

**A Corpus-based Analysis of the Media Representation of Feminism: International
Evidence**

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Abstract

Social psychology research has indicated that the majority of public perceptions of feminism are based on stereotypes associating it with leftist politics and lesbian inclination. It is asserted that these beliefs are a result of how feminism has been sexualized and portrayed negatively in the media. Studies concerns about how feminism is portrayed in the media seem to support this trend. While the majority of this research offers important insights into how feminism is portrayed, the conclusions are frequently based on a limited sample of texts. Additionally, the majority of the research was done in an Anglo-American environment. This study examines the feminism discourse in a substantial corpus of German and British newspaper data in an effort to rectify some of the inadequacies of earlier research. It does so by using the resources.

Keywords British, collocation, corpus linguistics, feminism, German, post-feminism, press discourse

Introduction

We need to be sensitive to the ways feminism is perceived outside the academic world, to be aware of how it is being appropriated and, especially, misappropriated. (Talbot, 2005: 168) Nowadays, feminism is seen as bearing little or no relevance to women's lives in contemporary society (McRobbie, 2009). Although there is an awareness of continuing gender inequalities, for example in the gender pay gap, women very rarely identify themselves as feminists, or indeed simply reject feminism (Buschman and Lenart, 1996). Even those who seem to be sympathetic to feminist values distance themselves from the movement (Percy and Kremer, 1995; Riley, 2001). In her most recent analysis of feminism in contemporary society, McRobbie (2009) argues that, since the early 1990s,

there has been a steady dismantling of the status of feminism in public discourse. This process of marginalising feminism has been affected by a mechanism which, following Butler (2004), McRobbie (2009: 6) describes as a 'double entanglement'. It is based on the co-existence of conservative values which reinforce traditional gender roles and, at the same time, an essentially feminist stance proclaiming equal opportunities. This is best illustrated by the new discourse of 'female success' which permeates the public discourse space, suggesting that all the battles have been won, and that women are now recognised as equal citizens (McRobbie, 2009: 14). Now it is down to the individual female to merely make the right choices (out of the many possibilities supposedly available to her), in order to become successful and competitive in the labour market. Talbot (2005) provides a telling example of how feminist ideals have been subsumed and misused in the discourse of 'female empowerment' by analysing the advertisement strategies of the National Rifle Association (NRA), aimed at selling guns to women. The underlying theme of the NRA campaign was the feminist slogan: Refuse to Be a Victim, which was used in the 1980s by a group of American feminists to encourage women to stand up against male violence. By adopting the feminist slogan, the NRA appropriated the feminist ideal of self-empowerment, not to raise awareness of violence, but to promote gun ownership. McRobbie (2009) argues that the spaces where the process of marginalising feminism have been particularly successful are in the media industry and popular culture. While the media allow for certain feminist ideas to be represented (e.g. the gender pay gap), they are re-located to the periphery of the media space, which is instead dominated by a strong focus on the female body. If feminism is mentioned, it is normally dismissed as a thing of the past, treated ironically,¹ or depicted as a movement fuelled by hostility to men. Such qualities are in strong opposition to the ideal of the new femininity, centred on the fashion–beauty complex promoted by the media, and it is therefore not surprising to see that women tend to reject feminism. In so doing, the media and popular culture are, as McRobbie (2009) argues, the major agents in the dismantling of feminism, and the re-instatement of women as consumers of fashion. For some, such claims may sound like a conspiracy theory. However, some of the arguments brought forward by McRobbie (2009) seem to be supported by empirical evidence. Jaworska and Krishnamurthy 403 In their study on the attitudes towards feminism amongst undergraduate female students in the USA (n = 261), Buschman and Lenart (1996) detected two consistent patterns. One group of respondents (35%) believed that women's status in society was good enough. Hence they did not see any need to support feminist ideals. A slightly larger group

