

THE IMPACT OF TOPIC-RELATED AND OVERLAPPING LEXICAL BUNDLES ELIMINATION IN FORMULAIC ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

Andressa Gomide*, Carolina Bohórquez*, Luciana Aguiar de Oliveira* e Deise P. Dutra* carolinaboho@gmail.com

*Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Faculdade de Letras, Linguística Aplicada, Ensino/Aprendizagem de Língua Estrangeira 01/03/2012 à 01/03/2013

ABSTRACT Recent results within research using Corpus Linguistics (CL) in the area of applied linguistics have pointed to a new direction that focuses on the investigation of formulaic language and its functions. This focus proves a view of language that unifies lexis and grammar, and should be applied in the classroom setting, providing learners with a more complete and rich version of the language. Researchers have found opposing results concerning phraseological items depending on whether these were eliminated on the lines of being related to a topic, or as part of a longer unit, or maintained (Chen, Y. & Baker, P. 2010; Hyland, 2008). This study investigates if the elimination of topic-related and overlapping lexical bundles (Biber et al. 1999) has a significant influence on the correlation between the level of proficiency of learners of English and their reliance on formulaic sequences when writing academic texts. To do so, we examine two subcorpora among the 17 that compose the International Corpus of Learner of English Version 2 (ICLEv2) built by Granger et al. 2009, which is composed mainly of argumentative essays, building up a total of 4.5 million words. We chose to work with the Chinese and Dutch learners groups, each containing 200,000 words. The groups respectively represent the lowest and the highest levels – more specifically higher intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency – according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF). Through the application of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical test, preliminary results show that there is a correlation between the highest level of proficiency and a greater level of the use of formulaic language when the above-mentioned bundles are eliminated. The results also show that there is a correlation between essay average length and level of the use of lexical bundles. Based on previous research, we investigate if there is an opposite correlation – a highest proficiency level and a lesser level of lexical bundles use – when the same bundles are not eliminated, as it was found in Hyland, 2008a. As a whole, the findings show the necessity of incorporating frequency-driven formulaic expressions found in native academic production, such as the ones found in the Academic Formulas List (AFL) (Simpson-Vlach & Ellis 2010), within the English as a Second Language/English as a Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) curricula. This incorporation will provide learners with valuable data on their path to acquire fluency and accuracy in academic writing in English. Afterwards, we intend to look for the same types of correlation within the Brazilian sub-corpus of ICLE (Br-ICLE).

KEYWORDS: lexical bundles elimination, academic writing, Corpus Linguistics

REFERENCES

BIBER, D.; JOHANSON, S.; LEECH, G.; CONRAD, S.; FINEGAN, E. Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English. Essex: Longman, 1999.

CHEN, Y.; BAKER, P. Lexical bundles in L1 and L2 academic writing. **Language Learning & Technology**, Lancaster University, v.14, n.2, p. 30-49, 2010. Disponível em: <<http://lt.msu.edu/vol14num2/chenbaker.pdf>>. Acesso em 10 de março de 2012.

GRANGER, S., DAGNEAUX, E., MEUNIER, F., PAQUOT, M. (orgs.). International Corpus of learner English. v.2. Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses universitaires de Louvain, 2009

HYLAND, K. Academic Clusters: text patterning in published and postgraduate writing. **International Journal of Applied Linguistics**, University of London, v. 18, n. 1, p. 41-62. 2008.

SIMPSON-VLACH, R., ELLIS, N. An academic formulas list: New methods in phraseology research. **Applied Linguistics**, University of Michigan, v. 31, n. 4, p. 1-26, 2010.