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## Introduction

### Zooming in

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*Exploring the Lexis-Grammar Interface* is one of two results from a conference that was held under the title of the present volume at the Leibniz University of Hanover, Germany, from October 5–7, 2006. The other result is a special issue of the *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* on “Patterns, meaningful units and specialized discourses” (Römer and Schulze 2008). At this conference, scholars from all over the world addressed issues of lexis-grammar co-selection in English and discussed empirical evidence for the inseparability of lexis and grammar. They explored in what respects these two parts, often treated separately in linguistic theory and description, in fact form an organic whole. The conference helped to shape and develop further thinking in corpus linguistics.

Over the last two or three decades, researchers in corpus linguistics and neighbouring fields have provided intriguing evidence on the interrelatedness of vocabulary and syntax. However, there are still a number of aspects of the topic suggesting a close relationship between general properties of the lexical inventory of a language and the preferred or less preferred arrangement of lexical items into larger strings of units in language that seem to have gone unnoticed so far. The papers in this volume aim to address some of these aspects. We are here referring to aspects that come to light in and across different theoretical and methodological assumptions in linguistics which tend to work in the same direction. Among them are John Sinclair’s idiom principle, his lexical grammar approach and related theoretical assumptions (emphasising notions such as collocation, colligation, semantic preference, and semantic prosody), the pattern grammar work by Susan Hunston and Gill Francis, Michael Hoey’s theory of lexical priming, the lexical bundle approach presented by Douglas Biber, Stefan Gries and Anatol Stefanowitsch’s collocation analysis (including distinctive collexeme analysis), emergent grammar in American usage-based linguistics inspired by Paul Hopper, Suzanne Kemmer and Michael Barlow, cognitive linguistics and construction grammar masterminded by Ronald Langacker and Adele

Goldberg, grammaticalisation as topicalised by Paul Hopper and Elizabeth Closs Traugott, language as a conceptual network developed by Richard Hudson, or valency theory introduced by Lucien Tesnière. The fundamental questions in these different, though related areas, include the following:

- Which larger strings of words do we find in language?
- Which words or parts of speech may enter larger strings of words?
- What options/constraints/peculiarities are found in these strings?
- Do particular words or parts of words have individual grammar and/or meaning?
- What is the situation in earlier forms of the language?

The answers offered and accepted by different theorists and researchers depend on the general theoretical perspective taken and therein lies the rub. As long as the theoretical scenario for the answers is still being modelled and remodelled, the same facts are clad in ever-new representational formats and the reader has to be familiar with the respective theoretical background in order to appreciate the progress made. This volume strives to fill a number of different theoretical and methodological gaps in that it presents some of the latest work in areas that emphasise the lexis-grammar interface on the one hand, and in that it explores and demonstrates these more recent considerations against the background of authentic language as it surfaces in different types of corpora on the other hand. The objective of the collective volume is not to show that different stances (e.g. Sinclair's lexical grammar or Goldberg's construction grammar) advocating a lexis-grammar continuum should be preferred to those espousing some modular point of view; but rather, the volume seeks to uncover those linguistic mechanisms which help to overcome the traditional conceptual separation of core areas in language. Accordingly, there is not going to be a prioritisation of lexis at the expense of grammar or a marginalisation of lexis in favour of grammar.

Although the volume has inherited its contributions and objects of investigation from different approaches, all of these are closely related to the commonly accepted usage-based, context-of-use or inductive stance in linguistics (see e.g. Kemmer and Barlow 2000; Langacker 2008 or Tomasello 2003). As a result of recent advances in these areas, it has turned out that human beings construe non-linguistic reality the way they think about themselves or speak and write to others, becoming manifest and accessible predominantly in large computer-readable collections of spoken and written natural texts.

The position advocated by most of the contributors to the volume is that word meaning and the meaning of multi-word units is protean in nature: the lexical and grammatical meaning of a single lexical item or a unit-like, well-defined

string of words is prone to shift depending on the context of use. Seen from that point of view, linguistic material available from general and specialised discourses is grasped as a prompt for meaning generation and construction rather than as a container that carries meaning. Eventually, meaning construction is dynamic. Or to put it differently: linguistic material in isolation is impoverished and highly underspecified so that it seems safe to claim that the context of use guides meaning generation and construction. Due to the high complexity of this matter, most of the authors present both a quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The contributions provide a multilateral perspective touching principally upon two main issues: (a) the degree to which conceptual and grammatical meaning is entrenched in linguistic structure and, hence, found in different speech communities, genres or text types, and (b) the way conceptual and grammatical meaning is expressed in authentic communication. The analyses of conceptual and grammatical aspects in the single contributions illustrate that both alternatives are equally utilised by language. The reason for adopting diverse, though related approaches to the analysis of different form-meaning pairings is compelling as language is largely seen as a conceptual network or a system of interconnected units that, in order to facilitate proper treatments, requires insights from different fields of enquiry.