of respondents (42%) were of the opinion that there was still a need for improvement in women's status. However, at the same time, they disagreed with the feminist movement. Only a small number of respondents could be clearly classified as feminists (17%). All the groups (apart from the feminists) associated feminism with negative images based on clichéd views of the movement as militant or radical. The authors concluded that the 'label' feminism operates as a negative cognitive frame, and this may be due to the stereotyping of feminism in popular discourse, especially in the mass media. A similar pattern of expressing sympathy with feminist ideals, but simultaneously rejecting feminism (I am not a feminist but . . .) was revealed in studies by Griffin (1989), Percy and Kremer (1995) and Aronson (2003). In a survey conducted by Callaghan et al. (1999) with more than 1000 Scottish women, 45% of the respondents identified to some extent with feminist values – a high percentage in the opinion of the authors. At the same time, when asked to comment on feminists, their views again largely reflected negative images. Typically, feminists were described as unreasonable, unattractive, unfeminine and extreme, with a small number of respondents equating feminists with lesbians. This negative portrayal of feminists was also confirmed in a study by Riley (2001). The author argues that the deployment of the liberal discourse of equality has been established as a practical ideology in contemporary Western society, paving the way for a new discourse repertoire which devalues feminism, confirms masculinity as the norm, and consequently minimises any need for social change. Riley (2001) further argues that this new discourse is essentially another form of sexism, without the use of overtly sexist terminology, 'whereby prejudice is justified with reference to positive ideals such as equality and plurality' (Gough, 1998: 40). Research into public opinion and attitudes towards feminism amongst both women and men seems to support McRobbie's (2009) claims about the 'double entanglement' discussed at the beginning of this section. Scholars tend to link the disavowal of feminism with its treatment in the media (Aronson, 2003; Callaghan et al., 1999). The question which therefore arises is whether the portrayal of feminism is indeed as negative as claimed by these scholars. The representation of feminism in the media has attracted some attention over the last two decades, but research interest has generally been sparse (Lind and Salo, 2002). One of the most influential books on this subject is Faludi's (1991) semi-academic (i.e. rather journalistic) account of the role that the Western media has played in devaluing feminist achievements. Drawing on Faludi (1991), Danner and Walsh (1999) analysed the coverage of the Fourth UN Conference on Women in two mainstream US newspapers: the New York Times and the

Washington Post. The authors looked at 60 byline stories, and found that barely a quarter of them dealt with issues raised at the conference, such as violence against women and poverty amongst women. Instead, there was a strong focus on representing women as conflicting with each other, underlined by the heavy use of vocabulary associated with disagreement and tension. There was also a tendency to portray the participants attending the conference as radical and unfeminine, 404 *Discourse & Society* 23(4) while the conference itself was trivialised until it seemed more like a carnival. Danner and Walsh (1999) concluded that both newspapers effectively misrepresented the conference, and hence feminist values, by ignoring the main political and social concerns raised by feminists, and instead reverting to the stereotypical views of feminism as radical and unfeminine. Rhode (1995), in her historical overview of the media image of feminism, claims that, despite the growing number of female journalists, the mainstream press has remained largely uninterested in feminism and women's issues. Whenever the feminist movement is discussed, Rhode (1995) argues that the media coverage uses four strategies: demonisation, trivialisation, polarisation, and the focus on individual rather than social transformation. The first strategy relates to the depiction of feminists as radical members of a fringe movement and as 'unsexed' harpies with deviant lifestyles (Rhode, 1995: 693). The frequent references to the physical appearance of feminists, in Rhode's view, serve to trivialise the movement. The author also maintains that feminism and feminists are often portrayed in 'charged circumstances' as antagonistic, polemical, and different from 'regular women', while 'their opponents appear in more contemplative settings, conducive to more "reasoned" responses' (i.e. polarisation) (1995: 701). Finally, there is a strong focus on self-transformation, usually consisting of individual success stories encouraging women to believe that they can meet all the challenges of modern life just by improving themselves. This, in turn, obviously discourages any collective action. Similar patterns have been reported in research carried out by Huddy (1997) and Lind and Salo (2002). The latter is particularly interesting for this article, as it is the only corpus-based study of the subject conducted so far. The corpus (135,759,087 words) consisted of transcripts of 35 hours of public affairs programmes aired on various American radio networks between 1993 and 1996. The corpus was searched for the words feminism, feminist, feminists, woman and women. The outputs were categorised in accordance with seven frames: (1) demonisation (deviance), (2) personalisation (roles), (3) trivialisation (appearance, style), (4) goals (civil rights, equality), (5) victimisation (weak and vulnerable), (6) agency (strong, capable) and (7) site/ location (work place, education, home, etc.).

The search terms feminism and feminist(s) occurred 25,139 times in the corpus, which amounted to only 0.02% of the total number of words. The authors argued that this provides evidence for the marginalisation of feminism and feminists.² Woman/women appeared more frequently, representing 0.85%. Moreover, frequent collocations of the search term feminism and feminist/s were radical, militant, lesbian and raging, which led the authors to conclude that feminism and feminist/s do indeed tend to be demonised in the media. Interestingly, feminist/s were trivialised less often than ‘regular women’ and more commonly associated with goals and rights. Feminist/s were also more frequently framed within the domains of arts, media and politics, while ‘regular’ women tended to be associated with private spheres such as the home. In their conclusion, the authors stated that attention to feminism in the media is rather sparse. The most interesting result to emerge from the data is that feminism is not seen as relevant to the daily life issues of women. Feminists are seen as odd, and engaged in practices that are foreign to the vast majority of ‘regular’ women.

