

# The Portrayal of Women's Contribution to Irish Society through a Sample from the Irish Press<sup>1</sup>

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## *Abstract:*

The article intends to approach the representation of womanhood in the Irish press from 2006 to 2012. The corpus comprises all the texts dealing with women, from January 1 to 31 December of four years within this time range, taken from one of the main Irish broadsheet newspapers: *The Irish Independent*. The research database LexisNexis Academic was employed to compile the corpus. For the purposes of this research, Teun van Leeuwen's (2008) social actor network model was applied. This paper points out that Corpus Linguistics (CL) can be a powerful complementary tool to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

*Keywords:* Celtic Tiger, corpus-based critical discourse analysis, Ireland, social actors, women

## 1. *Introduction*

The Irish economy expanded tremendously in the period known as the Celtic Tiger (1997-2008) (Baccaro, Simone 2004; Barrett *et al.* 2009; Gaughan, Garre 2011) due to different reasons: the arrival of foreign working capital, the improvement of social facilities, the creation of technological and pharmaceutical companies, among others. In addition, there are two reasons that are especially significant for this article: a) the increasing arrival of immigrants, and b) the incorporation of women to the labour market. Asylum seekers saw the country as an attractive location, and immigrants from different regions around the world decided to try to find a job and start a new life there. In this way, the Republic of Ireland was transformed into a country of prosperity and immigration, as Schuppers and Loyal make clear:

Contrary to many other European countries, Ireland has only become a destination country for migrants in the last two decades. It is only in the last fifteen years that the number of immigrants entering Ireland has outstripped the number of emigrants leaving. Another difference between many European countries and Ireland is that the vast majority of Ireland's immigrants are EU citizens and that a large number are well educated. (Schuppers, Loyal 2012, 181)

This rapid growth in economy was characterized for its being dependent on the labour of non-Irish workers (Dundon *et al.* 2007; Messina 2008), which transformed the country into a competitive marketplace:

There are two contrasting images of foreign workers in Ireland. On the one hand, there exists an image that such workers are highly skilled and central to Ireland's economic boom of recent years. On the other hand, however, non-Irish national workers are viewed as a source of cheap labour, easily disposable and found in the tertiary labour market. (Dundon *et al.* 2007, 502)

The increased population diversity resulting from the increased immigration to Ireland over the Celtic Tiger period makes it necessary to consider the ways in which Ireland has dealt with immigration in the context of global population movement. In addition, the arrival of immigrants to Ireland contributed to the creation of a national Irish identity (Conway 2006; Phelan 2007; Darmody *et al.* 2011).

This new situation went together with the development of racist attitudes (Fanning 2002; Conroy, Brennan 2003; Garner 2004). As Russell *et al.* claim: "Increasing national and ethnic diversity may have implications for access to equal treatment on the grounds of ethnicity/nationality" (2008, 18). Some of the immigrants who arrived were women and some of the new workers were Irish women who had an opportunity to find a place in the labour market due to the prosperous economy of Ireland.

As already mentioned, apart from immigrants, women also contributed to the development of the Irish economy during the Celtic Tiger period due to the fact that they became an active part in the labour market. Before the Celtic Tiger, women and their work was invisible and not paid, whereas men's work took place in the public sphere, where they were basically the ones earning money (Conlon 2007). Women were relegated to the domestic sphere as mothers and caregivers, that is, their jobs were associated with the private sphere. In a way, they were invisible as workers since they did not take positions in the public places.

There are very few studies that have concentrated on the representation of women and immigrants in Irish society, most of which have a sociological perspective (Mac Éinrí, White 2008; Palmay *et al.* 2010; Cross, Turner 2012). In our case, we are especially interested in the linguistic representation of women in general and immigrant women in particular in a sample from the Irish press because migrant women may face particular situations or vulnerabilities different from those men do (Conroy 2003; Walter 2004; McGinnity *et al.* 2006; Mayock *et al.* 2012).

The printed press is considered the most serious source of information, and the one with the highest capacity to spread all sorts of ideologies and beliefs (Bañón Hernández 2002; Martínez Lirola 2013; van Dijk 2009). Its power is due to its capacity to create knowledge through the production of news articles. This must have some impact on the pieces of news written

about women and immigrant women during the Celtic Tiger and post-Celtic Tiger period. The tools of the press are verbal language and the photographs illustrating the written message in the examples of multimodal texts. In this sense, since choice, either verbal or non-verbal, is meaningful at all levels, we are interested in analysing the different choices the newspaper under analysis made in order to refer to women.