Thus, the volume is valuable for several strands and readerships in linguistics. The approaches taken by the contributors to this volume benefit mutually from the different perspectives adopted. For general and English linguists, for example, the broad macroscopic view on language, derived from sociolinguistic research work, and the microscopic view on language, with a clear focus on the processing and verbalisation of (social) knowledge by individual interactants, are beneficial to the current enterprise since overall findings help to reorganise and redefine a number of linguistic notions and categories, which may still be fuzzy due to a lack of a more comprehensive corpus-linguistic approach. So far, particular grammatical constructions (e.g. double-object constructions as discussed by Meyer) have mainly been dealt with in grammar books with the objective of distinguishing constructions on the basis of their individual make-up. Other phenomena (e.g. intensifiers, evaluative markers or complementisers as dealt with by Cacchiani, Duguid, Kolbe and Tsiamita) have been the matter of pragmatics or dialectology so far. On the whole, the volume widens the corpus-linguistic horizon following different trends in lexical grammar (e.g. Mukherjee and Stubbs), construction grammar, pattern grammar and lexical priming or lexical and semantic association theory (e.g. Ellis, Frey, and Jalkanen, Hoey or Mahlberg), or valency grammar (Herbst).

By the same token, the volume reflects the current tendency in usage-based linguistics where language is also being understood as a tool for the interaction

between participants rather than for descriptive purposes only. Thus, sociology and social psychology will also benefit from the conceptually oriented macroscopic view provided in the different sections, which will add to the knowledge of cultural and societal aspects of language. But also the various linguistic issues widen the view of psychologists and social psychologists alike, and the presented findings can be utilised for further psycholinguistic analyses (as suggested by Ellis, Frey and Jalkanen). What the contributors to this volume assume is that the mutually interdependent nature of particular lexical items and emerging constructions can be captured by holding an empiricist view concerning the exploration of language, by adopting the usage-based thesis “schematisation and abstraction reflect language use”, and by endorsing a non-compositional point of view (patterns and constructions are meaningful).

The volume represents the most recent approaches in contemporary linguistics and up-to-date methodology in corpus linguistics in order to tackle issues related to the lexis-grammar interface. It consists of two sections. Section I (*Setting the Scene*) provides an overview of some of the main aims, assumptions and commitments of the lexis-grammar interface enterprise and provides a highly informative sketch of some of the descriptive analyses and theoretical positions that are representative of this area. Section II (*Considering the Particulars*) is more applied in that it focuses on different corpora, on different linguistic manifestations of the general theme and different theoretical frameworks that help to integrate some of the findings into some robust systems of ideas. The distinction between these two main areas is not, however, meant to imply a strict separation. On the contrary, theories or methods cannot do without application perspectives, and basic theoretical issues are naturally present in the more application-oriented parts of the second section.

Michael Stubbs’s paper “Technology and phraseology: With notes on the history of corpus linguistics” offers an excellent opening to the volume in that it demonstrates how a postulated interface between lexis and grammar can be reconciled with a corpus-driven Sinclairian position. The paper offers both a historical and synchronic dimension in that it makes clear to the reader that twentieth century linguistic concepts such as collocation, KWIC concordance, lexical pattern or phrase frequency can be traced back to much older linguistic and non-linguistic traditions. It is also an account of how the author became (and still is) a committed corpus linguist, i.e. someone who can offer expert advice on the extraction and evaluation of recurrent word-strings (as alleged units of meaning) and their variants, as exemplified in the phrase *smelling of roses*. The sample analyses are based on the British National Corpus and William Fletcher’s PIE interface to the BNC. With the analyses, Stubbs is able to relate his findings to a

somewhat under-researched branch of corpus linguistics which views language as social action and is a spin-off of social cognition.