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Aims of the present study

The research studies reported above seem to confirm the claims put forward by McRobbie (2009): that the media arena is a site where feminism is marginalised, or trivialised. While these studies provide significant insights into the way in which feminism is represented, there are also some limitations. First and foremost, all are based on investigations of the media in an Anglo-American setting (and there is very little research outside this context). Moreover, with the exception of the corpus-based study by Lind and Salo (2002), the results are mainly based on small samples of texts. In our present study, we intend to address some of the shortcomings of previous work by examining the discourse surrounding feminism in large corpora, and in German as well as British newspaper data. We will do so by employing the methods and tools of Corpus Linguistics (CL). Increasingly, CL has been used in critical discourse studies to examine the discourse of racism (Krishnamurthy, 1996), homosexuality (Baker, 2004), climate change (Grundmann and Krishnamurthy, 2010), refugees (Baker and McEnery, 1996; Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008) and gender issues (Hunt, 2011), uncovering the existence of language patterns and messages otherwise unobserved. Alongside the methods of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) usually adopted in the investigation of discursive patterns and strategies (Van Dijk, 2001; Wodak, 2001), CL can add a new quantitative dimension to the analysis (Baker et al., 2008). Normally, language users have a range of lexical items at their disposal. However, when referring to a certain phenomenon or a group of people, they may tend to prefer certain lexical choices over others and, in so doing, will propagate a certain version of

reality. Van Dijk (1995) highlights the fact that lexical choices (or ‘lexicalisation’, as he calls it) are not only evaluative judgements, but also reflect the ideological stance of the user, or the group that she or he represents. A classic example is the use of the terms ‘terrorist’ (and its associations with extremism in one discourse context) and ‘freedom fighter’ (in another) (Van Dijk, 1995: 259). Even words or phrases that on the surface seem to have a rather neutral or positive meaning can, in some discourse contexts and in occurrence with certain words, express negative value judgements and specific ideological stances. Stubbs (2001: 105) gives an example of ‘cosy’, whose meaning generally tends to be positive, but in the phrase ‘cosy little relationship’ it expresses the negative meaning of ‘cliquey’. This point goes back to Sinclair’s (1991) claim that the meaning of a word depends strongly on its relationship with other co-occurring words, and that some words have a tendency to occur with pleasant events, while others may be generally associated with negative situations. Louw (1993: 157) terms this phenomenon ‘semantic prosody’, and defines it as the ‘consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates’. Stubbs prefers the term ‘discourse prosody’ to differentiate between lexical choices that express speaker attitudes in specific contexts, and meanings that are purely lexical and independent of speakers. Baker (2006: 86–87) offers a good example to illustrate the difference: the sequence of items ‘glass’ and ‘of’ normally attracts words denoting drinks. However, the combination of the word ‘refugees’ with the verb ‘to plot’ or ‘to arrest’ is more than just a lexical combination. It attaches particular attributive or evaluative meanings to the word ‘refugees’, which are, in this case, negative; that is, refugees are seen as criminals. The former combination is an *406 Discourse & Society* 23(4) example of semantic preference, while the latter is referred to as discourse prosody. The distinction is important, as we should not think that phenomena such as, for example, migration or feminism inherently attract certain meanings. Rather, certain meanings are attributed to them by language users who prefer particular lexical choices over others (Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008). Frequent patterns of co-occurring choices, that is collocations, are especially interesting to investigate, as they can point to the salient ideas associated with a particular phenomenon. In doing so, they can provide indications as to how the phenomenon is frequently framed in discourse. As Stubbs (2001: 35) states, collocations are not simply lexical items, they ‘are also widely shared within a speech community’ and are often ‘nodes around which ideological battles are fought’ (2001: 188). This in turn can hint at the societal value judgements that the phenomenon in question evokes (Mautner, 2007). By investigating the collocation profiles of the search term feminism in two large corpora,

we will provide attested evidence of salient discourse patterns, and consequently the discourse prosodies surrounding the word feminism, in two different cultural contexts. The methodology and corpus data To investigate the media representation of feminism in British and German newspapers, two corpora of articles that appeared from 1990 to 2009 in major national newspapers of Germany and Great Britain were compiled. All the articles were retrieved from Nexis®UK.³ To achieve reasonable comparability between the two corpora, the decision was made to look for the search term feminism in national newspapers only. The next criterion for selecting articles was that feminism had to be the primary topic of the article, that is, it had to appear either in the headline or in the lead paragraph. This was done with a view to including only articles in which feminism was discussed as the major topic (or at least one of the major topics), and to exclude texts in which the word was mentioned only in passing. Based on these criteria, the contents of the British Press Corpus (BPC) are as follows (Table 1).

