

The Polish Catholic Church on IVF. Corpus Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis.

The aim of the study is to analyze the discourse about the In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) in the official statements of the Polish Catholic Church. IVF has been a publicly discussed subject in Poland due to the parliamentary debate (April 2012) concerning different projects connected with bioethics bills. One of the important voices in this public debate was the one of the Polish Catholic Church expressed by both individual priests and the Commission of Polish Episcopate (CPE) in its official statements. The latter is subjected to the analysis in the study to be presented. The analysis is conducted in the Critical Discourse Analysis paradigm (van Dijk, 1993) with the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The main research question concerns the way IVF is discursively constructed. To discover other aspects characteristic of the discourse in question, key words approach was used (Baker, 2006). Two reference corpuses (RC1 composed of official documents from the same website as the main corpus and RC2 built from texts containing words *in vitro*) were constructed. Key words being a result of comparison to RC1 and RC2 were subjected to further qualitative concordance analysis.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative corpus methods resulted in revealing different aspects of the discourse in question. The most important one seems to be the overall negative attitude of the Polish Catholic Church against IVF visible through, for example, concentration on the technical part of the procedure or pointing to negative consequences of IVF. As for the characteristic features of the discourse in question, pointing at the constant state of endangerment and talking about laboratory aspects of different phenomena can be mentioned. Finally, the role of these discourses in legitimizing and reinforcing the power of Catholic Church in Poland is shown.

References

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