

Pathways to Textuality

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POSTER Abstracts Booklet

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A corpus-driven contrastive study of English and Chinese based on the Lexical Priming Theory—a case study of world and 世界shi4jie4

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Keywords

Lexical Priming Theory

collocation

colligation

The present study tentatively explores the feasibility of comparing English and Chinese from the perspective of the Lexical Priming Theory. Three fundamental concepts, namely, collocation, colligation and semantic association as defined in the theory were considered. With these three categories serving as the contrast base (or tertium comparationis), a holistic analysis was undertaken. The combinatory profile showed that 1) the grammatical class of “word” needs to be re-defined in the cross-linguistic studies between the two widely spoken languages. Nesting as defined in LPT might be treated as the basic equivalent unit at the lexical level; 2) no unique word combination containing "world" and 世界 shi4jie4 occurred for either English or Chinese but do show a high or low frequency of use for a particular nesting; 3) shared semantic association is primed by both English and Chinese speakers, but different word choices are made. 4) there is an interaction between the node items' inter- and intra-colligation. The colligation is primed in an interaction with collocation and semantic association. The parameters interchange with and are dependent on each other.

Selected References:

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Forced Lexical Primings as evidence of Power Relations in Jihadist Magazines

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Keywords

Corpus linguistics

Discourse analysis

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power-relations

This poster presents an investigation into the evidence of fixed language use within jihadist magazines and the extent to which forced primings appear to reflect specific power relations within that discourse community. The research presents the hypothesis that the writers of articles in jihadist magazines have become primed to employ certain words and sets of words through their repeated usage in context (cf. Hoey 2005, 2017). Thus, lexical and grammatical associations and constructions are analysed to determine the extent to which language use is unique in our corpus. Evidence is presented of the unique way power relationships are linguistically expressed; it is argued here that this reflects the ways in which the writers are primed for their motives or aims of recruitment. Moreover, we argue that the writers are also consciously priming their readers with idiosyncratic patterns (or forced primings, see Duguid, 2009). Here, a number of words, which are fairly common in news discourse and are in the semantic field of power relations, have been identified as keywords in jihadist magazines. These show the collocation and colligation divergence where they are compared with occurrences in the COCA magazines sub-corpus covering the same time period.

References

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Patterns of Lexis in research articles in English and Bulgarian

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Keywords

lexical repetitions
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While looking for ‘the significant words’ in texts for translation in the nineties of the twentieth century, I discovered and applied Hoey’s classification of repetitions in *Patterns of Lexis in Text* (1991). The three basic types established there are: simple (bear – bears) and complex (drug-drugging) lexical repetition, plus the paraphrase applying more than one type of repetition at a time (writer – writings). Compared to co-referential chains (Halliday and Hasan 1976), this was a very straightforward way for students to recognise and underline all the words that determine the structure of the article, to analyse them and then translate the article maintaining the selected terminology. Later, frequency lists started being established by sophisticated statistical procedures, such as word lists, key word lists, and clusters (Scott 1997, Anthony 2017). In view of recent debates of the adequacy of key words (Baker 2004, McEnery 2021 among others), comparing word lists to a pen-and-paper analysis of the repetitions in the style suggested by Hoey provides interesting findings about which words actually reveal the structure of a research article and need to be included in translation glossaries. Such an analysis is even more interesting when applied to texts written in Bulgarian where the determiners are bound morphemes and the paradigm of a verb, for instance, can include up to 26 forms – which has a strong impact on the statistics about keywords.

In my presentation, I compare the patterns of repetition in an article in English established by hand and the word and keyword list of the article. The same comparison is applied to a translation of the article in Bulgarian and the conclusions concern the adequacy of the key word lists for building a translation glossary.

Helpful Lexical Priming in the language learning classroom

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Keywords

pedagogical corpora
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language learning
corpus-based tasks
repetition and variation

This poster presents an original approach to language learning and teaching that aims at promoting helpful Lexical Priming. As we all know, language learning in classroom settings follows a fundamentally different pattern than the acquisition process of speakers' L1. A major claim of Hoey's theory (2005: 23) is that every encounter with a given linguistic item shapes the speakers' knowledge about the use of that item; in other words, every encounter has a priming effect. It is therefore a reasonable assumption that pedagogical settings are likely to influence how items of the target language will be primed. Several factors may undermine helpful priming in this context, such as (1) existing primings from L1 and other languages, (2) simplified, artificial and/or atypical course book texts, (3) students' limited exposure to authentic language and (4) interactions with other learners displaying limited knowledge of the new language (Hoey 2005: 184). Hoey suggests (2005: 186) that well-designed tasks and materials can create „shortcuts” to helpful priming to counterbalance these effects.

This poster presents a possible methodology to create helpful priming conditions in the language learning classroom by using authentic minicorpora organised by theme and genre. Noticing tasks, manual and machinal corpus analyses, reproducing existing texts as well as creating new texts based on authentic linguistic input are the key elements of this method. The method was tested with 23 B.A. students at Leiden University (The Netherlands). The students' feedback (presented briefly in the poster) was overwhelmingly positive.