

Feminist discourses and modal verb constructions: a multicultural comparison

Feminism continues to be seen with negativity. Some reasons lie in the use of stereotypes and misinterpretation of what feminists say and do. There are a few studies on feminism. Some of them investigate representation of feminism in specific text types. Jaworska & Krishnamurthy (2012) investigated the representation of feminism in public and media discourse in Great Britain and Germany between 1990 and 2009. They observed a tendency to represent feminism in negative terms in both corpora. Crusmac (2017) analyzed the way feminism is represented on the website 'Woman Against Feminism' and identified some stereotypes such as: "feminism is an ideology that demonizes men and does not wish for equality, but special treatment and Privileges for women." Few other studies concentrate on the feminist discourse(s). Jawwad & Asghar (2017) wrote about the feminist discourse in Sci-fi and Art, showing how feminists have used these spaces to share their ideas about sexuality, sexual orientation and different artistic concepts over time. Silva and Souza (2019) investigated the self-representation of feminists in Brazilian social media of feminists. The goal of this study is to analyze the discourses of feminists in American, Brazilian, British and German cultures, focusing on the construction women/*mulheres/Frauen* + modal verbs. These patterns were identified with WordSmith Tools (Scott 2021) and appeared in all corpora. The data consisted of four corpora comprising texts from different text types, in the original language, written by feminists of the four countries. The results were interpreted based on the concept of conversational background described in Müller (2021) and they show that there are different voices stating these constructions. On the one hand, there are the voices of feminists who declare what they think, or demand women should/must/can('t)/might/could etc. do. On the other hand, there are the voices of society and some intellectuals, philosophers and authors, reported by the feminists, to comment, criticize or to develop the ideas further.