

# **Representations and self-representations of LGBTIQIA<sup>+</sup> identities in the British and Italian press**

**A diachronic corpus informed comparative analysis of the broadsheet press and news releases from websites of LGBTIQIA<sup>+</sup> Organisations**

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In recent times there has been a growing interest in corpus-based approaches to the analysis of the discursive representation of LGBTIQIA<sup>+</sup> people in public discourse, especially in Governmental debates and in the press. As for the first area, scholars have shown implicit and indirect homophobia reproduced in parliamentary debates on the age of Consent for same-sex intercourse (Baker 2005; Love & Baker 2015), same-sex relationships (Bachmann 2011) and marriages (Findlay 2017). For the second, corpus-based critical discourse analysis has been applied mainly to the British press to analyse the discursive representation of same-sex marriages (Turner et al. 2018; Paterson & Coffey-Glover 2018), gay identities (Baker 2006, 2015), transgender people (Baker 2014b; Zottola 2018, 2021), bisexuality (Wilkinson 2019) and LGBT<sup>+</sup> refugees and asylum seekers (Baker et al. 2008; Wilkinson 2020).

Drawing on this background and aiming at critically exploring any possible changes in trends of the representation of the issues raised by LGBTQIA<sup>+</sup> communities in the press, this paper attempts to answer the following research questions:

- How do LGBTQIA<sup>+</sup> people represent themselves in the websites of their Organisations?
- How are LGBTQIA<sup>+</sup> people discursively represented in the broadsheet press?

Using the methods of diachronic corpus-based and critical discourse studies, this research analyses two large multilingual corpora including, respectively, news releases from websites of British and Italian LGBTQIA<sup>+</sup> Organisations, as well as British and Italian broadsheet newspaper articles. Texts published between 2016 and 2021 were chosen to consider the latest social and political debates on issues involving LGBQIA<sup>+</sup> communities, as well as the extent to which Covid-19 has triggered different protest movements against already existing social inequalities sharpened by the effects of the pandemic.

Findings suggest that, although British and Italian newspapers still similarly reproduce implicit heteronormative discourses explored in the literature, in the British press minorities previously erased such as transgender and queer people have increasingly gained visibility. Furthermore, compared to the Italian corpus and similarly to the results emerging from the analysis of both British and Italian news releases of LGBTQIA<sup>+</sup> Organisations, British journalists tend to report on LGBTIQ<sup>+</sup> people adopting an increasingly inclusive and intersectional approach.

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