Table 1. The British Press Corpus (BPC) 1990–2009.	
1990–1999	Articles Words (tokens)
Guardian/Observer	597 654,450
Independent	372 352,037
Times/Sunday Times	297 252,929
Daily Mail/Mail on Sunday	177 111,908
Mirror/Sunday Mirror	10 5,515
Total	1,453 1,376,839
2000–2009	Articles Words (tokens)
Guardian/Observer	524 413,717
Times/Sunday Times	266 188,207
Independent/Independent on Sunday	190 156,282
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In the British corpus, most of the data come from four newspapers and their corresponding Sunday publications: The Guardian, The Independent, The Times and The Daily Telegraph. There are also the three biggest selling newspapers: The Sun, The Daily Mail and The Mirror (see Table 2). The German corpus is considerably smaller, which is due to the restricted number of publications in German available in Nexis®UK (see Table 3). The largest number of articles comes from Tageszeitung (TAZ) followed by Die Zeit, Die Welt, together with its Sunday publication, and Frankfurter Rundschau. Der Spiegel is a popular weekly magazine. Bunte is also a weekly magazine but it focuses mainly on fashion and celebrities, and can be classified as a middle-range tabloid (see Table 4). Both corpora were searched by using WordSmith Tools™ (Scott, 2010). The search terms used were feminism in the British corpus and Feminismus in the German corpus. Baker (2006) recommends using large reference corpora when applying corpus methodology in the investigation of discursive constructions of a given social phenomenon. Large reference corpora are normally regarded as representative of a language in general, Table 2. The title, type, frequency and circulation of British newspapers.

Newspaper title	Type of publication	Frequency of publication	Circulation
Sun	tabloid	daily except Sunday	

7,682,000 Daily Mail middle-range tabloid daily except Sunday 4,678,000 Mirror middle-range tabloid daily except Sunday 3,221,000 Mail on Sunday middle-range tabloid every Sunday 2,098,244 Sunday Mirror middle-range tabloid every Sunday 1,900,460 Daily Telegraph broadsheet daily except Sunday 1,761,000 Times broadsheet daily except Sunday 1,673,000 Guardian broadsheet daily except Sunday 1,102,000 Sunday Times broadsheet every Sunday 1,011,385 Independent broadsheet daily except Sunday 543,000 Sunday Telegraph broadsheet every Sunday 499,612 Observer broadsheet every Sunday 274,304 Independent on Sunday broadsheet every Sunday 164,518 1990–1999 Articles Words (tokens) Daily Telegraph/Sunday Telegraph 134 92,459 Daily Mail/Mail on Sunday 120 142,074 Mirror/Sunday Mirror 26 14,396 Sun 15 4,030 Total 1,275 1,011,165 BPC Total 2,728 2,388,004 Table 1. (Continued) 408 Discourse & Society 23(4) and contain data from a variety of sources. For this reason, they act as ‘a good benchmark of what is “normal” in language’ against which data from one’s own corpus can be compared (Baker, 2006: 43). The reference corpora can also reveal certain normative language patterns associated with the phenomenon in focus, and indicate how the search term is used, the associations it has, and who is likely to use it. For this reason, we decided to consult two large corpora of English and German language in order to find out how the search terms feminism and Feminismus are framed, in which types of text, and the associations they have. For English, we consulted the Bank of English, which is a corpus created at Birmingham University by COBUILD (a joint project with HarperCollins Publishers) and used originally for writing dictionaries and other language reference publications. Table 3. The German Press Corpus (GPC) 1990–2009. 1990–1999 Articles Words (tokens) TAZ 160 108,397 Zeit 140 146, 672 Welt/Welt am Sonntag 15 11,810 Spiegel 7 8,622 Bunte 2 155 Total 324 267,034 2000–2009 Articles Words (tokens) TAZ 279 177,970 Zeit 220 188,803 Welt/Welt am Sonntag 84 60,347 Frankfurter Rundschau 60 38,859 Spiegel 29 19,678 Bunte 3 4,840 Total 675 490,497 GPC total 999 757,531 Table 4. The title, type, frequency and circulation of German newspapers. Newspaper title Type of publication Frequency of publication Circulation Spiegel broadsheet every Sunday 975,0006 Bunte middle-range tabloid every Monday 634,7807 Zeit broadsheet every Thursday 503,5598 Welt am Sonntag broadsheet every Sunday 412,5009 Welt broadsheet daily except Sunday 252,33410 Frankfurter Rundschau broadsheet daily except Sunday 122.51911 TAZ broadsheet daily except Sunday 101,57212 Jaworska and Krishnamurthy 409 Now it is used mainly for research and teaching. It consists of 448 million words of largely British, American, Australian