The next paper by Michael Hoey, “Corpus-driven approaches to grammar: A search for common ground”, takes a corpus-driven Sinclairian position on the interface between lexis and grammar, complemented by Hoey’s own perspective, as expounded in his theory of lexical priming. The paper itself is concerned with the deficiencies of traditional grammar (i.e. no explication of fluency, no consistent model of variation, no proper account of polysemy and no explication of the company that words tend to keep), while simultaneously offering three current approaches in lexical grammar to remedy this situation. These are: Sinclair’s idiom principle, Hunston and Francis’s pattern grammar, and Hoey’s own lexical priming approach. Hoey concludes that all these approaches are compatible, and that even contradictory findings, i.e. where the association of pattern and meaning is not really predictable, can be reconciled with pattern grammar generalisations and lexical priming claims (as shown on the basis of the semantic set COMPLAIN + *of* + noun). It is not a coincidence that Hoey’s lexical priming claims share some common ground with research done in the cognitive sciences in which different models of semantic priming (i.e. spreading activation models, verification models, compound-cue models, distributed network models or multi-stage activation models) are related to memory and word recognition research (McNamara 2005; Pishwa 2006).

Thomas Herbst’s paper “Valency: Item-specificity and idiom principle” also focuses on the role of idiomatic and idiosyncratic aspects of language. His perspective is an intradisciplinary comparison, with different branches of linguistic research such as construction grammar, valency theory, foreign language teaching and learning, and corpus linguistics providing powerful, supportive theoretical and methodological tools. While Herbst clearly favours a usage-based approach and uncompromisingly opts for a surface-orientation in linguistic research, he is far from claiming that these branches of linguistic research are simply different labels to uncover the specifics of multi-word units.

The question of how constructions are dealt with in written ‘instructive’ material, i.e. modern reference grammars, dictionaries or usage guides, is tackled by Ulrich Busse and Anne Schröder’s contribution “Fowler’s *Modern English Usage* at the interface of lexis and grammar”. The authors show how a formerly prestigious usage guide, mercilessly prescriptive in its intentions and elevated from its inception on to some almost ‘divine’ status, deals with aspects of both grammar and lexis, focussing on perennial ‘troublemakers’ such as *hopefully*, *none* plus singular or plural and *different(ly) from* or *to* or *than*. The paper discusses how the boundaries between modern reference grammars, dictionaries and usage guides have become blurred, that more recent editions of usage guides have turned more or

less descriptive, and that all the different genres or text types can be seen as multi-purpose works that clearly emphasise lexis-grammar interrelatedness.

The final paper in the first section is devoted to questions related to word recognition and lexical access. Nick Ellis, Eric Frey and Isaac Jalkanen in “The psycholinguistic reality of collocation and semantic prosody – neighbourhoods of knowing (1): Lexical access” tackle two different phenomena of lexical association: collocation and semantic prosody. On the basis of a particular, controlled experiment, namely a lexical decision task (McNamara 2005), they are able to point out that frequent verb-argument structures such as *end war* or *stop whingeing* and booster/maximiser-adjective collocations such as *badly mauled* or *deeply apposite* contribute to a fairly robust body of evidence in favour of a corpus-linguistically inspired psychology. The authors conclude that lexical decision tasks are proving their value by producing insightful results for the description and analysis of multi-word units and are thus on a par with lexical priming claims advocated by Hoey, although derived from different theoretical and methodological sources.

While the first section in the volume addresses issues that in various ways relate to the more theoretical aspects of the lexis-grammar interface, the second section (*Considering the Particulars*) exemplifies a representative selection of fields of application. The first comes to the fore in Joybrato Mukherjee’s contribution “The lexicogrammar of present-day Indian English: Corpus-based perspectives on structural nativisation”. Based on Schneider’s (2003) evolutionary model of the development of New Englishes, Mukherjee extends his research on processes of structural nativisation in Indian English to select multi-word units, including collocations, new prepositional verbs, new transitive verbs and verb complementation in order to unearth emerging innovations in a particular institutionalised second-language variety. Adopting both a quantitative and qualitative approach to the data, he foresees a growing increase in the empirical demands on lexicogrammar and descriptive sociolinguistics. Additional and complementary databases, different experimental designs and the accompanying forms of quantitative data analysis in the form of collocation analysis (Stefanowitsch and Gries 2003) are likely to occupy a more central position in linguistic fields that deal with institutionalised second-language varieties of English world-wide.

