

Joanna Moore

Queer Language in German and Slovene

My research will investigate the relationship between the language of sexuality and the political and social context, specifically non-heterosexuality, in German and in Slovene, resulting in a comparison of the findings for the two countries. It will consider the language of sexuality as a tool, or cause and effect of, or reaction to the wider political and social context in Germany and Slovenia, and offer an insight into how society's understanding and acceptance of such issues change and are the results or causes of political and social change.

In terms of LGBT rights, Slovenian law is on a par with that of most Western European countries, and more accepting than most Eastern European countries. However I have met Slovenians who believe that there are no homosexual people in Slovenia and have been told that hiding one's homosexuality is often advisable there. Conversely, Germany is socially quite tolerant towards homosexuality and is perhaps one of the most tolerant European countries in this sense. Yet, politically, it is not a European leader in LGBT rights.

In order to investigate political and social language, I plan to consider language use drawn from official government communication, official communication by LGBT organisations, everyday language used by heterosexual people and everyday language used by non-heterosexual people. Information will be drawn from corpora, existing language use and qualitative interviews with native speakers.

The combination of topics will make for an innovative study as queer studies and Slovene studies are relatively new or under researched topics and, combined with German studies, will form an innovative study. My presentation will introduce my proposed research (to be started in September) and the approach I plan to take, as well as how my ideas relate to existing research.

Joanna Moore is a final year undergraduate at the University of Nottingham (England), studying French, German and Slovene. In September she will start a research Masters at Nottingham in German and Slovene.