

DISCOURSAL ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL BUNDLES IN POLITICAL SPEECHES

تحليل خطابي للحزم المعجمية في الخطابات السياسية

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Abstract

This study investigates a new category of word combination referred to as lexical bundles. Lexical bundles has been defined by Biber et. al. (1999) as " sequences of three or more words that show a statistical tendency to co-occur" (Ibid:183). The study aims at exploring the functions of lexical bundles in political speeches, finding out the types of bundles used in political speeches. The study adopts Biber (2006) model of classification to the analysis of lexical bundles in some British political speeches. The main finding of this study indicates that the referential function of lexical bundles has taken a priority over other types of functions in the political discourse.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The problem

Several recent studies emphasize the importance of multi-word items in spoken andwritten discourse (Biber, Conrad, & Cortes, 2004; Cowie,1992; Moon, 1998; Moon, 2000). These multi-word items have been studied under different terms such as fixed expressions (Moon, 1998; Moon, 2000), lexical phrases (Nattinger, &DeCarrico, 1992), pre-fabs, ready-made units (Cowie, 1992). Moreover, different criteria has been used to define and identify multi-word items. Earlier studies of longer word combinations were based on an intuitive rather than empirical evidence in real language use.

With the development of computer technology and corpus linguistics it became possible to investigate longer sequences of words in discourse statistically, that is, researchers can focus on frequency as a defining feature to deal with these sequences. The concept of lexical bundles was

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introduced in The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999). Biber, et al. (1999)

define lexical bundles as “the most frequent recurring lexical sequences;” ... “which can be regarded as extended collocations: sequences of three or more words that show a statistical tendency to co-occur” (p.183).

Recent research has assured the importance of lexical bundles as a major component in coherent linguistic production, since they represent "building blocks" (Hyland, 2008:1) of coherent discourse. On the other hand, this new category of words which follow each other more frequently than expected by chance help to shape meanings and contribute to our sense of distinctiveness in a register. Thus using a particular set of lexical bundles will define the text as belonging to a particular register such as legal or academic text. (Hyland, 2008)

However, while most investigations of lexical bundles have focused on their identification, structures, and discourse functions in various disciplines, significantly no attention has been paid to the study of lexical bundles in political speeches. Thus, it is not known what types of bundles are used to shape a political text? What functions do these bundles serve? What types of bundles are widely used?

1.2 The aims

This study aims at:

- exploring the functions of the lexical bundles in political speeches.
- Finding out the types of bundles used in political speeches.
- Finding out the most widely used functions in political speeches.

1.3 The hypothesis

It is hypothesized that:

- 1- In the genre of political speeches, politicians tend to rely on using one function more than the others, and the most widely used function is the intangible framing bundles.
- 2- There are functions which are rarely used by politicians

1.4 The procedure

To carry out this study the following steps are followed:

- 1- Surveying the theoretical background on lexical bundles, reviewing the adopted model for the analysis.
- 2- Analyzing the data following Biber (2006) model for the functional analysis of lexical bundles.

1.5 Limits of the study

This study is limited to the analysis of functions of lexical bundles in some British political speeches. The analysis is also limited to four-word combinations excluding three and five word combinations since many four-word bundles hold three-word bundles in their structure and four-word bundles are, in many cases, much more frequent than five-word bundles.

2. General Characteristics of Lexical Bundles

The term ‘lexical bundles’ was used for the first time in the Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (Biber et al. 1999), where it was defined as “bundles of words that show a statistical tendency to co-occur”(1999:989) as a result of, on the other hand, in the case of the, the context of the, and it is likely .And it is also defined as “recurrent expressions, regardless of their idiomaticity, and regardless of their structural status” (Ibid:990). Later, they are further specified as the most frequent recurrent sequences of three and more words in a register or genre (Biber and Barbieri 2007: 264). They are also known as chunks or clusters by Hyland (2008). This recently-introduced category of word combination has several features that distinguish it from other types of word combinations.