and Canadian English texts; written texts (newspapers, magazines, fiction and non-fiction books, and ephemera – junk mail, advertising and information leaflets, etc.); and recorded speech (radio broadcasts, formal interviews, informal conversations, etc.). The vast majority of the texts are from the 1990s. The corpus is not publicly available.¹³ For German, the corpus stored at the Institut für Deutsche Sprache (IDS) in Mannheim was used. It is the world's largest collection of texts in German (3.9 billion words), including the Swiss and Austrian varieties. The IDS corpus consists predominantly of written texts, of which a large sample is publicly available. The corpus is for the main part a collection of press articles, including many regional Austrian, German and Swiss newspapers. It can be searched using a web-based interface, which has an inbuilt corpus software programme (Belica, 1995).

Representations of feminism in the reference corpora This section presents the main findings which emerged from the two reference corpora. In the present study, we focus on collocates which will be categorised into semantic groups in order to identify recurrent discourse patterns that surround the search term feminism in Anglophone and German-speaking contexts.

Representations of feminism in the Bank of English A search for the word feminism in the Bank of English returned 3077 occurrences. To begin with, we examined the distribution of the search term across the genres and registers contained in the corpus. The analysis revealed that the word is used more frequently in American academic books, and in Canadian and British writing. It is also frequently used in British broadsheet newspapers, such as *The Guardian*, *The Independent* and *The Times*. It is less frequently used in business and scientific texts (such as the *Economist* or *New Scientist*), and in spoken media covering international affairs (BBC World Service radio broadcasts and American national public radio or NPR). Feminism is not an issue discussed frequently in tabloids, and it does not generally feature often in the spoken genres included in the corpus. All in all, the analysis of the distribution of the search term strongly indicates that feminism is a matter featured predominantly in the written mode, particularly in academic text types. Moreover, feminism is more likely to appear in broadsheets as opposed to tabloids. Given that broadsheet newspapers have a much smaller circulation compared to tabloids, we can assume that the impact of feminism (if any) is restricted to a small section of society. In the next step, we examined collocates, that is words that co-occur more frequently than normal distribution with the search term feminism, in order to capture its most frequent lexical associations. The list of collocates was obtained by using the t-score statistic (which calculates the co-occurrence frequencies expected from corpus frequencies, and compares this with the actual

number of co-occurrences) and sorted by frequency. The procedure yielded the following results (see Table 5). 410 Discourse & Society 23(4) The top 50 collocates were subsequently categorised into thematic groups. Since some words could belong to more than one thematic group, their use in context was carefully examined by looking at the concordance lines. Overall, six thematic groups were identified, as summarised in Table 6 below.

Table 5. The 20 most frequent collocates of feminism within a -5 to +5 span. Collocate t-score Frequency of 1,211 16,568,256 and 965 12,321,319 is 415 9,037,262 has 248 10,450,125 women 204 13,460,741 radical 131 11,360,602 her 123 6,322,697 about 115 5,981,272 feminism 110 10,471,986 political 76 7,788,159 wave 70 8,253,780 post 65 7,620,464 lesbian 64 7,905,844 feminist 58 7,556,627 anti 55 7,044,710 men 55 6,019,111 new 55 5,725,465 modern 45 6,261,655 politics 45 5,944,469 socialist 42 6,375,852

Table 6. The 50 most frequent collocates of feminism categorised into six thematic groups. Category Collocates political movements radical, political, anti, socialist, politics, movement, Marxism, liberal, minority, equality, liberation, black sex, gender lesbian, gay, lesbianism, gender time 1970s, post, contemporary, wave, second, generation place Western evaluative new, modern academic theory As Table 6 shows, the search term feminism is strongly associated with political movements, most of which are on the left of the political spectrum, such as socialist and Marxism. Within this context, the most frequent collocate is the adjective radical, suggesting a strong sense of extremism. At the same time, there are a number of collocates pointing to a progressive stance, as exemplified by the relatively frequent use of liberal Jaworska and Krishnamurthy 411 and equality. However, this is contrasted by the frequent references to homosexuality, as in the frequent use of the adjectives lesbian and gay. This largely confirms the stereotypical and rather widespread view of feminism as a movement of lesbian women (cf. Callaghan et al., 1999; Riley, 2001). Another noticeable pattern is the frequent connection of feminism with the past, as evident in the use of time references such as 1970s and post-; the latter, in particular, implies that feminism is historical and no longer current. Finally, we can see from the list of collocates that feminism is a movement strongly associated with the Western part of the world. Within the 50 most frequent collocates, there are no examples of collocates indicating other geographical locations. Representations of feminism in the IDS corpus of German The search for the word Feminismus in the IDS corpus yielded 1799 occurrences (the size of the corpus: 2,291,515,012 words). In terms of its distribution, Feminismus occurs more frequently in major national newspapers (see Table 7). The greatest number of articles was retrieved from two large national newspapers: the Austrian

