The discursive construction of sexuality in transnational European space: Evidence from Eurovision Song Contest press conferences

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This paper provides an ethnographically based in-depth discourse analysis of linguistic constructions of non-heteronormativity at Eurovision Song Contest press conferences. Contexts of high national salience have been found to largely support or even promote heteronormative discourses (Berlant & Warner 1998, Mosse 1985, Peterson 1999, Puar 2006). The present study, by contrast, sets out to look at sexual construction in a transnational community of practice of high European salience in which macro-level heteronormativity has to face greater competition from the local non-heteronormativity of the context. The study, therefore, supplements earlier research on the conversational construction of sexuality (e.g. Kitzinger 2005, Land & Kitzinger 2005, Rendle-Short 2005) by exploring the consequences of European transnationalism on the linguistic construction of sexuality. The analysis identifies the following patterns of non-heteronormative construction: non-heteronormative talk about love song lyrics and performances, the construction of male same-sex desire, and the challenging of dominant gender discourses. On the basis of the data, it is argued that the European transnationalism of the context causes a normative shift from (nationally associated) heteronormativity to an expectation that non-heterosexual identities and desires be met with greater tolerance.

References


Keywords: Europe, transnationality, sexuality.