2.1 Frequency

It is the most important feature of all, Biber, et. al. (1999) rely on frequency in distinguishing lexical bundles from other phraseological units. Biber (2004:376) assumes that “the usefulness of frequency data is that it identifies patterns of use that otherwise often go unnoticed by researchers” However, frequency is judged by using two criteria: the first is that although the frequency cut-offs are somehow arbitrary, the minimal cut-off decided by Biber et. al, (1999:990) is at least ten times per million words, but a lower cut-off is set for less common five/six words bundles. Second, to qualify as a lexical bundle a sequence must occur in at least five different texts within a register, this is important to avoid speaker/writer idiosyncratic uses. However, Biber et al. in a later study (2004) have set a relatively higher frequency cut off, that is to qualify as a bundle an expression must occur twenty times per million words.

2.2 Idiomaticity

Most lexical bundles are not idiomatic in meaning, which means that their meaning is derivable from the meaning of their component parts, this is in contrast to idioms which are “invariable expressions”

Biber,1999:990). This is in the case of bundles such as in the presence of, as a result of, I want you to and what do you mean.

2.3 Fixedness

As far as fixedness is concerned, Cortes (2004:400) points out that lexical bundles are fixed, not in the way other word combinations are characterized, rather their fixedness is a result of the frequency criteria used in the extraction process. Thus, lexical bundles are fixed when the computer program extracts one form of the bundle at the decided frequency cut-off. For example, in her study in the corpus of academic prose in biology, Cortes (2004: 400) finds that only the bundle these results suggest that appears as a frequent recurrent word combination, while the singular bundle thisresultsuggestthat does not qualify as recurrent word combination because it does not match the frequency decided in the study.

However, some lexical bundles are totally invariable such as by and large, as well as, let alone where as others are rather flexible such as the phrase a ----- ago may accept variations such as a day ago, a week ago, a month ago and so on.

2.4 Incomplete structure

With regard to their structure, most lexical bundles do not represent complete structural units, but often bridge two units,that is, they begin at a clause/phrase boundary, but the last words of the bundle are the beginning elements of the following structural unit (Biber and Barbieri, 2007:269). This observation is further supported by Cortes (2004):

“Lexical bundles are identified empirically, rather than intuitively, as word combinations that recur most commonly in a register, and therefore, lexical bundles are usually not complete structural units, but rather fragmented phrases or clauses with new fragments embedded” (p. 400). For example only 15 per cent of lexical bundles in conversation can be regarded as complete phrases or clauses, while less than 5 per cent of the lexical bundles in academic prose represent complete structural unit (Biber et al., 1999: 993-1000). Instead, most lexical bundles bridge two structural units: they begin at a clause or phrase boundry, but the last words of the bundle are the first elements of a second structural unit. Most of the bundles in conversation bridge two clauses (e.g. I want to know, well that's what I), while bundles in academic prose usually bridge two phrases (e.g. in the case of, the base of the) Biber et al., 2004:377)

3. Lexical bundles, idioms, and collocations

Biber et al. (1999:988) defines idioms as relatively invariable expressions with meaning not derivable from the meaning of the constituent parts. These expressions have to be learned as a whole without looking into the meaning of the parts. Thus, these expressions can be replaced by a single word with similar meaning such as:

Kick the bucket die
Bear in mind remember

In addition, these idiomatic expressions are not completely invariable, that is, the verb in the above expressions accepts tense, number, and aspect variation, but the choice of the content words should remain as it is to keep the idiomatic meaning.

LBs, on the other hand, usually they are not fixed expressions, that's why a bundle cannot be replaced by a single word. At the same time LBs are not structurally complete as in:

Do you want me to
going to be
I don't know what

Another significant difference between LBs and idioms is that idioms are not necessarily common expressions. The well-known idioms such as kick the bucket and slap in the face are usually found in fiction but rarely used in the other register. In contrast, LBs are very common expressions, frequency is a major feature in the identification of any bundle. Thus, for an expression to be counted as a bundle must co-occur frequently.