Die Presse and the German Frankfurter Rundschau. Feminism is also frequently discussed in regional newspapers, such as Nürnberger Nachrichten and Rhein-Zeitung, but this apparent frequency is inflated by the large amount of data in the corpus from both these newspapers, covering 14 years or more (see Table 7). Given the large number of texts, the coverage of the issue is actually rather minimal. Since the newspaper data in the IDS corpus was collected in different years, and coverage for each source publication spans different periods of time, it is difficult to make robust claims about the overall increase or decrease of media attention regarding the issue of feminism over the past two decades in the German-speaking press. As with the English data, the next step was to examine collocates of the search term. These were retrieved by using the co-occurrence software function available within the web interface of the IDS corpus (Belica, 1995). Unfortunately, this software uses loglikelihood ratio (LLR) to calculate collocates, and no other statistical measures are available (so an exact comparison of the English and German data in terms of collocation is Table 7. Distribution of the search term Feminismus in the IDS corpus: 10 main sources. Occurrences Source 209 1992–2000 Die Presse 196 1997–1999 Frankfurter Rundschau 187 1996–2010 Rhein-Zeitung 131 1990–2010 Nürnberger Nachrichten 117 1991–2000 Salzburger Nachrichten 106 1997–2010 St Galler Tagblatt 105 1996–2000 Zürcher Tagesanzeiger 98 1995–2010 Mannheimer Morgen 81 2002–2010 Nürnberger Zeitung 45 1996–2000 Tiroler Tageszeitung 412 Discourse & Society 23(4) not technically possible). A span of five words to the left and to the right of the search term was chosen again, to offer some consistency. The analysis produced 297 collocates. Table 8 shows the 20 most frequently occurring LLR collocates. Table 8. The 20 most frequent collocates of Feminismus within a –5 to +5 span. Collocate LLR Frequency Frau 333 138 Emanzipation 230 16 Ikone 211 14 anti- 204 19 radikal 166 22 gleich 156 21 Ökologie 144 16 Thema 143 49 Maskulismus 140 3 kämpferisch 137 9 Machismo 134 6 post 133 15 neu 119 67 Sex 113 10 Sozialismus 106 11 Geschlecht 104 12 Konsum 94 7 Vertreter 93 12 Mann 90 37 feministisch 90 11 Subsequently, all 297 collocates were categorised into seven thematic groups. These included: (1) political movements/ideas, (2) sex, gender roles/body, (3) feminist ideas, (4) academic/arts/literature, (5) places/nationalities, (6) time, and (7) social trends. Table 9 shows the main collocates that accompany the word Feminismus. As can be seen from the list, Feminismus in the German-speaking press seems to be strongly associated with political movements and ideas, particularly with those on the left of the political spectrum such as Sozialismus (Socialism) and Kommunismus (Communism). These movements, of course, are in

Western countries widely regarded as belonging to the past and are nowadays discussed, if at all, only in academic and political circles. A point worth noting is the frequent use of adjectives such as radikal (radical), kämpferisch (combative) and militant (militant), all pointing to a rather threatening and aggressive activism. Interestingly, the subsequent examination of collocates of the lemma radikal in the IDS corpus (60,335 occurrences) confirmed that it is used mainly with reference to political movements or religious groups seen in press discourse as fundamentalist or extreme, such as Islamist (Islamist), Palästinenser (Palestinians), Moslem and Hamas. This is even more evident in the case of militant (12,799), which is almost exclusively used to describe extremist groups. All of this evidence suggests that Jaworska and Krishnamurthy 413 there is a tendency to position feminism close to fringe and/or leftist organisations with a radical or extremist potential. Feminismus also strongly collocates with words which can be identified with the main aims of the movement, such as emancipation (Emanzipation). However, a closer look at the concordance lines reveals that these aims tend to be deprecated or regarded as already achieved (i.e. suggesting that feminism is obsolete). There are also very frequent references to words denoting gender, sex, and gender roles, such as Frau (women), Sexismus (sexism), Geschlecht (gender), Mann (man) and Machismo (macho). A quick look at the concordance lines shows that words such as feminism, sexism and machismo are often grouped together; and rarely do we find more elaborative statements pointing to the fact that, for example, feminism is against sexism. In the list of collocates, there are also many words that denote academic domains, as well as related areas of philosophy and the arts. Feminism is frequently discussed in book reviews in relation to academic or semi-academic publications and authors (e.g. Luise Pusch¹⁴). Geographically, feminism is associated with the West, particularly the USA, and there are also frequent time references, especially to the 1970s. Summary of results from the reference corpora The collocation profile which has emerged in the previous part of the study suggests that, in both reference corpora, feminism is framed predominantly as a political movement closely associated with radicalism, militancy, and leftist ideology, which in turn have distinctively negative connotations. Feminism is, at the same time, heavily historicised through frequent references to past decades and the history of the movement. Although there are some collocates referring to the aims of feminism (such as emancipation), there is a tendency to downplay these goals, or to see them as already achieved. This latter perspective is reinforced by the frequent use of the prefix post- in both the English and

