

Analyzing the structures, semantic prosodies, and semantic preferences of lexical bundles in research article introductions

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The study of lexical bundles, sequences of three or more words that recur in a register (Biber, et al., 1999), has become the focus of many corpus-based studies in the last decade. This presentation reports a study which analyzed the use of lexical bundles in a one-million word corpus of published research article introductions. Those bundles were studied in terms of their communicative functions using a move scheme (Swales, 2004), showing a strong connection between lexical bundles and the moves they help communicate.

This presentation will focus on the relationship between lexical bundles and the contexts in which they occur, analyzing the structures, semantic prosodies, and semantic preferences of these expressions. This analysis showed that most 4 and 5-word bundles could be easily identified as relating to a particular semantic prosody (positive, negative, or neutral). For example, the analysis of the bundle *the end of the* showed that the right collocates often indicate only neutral (75% of the occurrences) or positive semantic prosodies (25%) while the prosody of the left collocates spread more evenly among the three groups (25%, 31%, and 36% respectively). In addition, a taxonomy that reflects the semantic domains associated to these contexts was designed to categorize the semantic preferences of the most frequent bundles. This classification reflected a strong relationship between the right and left preferences of individual bundles, which may help better understand the role that these expressions play in conveying the communicative functions of particular moves.

The presentation will introduce pedagogical applications of the findings, implications for the study of formulaic language in research article sections, and suggestions for future research.

References

- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., & Finegan, E. (1999). *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. London: Longman.
Swales, J. (2004). *Research genres*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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*.