As far as collocations are concerned, "they are associations between lexical words, so that the words co- occur more frequently than expected by chance" (Biber et al. ,1999: 988). This definition suggests that collocations are different from idioms in that they do not represent fixed expressions. Instead, they are "the tendency of a lexical item to co-occur with one or more other words" Halliday et al. (1964: 33). In addition, the individual words in a collocation keep their own meaning.

LBs can be considered as "extended collocations" (Biber et al. ,1999: 989) since they share the feature of frequency with collocations, but they are words that very often come in sets of three or more words that always occur together. It is not a random decision of taking one word and

combine it freely with other words. These words must be used frequently in registers such as I don't think, in the present study, would you mind.

4. Structural Classifications of Lexical Bundles

Lexical bundles can be classified formally depending on their structural types. Although lexical bundles do not represent complete structural units, they have "strong grammatical correlates" which facilitate their grouping into structural types (Biber et. al., 2004:280). Accordingly, Biber et al. (1999) suggest a taxonomy through which they set a structural classification for lexical bundles relying on these grammatical correlates. (Table, 1)

Table 1 The most common structural patterns of 4-word lexical bundles (Biber et al., 1999: 997-1025)

Structure	Examples
Noun phrase + of	the end of the, the nature of the, the beginning of the, a large number of
Other noun phrases	the fact that the, one of the most, the extent to which
Prepositional phrase + of	at the end of, as a result of, on the basis of, in the context of
Other prepositional phrases	on the other hand, at the same time, in the present study, with respect to the
Passive + prep phrase fragment	is shown in figure, is based on the, is defined as the, can be found in
Anticipatory it + verb/adj	it is important to, it is possible that, it was found that, it should be noted
Be + noun/adjectival phrase	is the same as, is a matter of, is due to the, be the result of
Others	as shown in figure, should be noted that, is likely to be, as well as the

The structural classification proposed by Biber et al. (1999) has been used widely in subsequent studies (Cortes, 2004; Hyland, 2008). Although there are slight differences in the structural types proposed in each study, it is possible to distinguish three major structural patterns from which several structural subcategories are derived:

1. bundles incorporate verb phrase fragments- you don't have to, have a lot of, is based on the, it's going to be;
2. bundles incorporate dependentclause fragment- I don't know if, to be able to, to come up with;

3. and bundles incorporate nounphrase and prepositionalphrase fragments- one of the things, a little bit about, or something like that, as far as the (Biber et al.,2004:380ff).

5. Functional Classification of Lexical Bundles

In addition to the structural classification of lexical bundles, a functional classification is set depending on the contribution of these bundles to the coherence and the organization of the text. As Biber (1999:188) and Hyland (2008:1) suggest lexical bundles serve as "building blocks" for the construction of the spoken and the written discourse. The functional taxonomy presented by Biber, Conrad, and Cortes (2004); Cortes (2004); Biber (2004); and Hyland (2008) suggests three major functional types of bundles: stance expressions, discourse organizers, and referential expressions.

Stance bundles express attitudes or assessments of certainty that frame some other proposition. Discourse organizers reflect relationships between prior and coming discourse. Referential bundles make direct reference to physical or abstract entities, or to the textual context itself, either to identify the entity or to single out some particular attribute of the entity as especially important (Biber et al., 2006: 139). In what follows a description of each type will be presented.

5.1 Stance Bundles

According to Biber et al. (2006: 139ff) stance bundles show the writer's point of view towards the proposition in terms of certainty and uncertainty. In addition, they can be personal and impersonal. Personal stance bundles are explicitly attributed to the writer\speaker (I) as in: I don't think so. Impersonal stance bundles are not explicitly attributed to the writer\speaker as in: it is possible to, can be used to. Stance bundles can be sub-categorized, according to Biber et al. (2006: 139) into two main types: epistemic and attitude\modality bundles.