In her paper entitled “The semantic and grammatical overlap of *as* and *that*: Evidence from non-standard English”, Daniela Kolbe tackles the question “How are non-standard *as* and *that* related?” She first introduces the reader to the non-standard use of *as* both as a relativiser and variant of *that* and as a complementiser and provides examples from the Freiburg Corpus of English Dialects (FRED) and the Northern Ireland Transcribed Corpus of Speech (NITCS). She then goes on to examine different functions of relativisers and complementisers in contemporary reference grammars, before she explores the diachronic dimension of both

items. Among other factors, Kolbe suggests that *as* typically refers back to some grammatically fixed antecedent, thus constituting a very special construction and collocational/colligational profile (i.e. *such...as*, *as...as*, *same...as*). Following the loss and the omission of the first element of the construction, the second element has undergone reanalysis, i.e. it has adopted a new profile and developed into a non-standard relativiser.

The third paper in this section, entitled “The historical development of the verb *doubt* and its various patterns of complementation” also examines the diachronic dimension of constructions. Yoko Iyeyri presents the results of her research that has investigated the emergence and later development of *doubt* in combination with different complementation patterns. On the basis of the *Oxford English Dictionary on CD-ROM*, supplemented by the *Bible in English on CD-ROM* and the British National Corpus (BNC), the author explores the period from late Middle English to Early Modern English in particular, since this period is generally seen, at least from a linguistic point of view, as a fairly unstable one. Her findings show that various and distinct complement clauses have accompanied *doubt* in the past, whereas present-day English *doubt* has established a neatly defined pattern, allowing *whether*-clauses in affirmative and *that*-clauses in negative sentences; the still infrequent co-occurrence of *if*-clause and affirmative *doubt* seems to usher in a new developmental era.

In the next paper by Hans Lindquist and Magnus Levin, entitled “The grammatical properties of recurrent phrases with body-part nouns: The  $N_1$  to  $N_1$  pattern”, it also becomes apparent that the more traditional dichotomy between lexicon and grammar is hardly reconcilable with a usage-based description. The authors explore a particular symmetrical structure with body-part nouns, exemplified by *hand to hand* or *cheek to cheek*, and extensions of the pattern to new, still infrequent constructions such as *go head to head* (the pattern as an adverbial), *a head-to-head competition* (the pattern as a premodifier) and a *Christie-Lewis head-to-head* (the pattern as a noun). Their quantitative and qualitative analysis is based on material from the BNC, *The New York Times* and the *British Independent on CD-ROM*. Lindquist and Levin convincingly demonstrate the pervasiveness of the idiomatic and show that the  $N_1$  to  $N_1$  pattern exhibits a range of uses which cannot be derived on the basis of independently identifiable meanings of its parts. Echoing the findings of other contributors to this volume, the authors suggest that knowing a word such as *hand* or *cheek* proceeds through knowledge of the highly flexible usage range of *hand* or *cheek*, rather than through the association of *hand* or *cheek* with a fixed number of determinate meanings. Lindquist and Levin also touch on aspects of lexicalisation, grammaticalisation, layering and embodiment, i.e. the idea that the nature of concepts and the way they are structured, organ-

ised and expressed linguistically is constrained by the nature of bodily experience (Evans and Green 2006: 44–47).

That language consists of far more than just a set of syntactic rules plus a lexicon, is also reflected in Silke Höche's contribution "A corpus-based investigation of cognate object constructions", in which she claims, following Adele Goldberg, that a construction such as *live a life*, *die a death* or *tell a tale* has characteristics that cannot be straightforwardly derived from the constituent parts (and is thus non-compositional). In this she is partially echoing Lindquist and Levin. What makes Höche's claim go beyond that of Lindquist and Levin, however, is the assumption that cognate object constructions constitute a family of constructions or a schematic network with, graphically speaking, lexical material at the bottom and more abstract patterns higher up. There are a number of advantages to her approach; one is that her analysis is based on a thorough search of the BNC for the relevant material, yielding more than 3,100 instances of cognate object constructions. Another advantage is that her data are examined and interpreted through a collocation analysis, following the theoretical and methodological guidelines posited by Stefanowitsch and Gries (2003). In sum, Höche is able to show that two sub-patterns of cognate object constructions can be derived from well-established transitive constructions, and that a third one can be identified as a metaphorical extension of transitive constructions, exhibiting an effected object in direct object position.

In a similar vein, the importance of functional categories such as 'direct' and 'indirect object' is discussed in Matthias L. G. Meyer's paper entitled "Revisiting the evidence for objects in English", but from a rather different point of view. Meyer focuses on arguments provided by different reference grammars (Quirk et al. 1985 and Huddleston and Pullum 2002, for example) to define verb complementation patterns in a rigid and systematic way. One of Meyer's conclusions is that most previous attempts turn out to be insufficient and therefore require some classificatory improvements. Based on his 'passivisable object theory', he claims that redefinitions should pertain to constructions such as *resemble* [*one's father*], *lack* [*confidence*] or *watch out* [*for new dangers*], the bracketed material receiving the predicator-complement label, *give* [*the ladies*] [*a new card*] or *show* [*the guests*] [*the way*] receiving the object and complement-extension label and *give* [*a new card*] [*to the ladies*] or *show* [*the way*] [*to the guests*] receiving the object and predicator-complement label.

