

# A comparative study of lexical bundles in published history writing in English, Spanish, and Portuguese

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The study of recurrent word combinations such as lexical bundles has lately become the focus of many corpus-based studies of formulaic language. Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan (1999) defined *lexical bundles* as sequences of three or more words that occur frequently in a register. In English academic writing, frequent lexical bundles are expressions such as *as a result of*, *on the other hand*, and *from the perspective of* to mention only a few.

Drawing on several studies that attempted to explore the potential of lexical bundles in the teaching of academic writing, in translation studies (Cortes, 2008; Tracy-Ventura, Cortes, & Biber, 2007), and in the analysis of disciplinary writing (Cortes, 2004) this presentation reports the findings of a study that analyzed the use of lexical bundles identified in three one million-word corpora of published history articles written in English, Spanish, and Portuguese from American, Argentinian, and Brazilian publications. First, the most frequent 4-word lexical bundles were identified in each of these corpora and classified structurally and functionally. Then, the use of these bundles was compared across languages.

The bundles identified in each corpus showed structural characteristics that are closely related to bundles frequently found in academic writing (phrasal bundles) and characteristics related to the grammatical structure of each of these languages. In addition, the functional classification showed that some bundles shared functions connected to academic prose and to the essence of the discipline (referential bundles and discourse organizers), as well as to the topics discussed in the publications from where the texts had been extracted. These functions occurred across the three languages analyzed in the study.

The presentation will also introduce various pedagogical applications of the findings of the present project and implications for translation studies, as well as suggested paths for future research.

## References

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## Biodata

Dr. Viviana Cortes is Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics and ESL at Georgia State University, where she teaches courses in English grammar and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Her major areas of specialization are corpus-based discourse analysis and the identification and analysis of data-driven formulaic language in academic registers in English and Spanish. Her numerous articles have been published in *Applied Linguistics*, *English for Specific Purposes*, and the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, among others and in several edited volumes. She is also the book review editor for *English for Specific Purposes*.