5.1.1 Epistemic stance bundles

Epistemic stance bundles comment on the certainty or the probability of the proposition as in: I don't know if, I don't think so. Epistemic stance bundles can express certainty or uncertainty, but in general personal epistemic bundles express uncertainty only, while impersonal epistemic bundles tend to express certainty rather than uncertainty.

1- I don't know what the voltage is here.

2-I don't know if it will mean revolution in the same sense of the word.

3-Boys are more likely to be hyperactive, disruptive, and aggressive in class.

5.1.2 Attitudinal\Modality stance bundles

They express the speaker's\writer's attitude towards the event or the action in proposition, they are usually personal. This category of bundles can be further sub-categorized into four categories: desire, obligation/directive, intention/prediction, and ability

5.1.2.1 Desire bundles

They can be only personal expressing wishes and desires, or inquiries about another participant's desires.

4 -I don't want to deliver bad news to her.

5.1.2.2 Obligation\Directive bundles

Most of these bundles are personal but in a different way in that they have a second person pronoun you rather than first person pronoun as subject. In general, they are understood as personal expressions of stance, directing the listener to carry out actions that the speaker wants to have completed such as:

5 -Now you need to know how to read these.

6 -All you have to do is work on it.

5.1.2.3 Intention\Prediction bundles

In this category of attitudinal/modality stance bundles large number of the expressions are clearly personal expressing the speaker's intention to perform some action in the future. Other bundles in this category are impersonal expressing prediction of the future events without a hint to violation of the speaker.

7 - And so if you require a, twenty percent retrun on investment, this net present value is going to be zero.

5.1.2.4 Ability bundles

They formulate a small group of expressions occurring, mostly, with the second person pronoun:

8 -I want you to be able to name and define those four curriculum category .

5.2 Discourse Organizers

There are two major sub-categories included under text organizing bundles: topic introduction/focus and topic elaboration/clarification.

5.2.1 Topic introduction\focus bundles

This type of bundles provide to the reader\listener overt signals that a new topic is being introduced.

9 - what do you think the text trying to tell us ?

5.2.2 Topic elaboration\clarification bundles

The second sub-category of discourse organizing bundles relates to topic elaboration or clarification. This type of bundles is usually used when the speaker believes that additional explanation or clarification is required:

10- Section 3.5 illustrates how the techniques are employed together as well as the range of resulting execution characteristics that are presented to an architecture.

5.3 Referential Bundles

The third functional category is referential bundles that generally identify an entity or single out some particular attribute of an entity as especially important. There are four major subcategories included under referential bundles: identification/focus, imprecision indicators, specification of attributes and time/place/ text reference.

5.3.1 Identification\Focus bundles

These bundles have the function of focusing on the noun phrase following the bundle as especially important. That's why, they are put with in the category of referential bundles rather than the discourse organizers. For example, the bundle those of you who identifies the subgroup of students who are in focus:

11 -For those of you who came late I have the, uh, the quiz.

However, in most cases, identification\focus bundles have a discourse organizing function. In some other cases, identification\focus bundles perform the function of introducing a discussion by stating the main point first, and then giving the details:

12 -One of the things they stress in parenting is to be consistent and particularly with parents um some parents are inconsistent with siblings.

5.3.2 Imprecision indicators

The general function of the bundles within this category is that of indicating imprecise reference. More specifically, two functions are distinguished for this type of bundles, either to indicate that a specified reference is not necessarily exact, or to indicate that there are additional reference of the same type that could be provided.

13 -I think really we now have what about, six weeks left in class or something like that.

5.3.3 Bundles specifying attribute

These bundles identify specific attributes of the following head noun. Some of these bundles specify quantities or amounts:

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14-You'd have a lot of power.

15-Does it create a lot of wealth? No. It creates a little bit of wealth.

