The Collocational and Colligational Behaviour of the Lemmas MAN and WOMAN in the British National Corpus (BNC)

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Abstract

This paper reports on research on the collocational and colligational behaviour of the lemmas MAN and WOMAN in the BNC. Using the Sketch Engine software developed by Adam Kilgarriff, Pavel Smrz and David Tuckwell, I look at the behaviour of the target lemmas in selected grammatical relations (e.g. MAN/WOMAN as Subject; MAN/WOMAN as Object). The study reveals differences between the way MAN and WOMAN are used in the corpus. This is not surprising, given what is known about the asymmetries between terms used for male and female human beings. However, the findings do help to demonstrate the structured and systematic nature of these differences, and to give a new perspective on them.

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