

Abstract

Wits Pride is an initiative spearheaded by the Transformation and Gender Equity Office, at the University of the Witwatersrand. Beginning in 2010, the event has been held annually and has grown from a week-long event to a two-week long event which focuses on “*creating a non-heterosexist, non-cissexist, non-homophobic and non-transphobic university environment*”. Prior to 2010, it happened as part of the events of the campus LGBTQIA+ society Activate, and was not explicitly supported by the university as it is now, under the name “Wits Pride”.

With the university’s name attached to it, Wits Pride gained institutional support and that came with more visibility. Wits Pride was now able to advertise widely, producing posters for campus use, t-shirts to give freely to students, as well as issuing press releases to the general public. As a result, journalists came to campus to report on Wits Pride and these reports, along with the texts produced by the Wits Pride Office are the focus of this paper.

The paper analyses newspaper articles, posters and t-shirts, with the aim of explicating the discursive strategies used by Wits Pride and external media to represent Wits Pride. These representations are analysed diachronically, to see if and how they have changed over time, by espousing a Queer Linguistic approach which uses Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis to analyse the various texts.

Keywords: Wits Pride, MMCCA, Queer Linguistics, Sexuality, Space