Table 9. Collocates of Feminismus categorised into seven thematic groups. Category Collocates

political movements/ideas radikal (22) Ökologie (16) politisch (14) Vertreter (12) Sozialismus (11) Kommunismus (10) kämpferisch (9) militant (7) existieren real (5) Ideologie (7) Nationalismus (5) Kampf (5) extrem (4) sex, gender roles/body Frau (138) Mann (37) männlich (14) weiblich (13) Geschlecht (12) Machismo (10) Sex (10) sexual (7) Mutter (5) feminin (5) schwul (4) feminist ideas neu (67) Emanzipation (16) Ikone (14) feministisch (11) Feministin (5) Alice Schwarzer (6) Beauvoir (4) academic/arts/literature Thema (49) Pusch (12) Kunst (8) Theorie (6) Philosophie (6) Diskussion (5) akademisch (4) Medium (4) places/nationalities amerikanisch (11) Post [-feminism] (15) westlich (7) time 70er (10) Jahr (18) Geschichte (9) heute (6) siebziger (4) social trends Konsum (7) Pop (6) Mode (4) sozial (4) 414 Discourse & Society 23(4) German corpora, implying that feminism is finished, or at least no longer relevant. Overall, the analysis shows that feminism is portrayed as a fringe political movement, and there is a tendency to demonise or to sexualise it. The latter is evidenced by the frequent use of words from the domains of sex and gender. There are also a number of features that point to differences in the representation of feminism in the two cultural contexts. In the English corpus, there is a higher proportion of collocates referring to homosexuality, confirming the stereotypical tendency to see feminism as a movement of and for lesbian women. By contrast, in the German corpus, there are a greater number of items referring to the domain of academia and the arts, which suggests that feminism is a subject of mainly intellectual interest. The initial analysis of the representation of feminism in the large reference corpora has confirmed some of the claims made by social and cultural theorists, that feminism is essentially a marginalised or demonised phenomenon. The analysis also pointed to some differences in the representation of the movement in the British and German-speaking cultural contexts not accounted for by previous research. However, the analysis also has some limitations. First, both corpora use different statistical tests to calculate collocations, making an exact comparison of the English and German data in terms of collocation technically not possible. Second, many source publications cover different periods of time. Third, in the German corpus, there was a much higher proportion of regional (as opposed to national) newspapers. The former are normally less interested in generic social phenomena, or if they are, they tend to present them from the point of view of specific regional needs. Because we were interested in the representation of feminism in a broader national context, we carried out an in-depth analysis in two large corpora of English and German that consisted of national newspapers published in Great Britain and Germany. Representations of feminism in the British and German

press corpora Feminism in the British Press Corpus (BPC) The search for the word feminism in the British national newspapers available at Nexis®UK yielded 2728 articles: 1453 of these were published in 1990–1999, and 1275 in 2000–2009 (see Table 1). By way of comparison, the word terrorism (as the major mention) for the year 1990 alone produced 2773 results. Hence, we can assume that feminism occupies a more marginal position in the British newspaper coverage. The inclusion of several new newspapers in the database in 2000 did not contribute to an increase in the number of articles. This is not surprising, because most of the new data came from tabloids (which, as discussed above, are not very interested in feminism). In fact, where data from the same newspaper is available for both decades, we actually observe a slight (or in some cases substantial) decrease in the number of articles. Between 1990 and 1999, for instance, *The Times* and its sister publication *The Sunday Times* published 297 articles about feminism, while *The Independent* had 372. In the subsequent decade, the number of articles declined to 266 and 190 respectively. We can also witness a decrease in the number of articles featuring feminism as the main topic across all national newspapers in the decade 2000–2009. This points to a significant marginalisation of the movement in the British press.