The main research questions this paper addresses are the following: in which way are women and immigrant women portrayed in the *Irish Independent* during the Celtic Tiger and post-Celtic Tiger years? Following van Leeuwen's (2008) framework, what are the main categories used to refer to them as social actors? Are there differences in the way women are portrayed in the *Irish Independent* in the period under analysis? And, having observed the most frequent collocate pairs in the corpus, what does the collocational analysis of the word woman/women reveal about the construction of this group in Ireland? And, finally, what do we learn about their social situation?

After this introduction, the paper is divided into the next sections: section two offers the data, aim and methodology; section three pays attention to the importance of critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to frame the analysis; the next section offers the results of the analysis and the discussion of the data. The paper finishes offering some conclusions.

## 2. Aims, Data and Methodology

This paper intends to examine how women are portrayed in a sample from the Irish press. It analyses the main ways in which women are represented as social actors during particular years of the Celtic Tiger and the post-Celtic Tiger (2006, 2008, 2010 and 2012) using the *Irish Independent* as a source of data.

The purpose of the analysis is to show media constructions of women in an attempt to reveal what this might suggest about how women were portrayed in the newspaper under analysis. The analysis will offer information about the social situation of women (Irish and non-Irish). The following list of lemmas was used in order to carry out the concordance cluster analysis:

Woman/women Woman/women worker(s) Black woman/women Immigrant woman/women
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Table 1: Key words search

Only one newspaper has been included because the other two newspapers that were initially used to look for newspaper articles, i.e., *The Evening Herald* and *The Irish Post*, show very few examples of texts about women and are there-

fore not a representative sample. As such, all the news articles related to women from January 1 to December 31 were collected during the four years under analysis in the *Irish Independent*, i.e., two of them are part of the last period of the Celtic Tiger and the other two years coincide with the post-Celtic Tiger. The tables below show, on the one hand, the number of occurrences and how they have been normalised and, on the other hand, the pertinent corpus data.

Year	No. of texts	% of texts	No. of tokens	No. of occurrences							
				Woman	Women	Woman worker	Women workers	Black woman	Black women	Immigrant woman	Immigrant women
2006	16	8.7	8,341	1	105	0	13	1	2	0	0
2008	65	35.5	44,828	15	264	1	46	14	2	0	1
2010	39	21.2	23,201	7	210	0	26	7	4	0	1
2012	64	34.6	43,787	3	345	0	49	3	10	0	1
<i>Total</i>	<b>184</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>120,157</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>

Table 2: Corpus data

The *Irish Independent* is a broadsheet that was established in 1905 as the direct successor to the *Daily Irish Independent*, which was created in the 1890s. For most of its history, the *Irish Independent* (also called the *Independent* or, more colloquially, the *Indo*) has been seen as a nationalist, Catholic newspaper, quite conservative in its opinions (Gaughan, Garre 2011).

The data were collected through LexisNexis, the online interface of newspapers and periodicals which was used to compile newspaper articles containing the lemmas presented in Table 1 (see above). The strength of LexisNexis is that it presents full articles from major English-language daily newspapers worldwide. One of its potential limitations, though, could have been that it does not include texts prior to 2005; all in all, that was not an issue here, given my decision to study news articles from 2006 onwards in the *Irish Independent*.

Once the texts were collected, they were converted to a .txt format and they were coded in the following way: the initials of the newspaper, i.e., II, followed by the day, month and year in which the news article appeared; the last digit altered in the case that there was more than one example per day (e.g. II-120310-5). Then, the concordance programme *Antconc* (Anthony 2012) was used in order to retrieve a list of concordances containing the search word strings already mentioned. *Antconc* allows researchers to view concordances, to calculate lexical and phrasal frequencies, collocations, keywords, etc. Having done this, an Excel

spreadsheet was prepared including the concordance and the code of the .txt file from which the example had been taken. Moreover, I also included columns for the different categories of social actors proposed by van Leeuwen (2008).

