In class, we also discussed the way in which classification evolves. Though the way that we organize our knowledge of the world is rooted in scientific understanding, it is inherently social. For example, heterosexuality prevailed as the common sexuality because of biology, and how prevalent it is in nature. However, there comes a point where classification becomes social, like the existence of queer identities and the desire to be accepted in greater society. This is not to say that sexuality, more specifically homosexuality and bisexuality, is not biological, because there are many studies that have proven it is. The way in which we classify ourselves in society, including who we speak to and who we have relations with, is a social phenomenon. As the world evolves, humans must evolve with it. When individuals who accept their differences are out and proud, they are commonly harassed for it and met with hostility, just because they are not pertaining to the popular society's standards. Eventually, people and classification become less discriminating, and move toward celebrating our differences, as we have seen in the 21st century.

To bring us back to the bisexual flag emoji, I believe that it is a perfect example of classification, as it brings visibility to an identity that is less commonly known. In my generation, many have accepted that sexuality is a lot more like a regression than classification. Instead of looking at someone and asking "Are you gay or straight? Do you like men or women?" it is possible that the person is attracted to both, neither, or even a gender that was not included in the question. Since sexuality is more a spectrum, it is better represented by continuous variables than discrete ones. The rise in bisexual visibility and acceptance is a product of this evolution of classification in society. As bisexuals defy the expectations of individuals to fit into the dichotomous standard of "homosexual" or "heterosexual" and the discrete labels of "gay" or "straight" they are working towards normalizing more "unconventional" identities. Having an emoji to represent bisexuals can provide even more visibility to these diverse categories of being, and allow others to show their support for bisexuals as well.