Jaworska and Krishnamurthy 415 Following Sinclair’s principle – ‘Decide on the “strongest” pattern and start there’ (2003: xvi) – we looked first at collocates in the vicinity of the search term (using a –5 to +5 span) which occurred more than 10 times. The analysis was conducted by using WordSmith Tools™ (Scott, 2010) and 661 collocates in total were retrieved. As Table 10 above illustrates, the top 20 right-hand collocates include predominantly grammatical items, mainly forms of the verb ‘to be’, and a number of prepositions. Most researchers tend to exclude function/grammatical words, and focus exclusively on lexical items (Baker, 2006: 100). While lexical or content words carry the primary lexical meaning, they combine with grammatical words to form recurrent lexico-grammatical patterns (or chunks) that can specify or modify the meaning of a word (cf. Sinclair, 1991). For this reason, we examined the most frequent lexicogrammatical patterns, which in the BPC were: of feminism (1155), feminism is (573) and feminism and (545). In English, the preposition of often occurs with nouns to form nominal groups, in which the first element can often denote, among other things, a measure or an attribute (Sinclair, 1991). In order to see what attributes are frequently associated with feminism, the most frequent collocates appearing to the left of the pattern of feminism were examined. Most of the collocates were time references such as years, decades, history, age and days, which point to a strong historicalisation of the concept (see Table 11). As can be seen from

Table 11, feminism is more strongly associated with failures (15 times, plus failure – 10 times) than with achievements (9 occurrences) and gains (8 times). Another noticeable pattern is Table 10. The 20 most frequent collocates of feminism. Collocates Frequency of 1,155 the 639 is 573 and 545 has 439 that 334 a 249 new 212 in 198 to 172 was 170 for 130 as 126 on 116 about 108 not 106 with 87 by 65 women 60 it 58 416 Discourse & Society 23(4) brand of feminism, which suggests the treatment of feminism as a commodity. This deprives feminism of its essentially ideational ethos. Feminism is also often seen as a movement in flux, always in need of a re-make. This is evidenced by the frequent use of the words wave and face, the latter usually accompanied by the adjective changing or new. The examination of feminism and provided further indicative results. The most frequent collocates to the right of the pattern were the (70), political (11), gay (11) and lapdancing (9). It is particularly surprising to see feminism linked so frequently with lapdancing – a phenomenon which most feminists would surely oppose. The list also shows that feminism is strongly associated with gay, which is then predominantly followed by the word rights (9). This is an aspect which most feminists have indeed always supported. At the same time, it is only one point of the feminist programme, and it would be rather reductionist to associate feminism solely with gay rights. The last pattern we examined was feminism is. Most of the words to the right were grammatical words such as a (54) and the (29) and the negative particle not (47); but the adjective dead (24) also occurred frequently. A further analysis of the concordances for the pattern feminism is a/the showed that one of the recurrent patterns was feminism is a + dirty word (6). Overall, there is a stronger tendency for the pattern to occur with words evoking a negative evaluation (see Table 12). To see whether feminism is indeed predominantly imbued with negative associations, in the final step we decided to examine the most frequent adjectives occurring in the vicinity of the search term. It is interesting to see that the most frequent adjective is new, which could suggest an innovation in, or re-birth of, the movement (see Table 13). However, a look at the concordances revealed that the phrase new feminism frequently refers to a book titled *The New Feminism* by Natasha Walter (1998), which is often discussed in book reviews. When analysing the concordance lines, we also realised that more than 30 instances of the word new and feminism were surrounded by scare quotes and written in lower case, hence not referring to the aforementioned book. This indicates that the concept of ‘new feminism’ is often treated ironically, or its existence is questioned. The second most Table 11. The most frequent collocates to the left of the pattern of feminism. wave (35) years (34) face (23) brand (22) future (20) decades (19)

cause (17) rise (17) afraid (16) kind (16) failures (15) history (13) school (13) age (12) name (12) definition (10) failure (10) achievements (9) days (8) gains (8) of feminism Table 12. Complements of feminism is. Negative meanings Positive meanings feminism is dead (24) news (6) no + longer (5) action (5) bad (5) alive (4) seen + as negative (4) boring (4) finished (3) Jaworska and Krishnamurthy 417 frequent modifier is the prefix post-. The term post-feminism was introduced by Faludi (1991) in her semi-academic analysis of feminism in the US media, to refer to a backlash against feminism and feminists during the Reagan era. Since then, the phrase has been associated mainly with the rejection of feminism on the grounds that equality has been achieved, and that therefore feminism is obsolete in modern society. The fact that the term features so prominently in the corpus signals that feminism is often framed as a thing of the past. Finally, feminism is exclusively associated with the Western world.

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