Corpus linguistics helps to study language patterns in a large amount of texts and avoid the criticism of possible subjectivity towards the data (Butler 2004, Flowerdew 2008, McEnery, Hardie 2012). I agree with Stubbs that “Corpus data and methods provide new ways of studying relations between language system and language use. If patterns become very frequent in use across very large quantities of text, then it becomes ‘entrenched’ as part of the system” (2007, 127). This explains why this methodology is used to observe how women in Ireland are referred to in the *Irish Independent*. In this way, I will be able to draw some conclusion on how these journalists construe women’s identities and roles in the period under study (Baker 2010a). Moreover, corpus linguistics gives us the opportunity of analysing large numbers of texts systematically, which is not possible with manual methods; as Hidalgo Tenorio makes explicit:

Investigations grow thanks to what one expects to find in texts and to what texts offer to the reader. Nowadays, we know more about linguistic phenomena that cannot be explained by trusting intuition. Besides, human beings are incapable of analysing manually large collections of data in a limited time. Then, to my eyes, it was essential to rely on corpus based studies. (2009, 118)

Approaching texts in this way allows researchers to be less subject to bias (Baker 2004, 2006, 2010b; McEnery, Hardie 2012); as Gabrielatos and Baker make clear:

Corpus linguistics methodology allows for a higher degree of objectivity—that is, it enables the researcher to approach the texts (relatively) free from any preconceived notions regarding their linguistic or semantic/pragmatic content. When the starting point is keyword analysis, the analyst is presented with a list of words/clusters which will then be examined in (expanded) concordances for their patterning and contextual use. (Gabrielatos, Baker 2008, 7)

### 3. *Theoretical Framework*

This paper focuses on the representation of women as social actors in a sample from the Irish press. The perspective offered by CDA will be essential for the analysis since the intention of this research is to explore the relationship between the different linguistic choices used to name women and the social context framing Ireland in that historical period.

The theoretical framework on which this research is based is CDA and, in particular, van Leeuwen’s (2008) approach to CDA, which pays attention to the representation of social actors; thus I will be able to study some of main

discourse strategies found in the selected Irish newspaper to refer to women in news articles. In other words, we are interested in analysing the different linguistic choices and their relationship with justice, power, prejudice, bias and injustice, i.e., to establish a connection between language and society (Wodak, Meyer 2009; Hidalgo Tenorio 2011; Crespo, Martínez Lirola 2012). As van Leeuwen makes clear: “Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is based on the idea that text and talk play a key role in maintaining and legitimizing inequality, injustice and oppression in society. It uses discourse analytical methods to show how this is done, but without restricting itself to one particular discourse analytical approach” (2009, 277).

The language employed in the texts creates a particular world-view and a particular view of a social reality, in this case of women in the Irish press. I understand, in consequence, that there must be a relationship between how a text constructs its meaning and the social reality that frames it. This relationship makes it possible to deduce the socio-political framework of the text from the text itself, which frames the production and consumption of the text in its context of situation.

Using CDA as an analytical approach implies understanding the news articles under analysis as social practice and as discursive practice, i.e., the texts under analysis are produced, distributed and consumed, and there is a social purpose in the whole process (Fairclough 1992 and 1995; van Leeuwen 2009). In addition, CDA is concerned with the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used, as it will be highlighted in the next sections. CDA will allow us to analyse discourse from a critical perspective, paying attention to the implications of each linguistic choice, as Baker *et al.* point out:

We understand CDA to be an academic movement, a way of doing discourse analysis from a critical perspective, which often focuses on theoretical concepts such as power, ideology and domination. We do not view CDA as being a method nor are specific methods solely associated with it. Instead, it adopts any method that is adequate to realize the aims of specific CDA-inspired research. (2008, 273)

In order to deepen into social practice, I will use van Leeuwen's (2008) theoretical framework, so that I can observe how women appear as social actors in discourse. Van Leeuwen proposes some general categories and some subtypes, which sometimes are complementary, to refer to social actors in discourse: exclusion or inclusion. Inside inclusion, the following types are distinguished: 1) role allocation (agent or patient), 2) generalisation and 3) specification (generic or specific reference, i.e., representation as classes or as individuals); 4) assimilation (representation of people in groups), 5) association (groups of social actors) and 6) dissociation (unformed associations); 7) indetermination (unspecified representation of social actors) and 8) differentiation (specification of the different social actors); 9) nomination (reference to the unique identity of social actors) and 10) categorisation (identities and functions shared with others); 11) functionalization

and 12) identification (reference to social actors in terms of something they do or what they are); 13) personalization and 14) impersonalisation (representation of social actors as human beings or not); and, finally, 15) overdetermination (representation of social actors as participating in more than one social practice).

Therefore, from the previous paragraphs, it is clear that this paper establishes a connection between discourse analysis and corpus linguistics (Ädel, Repel 2008; Flowerdew 2012). In Charles *et al.*'s words: "Discourse analysis prioritizes whole texts and their cultural context, identifying patterns that extend across sentences and paragraphs. Corpus linguistics tends to use techniques that decontextualize individual texts and focuses on recurrent patternings of small-scale items such as words and phrases" (2009, 1).