Other bundles in this category describe the size and form of the following head noun:

16-These figures give an idea of the size of the ethnological community in Russia.

In contrast, some specifying bundles identify abstract characteristics:

17-Student must define and constantly refine the nature of the problem...

These abstract specifying bundles are often used to establish logical relationships in a text:

18-Fleshy fruits are classified on the basis of the differentiation of the fruit wall.

19-They are defined in terms of the emotion they elicit.

5.3.4 Time\place\text-deixis bundles

These bundles refer to places, times, or locations in the text itself.

20-Children in the united states are not formally employed in farm work...

Many of these bundles can express more than one function, referring to time, place, and/or text deixis, depending on the context.

21-So you have to record that, since the asset was sold at the end of the year.

22-She's in that... uh.. office down there.. at the end of the hall.

23-Uh I'm going to start actually with the end of the chapter.

6.Text analysis

6.1 Text no.1 "David Cameron's Conservative Party Conference Speech"

"We've got to"

That Conservative methods are not just good for the strong and the successful but the best way to help the poor, and the weak, and the vulnerable. Because it's not enough to know our ideas are right – we've got to explain why they are compassionate too. Because we know what we're up against.

We've got to belongs to the category of obligation\directives. In the example above, the bundle expresses the extent to which the speaker is committed to explain his ideas which are related to what he believes is essential and vital to the future of Britain. The prime minister is attempting to show the British people what the conservative party is trying to offer for them. He intended to focus on building a sound society by taking into consideration all the people without differentiations. To

treat all the citizens equally, is basic principle for the conservative party and it must be looked at as a fixed aim for the party.

"We're going to"

If we're going to be a winner in this global race we've got to beat off this suffocating bureaucracy once and for all. And then there are those who say "yes of course we need more housing" ... but "no" to every development – and not in my backyard.

The bundle carries the speaker's prediction concerning an imminent situation that is of eliminating all the obstacles and the complications which might affect the success of Britain in the global race. Thus, the speaker is explaining the contrasted type of thinking which belong to some people in which they seem to agree an explaining the economy of the country theoretically, but when it comes to the real actions they object approving the expansion. Expanding economy means jobs, orders, and contracts to be available which improve people's life. However, this needs flexibility in approving decisions related to the aspect of the economy expansion.

"I don't want"

I don't want great schools to just be the preserve of those that can pay the fees, or buy the nice house in the right catchment area ...I want those schools to be open to every child – in every neighbourhood.

The bundle I don't want conveys the speaker's desire in relation to the state of schooling in UK. He stresses the importance of making the "great schools" available for everyone and not to be restricted to a particular class of people or only to those who "can pay". Thus the bundle I don't want goes in the category of desire lexical bundles.

The aspect of education is very important to help Britain to rise. Thus, the developed schools should be available for everyone and there are no excuses to the failure of this aim.

"I want us to"

There are young people who work hard year after year but are still living at home. They sit in their childhood bedroom, looking out of the window dreaming of a place of their own. I want us to say to them – you are our people, we are on your side, we will help you reach your dreams.

The speaker is expressing his desire to improve the overall situation of the British society. He promises the British people that the government is on their side and that it will always make what is necessary in order to improve their life. And of course, the thing that the people first care

about is having houses of their own, since this will guarantee a respectable and safe life for them and this what the government is promising to offer. Accordingly, the bundle I want us to belongs to the category of desire lexical bundles.

6.2 Text no. 3 "Tony Blair's valedictory speech to the party conference"

"For the first time"

In 1994, I stood before you for the first time and shared the country's anger at crumbling school buildings, patients languishing, sometimes dying in pain, waiting for operations, of crime doubled, of homes repossessed, of pensioners living in poverty; and told you of our dismay at four election defeats and how it was not us who should feel betrayed but the British people.

