

The Discursive Construction of Otherness in the Public Sphere

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Abstract

In this paper, I present the data from a study on how the Spanish Parliament has dealt with a “minority” affected by one controversial issue such as same-sex marriage. By analysing mainly the minutes of the sessions in which homosexuality is discussed, or gays and lesbians are mentioned, I examine how these are represented (if they are) through the speeches delivered by politicians. As a consequence, I can also consider another relevant linguistic matter concerning these politicians themselves: how their ideological positioning influences the way they make use of language. It is my contention that what is said (and what has presumably been omitted or ignored), as well as how all this is said are instrumental in getting to know quite well all the participants in discourse. In this case, I observe how some former patterns are still reproduced so that homosexuals are finally identified with abnormality, disease or wickedness. But, at the same time, I aim to review the “disinvisibilisation” process by means of which these displaced social groups may not be “the Others” anymore. To check these hypotheses, I apply some of the basics of critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis, and benefit as well from the tools and techniques developed by corpus linguistics.

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