#### 4. Results and Discussion

As mentioned above, this article pays attention to the representation of women as social actors in particular in a sample from the Irish press. After identifying van Leeuwen's categorization of social actors in discourse, I analysed the ways in which women were referred to as social actors in discourse (active, passive, individuals, groups, etc.). Due to the space constraints of this paper I will select only some examples to illustrate the main categories found.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the corpus of examples is the role allocation given to women by presenting them as agents or patients; the examples show the presence of women in active sentences and their references as group instead of individuals. As van Leeuwen makes clear, "Activation occurs when social actors are represented as the active, dynamic forces in an activity, passivation when they are represented as 'undergoing' the activity, or as being 'at the receiving end of it'" (2008, 33).

The majority of the examples show women as active, which goes together with the prominence they have had during the historical period under analysis. For instance, the next examples make reference to the women working in the health service, or getting degrees:

1) ions", the report said. "In the health service, women represented almost 80pc of all staff but less tha (II-BR-141206-1)

2) Women are getting more honours degrees than men but are paid less when they go into the workplace, new figures out today reveal (II- BR-12112008-1)

Out of the different categories of social actors the one that appears the most is that of worker, which will be included inside the category of functionalization, since women as "[...] social actors are referred to in terms of an activity, in terms of something they do, for instance, an occupation or role" (van Leeuwen 2008, 42). This shows women's gradual incorporation into the labour market due to the new economic situation in Ireland.

There are many examples in which women are referred to as workers since there were many jobs offered in the period chosen for the analysis due to the positive growth of the Irish economy. For example, in 2006, there are some examples that make clear that more than 50% of women have now a paid job for the first time in the Irish history and they have started what traditionally was considered a male-dominated career:

3) 2006 Friday Six out of 10 women now work SECTION: NATIONAL NEWS LENGTH: 190 wor (II-BR-011206-1)

4) he first time in Irish history, more than 60pc of women are now working outside the home. And an increa (II-BR-011206-1)

There are examples worth mentioning because they evidence that women were in certain top positions for the first time. The following one is representative because it is one of the few in which the woman's name is shared with the reader:

5) anyone imagined. Stella Rimington was the first woman to become (II-BR-081108-1)

Sometimes, the importance of women in society is highlighted by comparing certain things they do with the ones done by men. The following examples focus not only on the activity itself they are involved in but also on their civil status:

6) ng it for themselves. For the first time, single women are buying more (II-BR-160908-1)

Ireland could see that women are gradually taking over the workplace, which involves that jobs and top positions were shared between both sexes progressively:

7) Ireland has seen a transformation in the role of women at work. Their (II-BR-100310-1)

8) orty-two per cent of people employed in 2010 were women, the highest (II-BR-050112-1)

However, it is also pointed out that the traditional role of caring was seen as women's responsibility:

9) cumstances. Caring duties still primarily fall on women and they are less inclined to attend late or over (II-BR-111206-1)

10) to change is the assumption that children are the woman's responsibility. Even when both parents are (II-BR-160508-1)

11) ent fund. The fact that the primary role of many women is caring also accounts for poor pension (II-BR-240212-1)

From the previous examples, we can see that there still exist certain pervasive stereotypes in Ireland, since women are thought to be more gifted for caring. Other stereotypes involving gender may peg the Irish woman as shopaholic:



12) emotionally, instead of making wise investments. "Women like shopping a lot. It's a sexist thing" (II-BR-050908-2)

The following examples make explicit that, although in recent years there have been many advances, women are treated differently than men, for example, in their salaries or in the time they devote to work at home, just as shown below:

13) FEMALE workers earn 150 a week less than men, new figures show (II- BR-29122006-1)

14) WOMEN working in the financial sector get paid up to 20,000 less than their male colleagues, according to a new survey (II-BR- 7112006-1)

15) gender inequalities still exist in the home, with women working on average an extra 39 minutes every day (II-BR-190608-1)

16) dig in the ribs, over a new report that suggests women do nearly 40 minutes more work a day than their (II-BR-110708-1)

17) THE vast majority of Irish women feel they are still treated as second-class citizens in the workplace, according to new research (II-BR-26082010-1)

18) The European Commission said the gap reflects women's problems balancing work and their private lif (II-BR-030312-1)

These examples make it clear that there are patent differences between both sexes at work. Most women have part-time jobs and, therefore, they earn less money because it is understood that the primary role of many women is caring. The fact that women have lower salaries than men implies that they take the risk of making their financial futures depend on men. Consequently, women could be left with nothing if they separated or divorced.