The bundle for the first time belongs to the category to of quantity specification attribute lexical bundles. The prime minister uses this bundle to point to the point of time that has passed since his first speech as a prime minister. This is because he wants to draw the people's attention to the progress that his government has achieved through this period. The reference to this period is intended to create a comparison between the time before and after Tony Blair's government in which an obvious achievements have been made including improvements in economy, health conditions, and education.

"In the face of"

The question today is different to the one we faced in 1997. It is how we reconcile openness to the rich possibilities of globalisation, with security in the face of its threats. How to be open and secure ?

As it is previously mentioned, this bundle performs the function of intangible framing attribute, that is some of the characteristics of the following head noun are being identified. The speech by the prime minister Tony Blair is, mainly, to discuss Britain's security from the one hand and the openness to the world on the other hand. In other words, the matter is about achieving the balance between the openness of Britain to a fast changing world without being affected by the external risks. So, it is the government responsibility to make people feel secure without being imprisoned inside their country.

"In the fight against"

That is why Identity Cards using biometric technology are not a breach of our basic rights, they are an essential part of responding to the

reality of modern migration and protecting us against identity fraud. Difficult reform leading to real progress in the fight against crime.

The bundle in the fight against goes in the category of intangible framing attribute. The speech, here, shows the speaker insistence on using whatever possible to improve the security side in the country including the exploitation to the developing technology of identifying people. This comes as a result of the instability in the world and the increase in crime averages. The speaker explains that these in

"It is right that"

In government you carry each hope; each disillusion. And in politics it's always about the next challenge. The truth is, you can't go on forever. That's why it is right that this is my last conference as Leader. Of course it is hard to let go. But it is also right to let go, for the country, and for you, the party.

This bundle belongs to the category of topic elaboration\clarification which is a sub category of discourse organizers bundles. The bundle is used when additional explanation is required.

Here, the speaker is trying to explain that in his position as a prime minister there are always wishes of new enhancement and improvements on different levels, and the challenges continue to appear as long as the country develops. However, there is an end for his period as a prime minister, but this will not prevent

7.CONCLUSION

Political speeches display a wide range of lexical bundle functions as they are studied by Biber, (2006). These functions are distributed differently with in the texts. Some of these functions have been used frequently by the three prime ministers such as the intangible framing attribute , quantity specification, and time\place\text diexis.

some functions have been noticed in a more limited manner such as epistemic, ability, and identification\focus. At the same time, there is the function of imprecision which has not appeared in the sample under the study.

This distribution of functions in the political discourse shows the decisiveness in the formulation and the wording of the political speech. Politicians attempt to be very cautious when choosing the words of a given speech, since they have to influence different levels of the society. Generally, they avoid expressions that give the addressee a feeling of hesitation on the part of the speaker. This is what politicians normally

avoid, since they want to give the impression that they are sure of what they say and hence it should be taken for granted. This is why they use the epistemic stance function in a rather restricted way.

The political discourse shows examples of desire, intention\prediction, and obligation\directives as they, normally, serve to persuade, the addressee through giving promises, expressing future wishes, and predicting future events (usually hopeful and positive).

Logically, the use of function such as the referential function is of benefit in a political discourse, as it facilitate connecting what is being said to entities (physical, abstract, or textual), in addition to the fact that such functions serve in highlighting some attribute as important. That's why they are widely used in the political discourse.

ملخص البحث

هذه الدراسة تتناول فئة جديدة من الكلمات المجتمعة تدعى الحزم المعجمية. الحزم المعجمية عرفت من قبل باير (1999) على انها " تتابع من ثلاث كلمات او اكثر . الدراسة تهدف الى اكتشاف وظائف الحزم المعجمية في الخطابات السياسية. الدراسة تتبع تصنيف باير(٢٠٠٦) لتحليل الحزم المعجمية في بعض الخطابات السياسية. الاستنتاج الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة يشير الى ان وظيفة الاشارة للحزم المعجمية قد احتلت الصدارة على الوظائف الاخرى في الخطاب السياسي

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