

From deviance to domesticity: A corpus-based critical discourse of queer identity in *The Times* between 1957-2017

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Identity, like language, is not a stable formation that exists outside of history. Rather, one's sense of self and community is 'produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices' (Hall 1996:4). This talk will present a current study that considers the process of discursive formation by discussing how, when and why notions of a queer identity or 'community' were developed within the UK between the years 1957-1967.

In order to do so, the study looks to the language of media as a site where notions of self and other are both reflected and reproduced (Wodak et al. 2009). The data is a 16-million-word corpus that was collected from a single newspaper – *The Times* – in order to focus on the diachronic nature of language between 1957-1967. By using a diachronic approach to corpus-based discourse analysis (Baker et al. 2013), the study reveals how linguistic patterns such as collocation and 'keywords' have changed over time. These discursive shifts in the mass-media both reflect and constitute the changing socio-political status of queer people in Britain. They also reveal diachronic variation in the language used to represent different sexual and gender identities, e.g. transsexual vs. transgender. As identities are 'constituted within... representation' (Hall 1996:4), it is therefore likely that changing linguistic resources affect the possibilities for identification and 'community' formation.

References

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