In addition, there are also clear differences in the number of women who have top positions in society, for example in politics, which contrasts with the few examples already presented some paragraphs above in this section that make reference to the jobs or degrees women have (see 1 and 2, above):

19) WOMEN continue to lag far behind their male counterparts when it comes to representation in decision-making structures at both national and regional level (II-BR-14122006-1)

20) only 15pc of seats in Leinster House are held by women. Most leadership positions are dominated (II-BR-080512-1)

21) rmination. When it comes to politics in Ireland, women are woefully under-represented. Just 25 women (II-BR-100312-2)

The references to women's age, race, religion or sexual orientation are concerned with the social category of identification, and specifically to classification; in van Leeuwen's words:

Identification occurs when social actors are defined, not in terms of what they do, but in terms of what they, more or less permanently, or unavoidably, are. [...] In the case of classification, social actors are referred to in terms of the major categories by means of which a given society or institution differentiates between classes of people. (2008, 42)

There are only four instances in which there are references to women's religious creed or sexual orientation; all of them were present in news articles published in 2012. This may involve that in the other examples women are understood to be heterosexual and Catholic, which have usually taken as the main, natural or normal tendencies in Irish society:

- 22) There's just one slight problem -- so are the women. All three are lesbians and are going to use tha (II-BR-280212-1)
- 23) d up in each other's arms. Nowadays heterosexual women work alongside red-blooded men. We sit beside (II-BR-250912-1)
- 24) ened up an opportunity otherwise denied to Muslim women and Abdallah says business is thriving (II-BR-200312-1)
- 25) r the anger and frustration of seeing five Muslim women in full niqabs walking straight through security (II-BR-200312-1)

Some other examples highlight the presence of black women in Irish society and their doing some important jobs:

- 26) arbara Jordan, who in 1972 became the first black woman elected to the House of Representatives (II-BR-030308-1)
- 27) educate herself and become Britain's first black woman judge. Beaten repeatedly with a stick for (II-BR-061208-1)
- 28) to Africa for a theme -- the empowerment of black women. Invitations to his 8.45pm show at the Royal (II-BR-170912-1)

Additionally, there are also examples that point out that black women faced a difficult situation, for example, the fact of suffering domestic violence or sexual harassment:

- 29) nd domestic violence habitually suffered by black women in the early years of the 20th Century (II-BR-031112-1)
- 30) Not every black woman who suffers sexual harassment in the workplace does so because of her race (II-BR-27092008-1)

I have analysed the references to women as migrant inside the category of race. The examples found in the corpus point out that immigrant women have more difficulties and that they are forced to undergo racist and sexist attitudes both inside and outside work (in the streets, at the shops, etc.); moreover, there are cases in which they are overexploited at work because they do not know their basic rights related to wages, holidays or maternity benefits:

- 31) CTION: NATIONAL NEWS LENGTH: 295 words MIGRANT women workers in Ireland suffer high levels of racism a (II-BR-061106-1)
- 32) eelings of social isolation and even fear. Some women had experienced highly sexualised racism and (II-BR-061106-1)

Therefore, following Hogan and Marandola (2005), the examples about immigrant women offer the possibility of talking about multiple vulnerabilities due to the fact that they suffer discrimination for their sex, race and the work they do. In this sense, Conlon makes the following statement, which is illustrated with some of the previous examples such as 29-32:

As in most European nations, women in Ireland have entered the paid labor force in significant numbers (see O'Connor 2001; and O'Connell 2001) while immigrants, predominantly women, take up the tasks associated with the social reproduction of the domestic sphere (see Conroy 2003). Ironically then, as many Irish women have been thrown into the public domain of Celtic Tiger Ireland as independent professionals, immigrant women take up the historically nationalist ideological position of Irish women as caregiver and social/cultural reproducers of the nation-state. (Conlon 2007, 48-49)

Although it is not one of the outstanding categories in any of the years under analysis, there are some examples that point out that one of the changes that indicates that women are assuming a new role in society is the fact that they marry later, they have fewer children or they even decide not to have children at all:

33) n ESRI study of census data shows that most Irish women now delay having children beyond 30 years of age (II-BR-100310-1)

34) been married by 18 and had children young but now women are more likely to marry late and have high (II-BR-200510-1)

Figure 1 below makes clear that women normally appear in active sentences and they are referred to as a group, not as individuals; in fact, there are very few examples dealing with specific women, called by their name and whose position in society is made explicit. As already mentioned in the previous section, the different collocations used intend to collectivize women and to refer to them by their function in society (what they do) and to their identity in terms of their race, age, status, etc.