Silvia Cacchiani's paper "Lexico-functional categories and complex collocations: The case of intensifiers" starts from the assumption that the occurrence of intensifiers in complex constructions gives us a clue about aspects of grammaticalisation, semantic prosody, the pattern of intensification, expressivity and involvement. More specifically, the paper explores intensifiers such as *very*, *desper-*

*ately* or *thumping* in complex collocations extending to the right and/or to the left and finds that the type and extent of expressivity and involvement, for example, determines the use of intensifiers such as *just*, *so*, *highly*, *extremely* or *stunningly*. Moreover, firmly entrenched intensifiers (i.e. highly grammaticalised items) are likely to occur in collocations extending to the right. All the findings are based on data culled from the BNC via the *SketchEngine*.

Yet another case study emphasising the role of semantic associations is presented by Fanie Tsiamita in her paper "Polysemy and lexical priming: The case of *drive*". Tsiamita analyses data from a subcorpus extracted from the BNC, mainly comprising literary texts, and argues that two select readings of nominal *drive*, i.e. 'journey in a car or other vehicle' and 'private road leading up to a house' (both glosses taken from the *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* 2003) can be distinguished on the basis of different semantic associations that polysemous items in a language typically take. More to the point, Tsiamita claims that the 'journey reading' invites categories or concepts such as DISTANCE/DURATION and EVALUATION, whereas the 'private road reading' activates categories or concepts such as SIZE and MATERIAL, with ATTRIBUTE and SHAPE categories playing a particular premodifying role in complex collocations. Thus, her distinction between different senses of a polysemous word is closely linked to the observation that there is a very strong tendency for words to be related to particular semantic and conceptual domains or areas of evaluative and attitudinal meaning, a claim which becomes manifest in Michael Hoey's lexical priming theory.

Lexico-grammatical patterning serves as an organising principle not only on the quasi-sentential, but also on the textual level. Michaela Mahlberg's paper "Local textual functions of *move* in newspaper story patterns" partly builds on White's (1997) analysis of different types of specifications in a newspaper text, and partly on Sinclair's and Hoey's findings concerning the interpretation of repeated patterns in language. Based on her own concept of 'local textual function', Mahlberg explores the inherent structure of hard news stories, seen as "events or situations which are construed as threatening to damage, disrupt or rearrange the social order in its material, political or normative guise" (White 1997: 104). Here, Mahlberg is concerned with nominal *move* immediately followed by *follow*\* and reveals some local textual functions that can be characterised by a set of observations: Mahlberg is able to show that *move follow*\* tends to occur at the beginning of a paragraph, that *move follow*\* tends to occur in the second paragraph of an article and that *move follow*\* tends to refer to the nucleus of a newspaper article.

Concluding the *Considering the Particulars* section is Alison Duguid's contribution "Comparing evaluative discourse styles: Patterns in rants and riffs" which combines the ludic with the informative in language. Duguid employs the keywords methodology provided by Mike Scott's *WordSmith Tools* and compares

patterns in a corpus consisting of what she calls ‘humorous opinion pieces’ by columnists of British broadsheets to patterns in another one, based on reviews published by the *Times Literary Supplement*. Her main purpose is to show how the satirical style of press columnists clearly flouts and exploits the expectations of a reader who is likely to rely on prima facie evidence from typical priming effects evoked by lexis and lexico-grammatical patterns in written language.

All in all, we hope that *Exploring the lexis-grammar interface* will be considered a welcome addition to the collection of recent publications that explore the patterned nature of language (in particular Granger and Meunier 2008 and Meunier and Granger 2008), since it deals with theories and methodologies that have very much moved to the forefront of corpus linguistic thinking in recent years, as well as being an arena of contention and innovative debate in linguistics at large (Geoffrey Leech, personal communication). Most of the contributions in this volume have been greatly inspired by and largely benefitted from John Sinclair’s groundbreaking ideas, in particular on the inseparability of lexis and grammar, and it is difficult to imagine discussions in corpus linguistics today and in the future without reference to his seminal publications. We dedicate the volume to his memory.

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