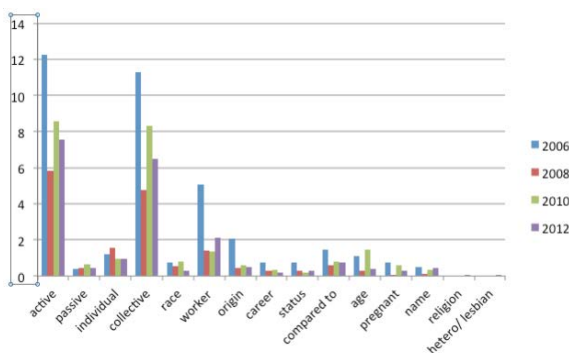


Figure 1: Comparison of the main categories used to refer to women in four years in *The Irish Independent*

As already mentioned, van Leeuwen (2008) makes clear that the different participants in the news articles can be referred to as individuals (individualization) or as members in a group (assimilation); and, in the words of Machin and van Leeuwen: “Which of these two options is chosen can make a significant difference to the way events are represented” (2005, 132). The fact that women are referred to as a group implies that there were many women who started to be visible in society and take positions in public places, which contrasts with their situation before the Celtic Tiger, when they largely stayed at home doing not-paid work and taking the traditional roles of nurturer and carer of their children.

Women are mainly referred to as workers out of the different categories taken into consideration (see Figure 1 above). This is very significant because this strategy clearly points out that at the end of the Celtic Tiger period and in the post-Celtic Tiger period women started to work outside home, which involved changes in their lives such as having more independence, having to work inside and outside home, and sharing housework with their partners. In this sense, it is interesting to mention the examples that offer a comparison between the situation of women and men in Irish society because they point out the ways in which women have improved their situation or the ways in which they continue being dependent upon men, have lower salaries or work more at home (see examples 13-21 above).

There are no great differences in the representation of women as social actors in the four years under analysis. If we compare the different categories in this period of time, it is interesting to observe that in 2010 more examples refer to the age of women than to their condition as workers; this is probably due to the fact that women have incorporated progressively to the labour market and now the newspaper is interested in pointing out the age of the women. However, in 2012 it is still the reference to women as workers the one that predominates followed by the examples in which women are compared to men to show their improvements or the situations that still need to change (see Figure 1).

### 5. *Conclusions*

In the present paper, I have observed how women are discursively constructed in a sample from the Irish press. In order to do so, CDA and CL are used to analyse the examples found. The press shows social realities and describes social actors, and language is the one of the most effective tools used to do so. For this reason, every lexical choice matters for the description/depiction/portrayal of women's condition.

It is outstanding that they are construed as such social actors in terms of the following categories: active-passive, individual-groups, work, status, origin, career, race, name, pregnant, name, religion, heterosexual or lesbian. The news-

paper articles analysed point out the presence of women in the labour market, which is a very important change in Irish society. Therefore, women start being less dependent upon men and their role is more active in society.

Even though there is no doubt of the presence of women in the main areas of Irish society during this six-year period, the examples analysed point out that there are still traditional stereotypes in society. This implies that women devote more time to work at home or they earn less money in certain jobs. In addition, some examples make clear that women feel as second class citizens and that some women rely on their partners because of having part-time jobs or inferior pensions when they retire. In consequence, it is observed that women are, on the one hand, more visible than they were before when their role was mainly at home; but, on the other hand, they are also more vulnerable than men.

Although there have been advances in the equal rights fight in the twenty-first century, it is still necessary to promote equality between women and men. In this sense, the prosperous economy of the Celtic Tiger in Ireland offered some women the opportunity of getting a job and being active in the labour market. However, this study has made clear that there are still differences between women and men in the salaries, positions and types of jobs.

Equality between women and men is not a fact in terms of power, visibility, salary, assumption of command, etc. in Ireland during the Celtic Tiger and the post-Celtic Tiger period. Therefore, feminism must question the social order established by the patriarchal system in which both sexes are far from being treated as equal, so that one sex has control over the other. This is one of the main ideas of the patriarchal system to keep women apart from power. For this reason, it is necessary to show the unfair reality that surrounds women in Ireland, to name it and to report it.

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