



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***FEATURES OF LEXICAL BUNDLES IN SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH  
ARTICLES OF NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE EXPERT WRITERS OF ENGLISH***

**REZA VASEGHI**

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ENGLISH**

By

**REZA VASEGHI**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**May 2016**

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## **DEDICATION**

**Gratefully dedicated to  
My dear wife and parents**



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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment  
of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**May 2016**

**Chairman : Professor Jayakaran A/L A.P. Mukundan, PhD**  
**Faculty : Educational Studies**

Lexical bundles are combinations of three and more words which co-occur most frequently in a given register or genre (Biber et al., 1999). They have been the focus of attention of many researchers in academic written discourse in the last two decades. In spite of the fact that lexical bundles are used much frequently in academic written discourse, it appears that non-native writers have difficulty in the application of these multi-word expressions, particularly in producing writing in their specific scientific field. Having evidence of their significant role in shaping the academic texts, it is worth exploring the usage of lexical bundles in the academic texts, particularly in a specific academic discipline. The present study adopted a corpus-based approach and investigated the usage of lexical bundles in social sciences research articles written by native and non-native Malaysian expert writers in the field. Moreover, the ultimate goal of this study was to develop and offer a useful pedagogical list of lexical bundles for social sciences academic writers.

In the current study, in order to examine the use of lexical bundles by native and non-native Malaysian social scientist writers, discipline-specific corpora, namely, Social Sciences Corpus (SSC) and Malaysian Corpus of Social Sciences (MCSS) were created. The number of tokens for native and non-native Malaysian corpora is 2,007,037 and 325,164 running words, respectively. The corpora were compiled from high-impact leading and prestigious international journals in the field.

Later, AntConc 3.4.3 (Anthony, 2014) software was used in order to extract target bundles from the Social Sciences Corpus (SSC). The concordancer tool was also employed on the data to help the qualitative analysis to examine lexical bundles corresponding contexts and determine the specific functions they perform. Moreover, the two modified versions of analytical frameworks, developed by Biber et al. (1999) and Hyland (2008a), were applied in the current study to classify the bundles according to their structural and functional characteristics. Furthermore, a

series of data refinement criteria were set out by the researcher to create a meaningful, concise and teachable list of lexical bundles and also to limit the number of the lexical bundles for further analysis in terms of their grammatical and pragmatic features. It is worth noting that these criteria were established as a methodological decision to meet the purpose of the current study.

The primary findings of the study indicated that most of the target bundles in the SSC were made up of three-word bundles, and the bundles belonged to a particular disciplinary discourse. In terms of the structural analysis, the results showed that the native social scientist writers show a greater tendency to use more noun and propositional phrases and verb or adjective phrases with 'to' clause fragments in their academic written discourse. The functional analysis revealed that the native social scientists writers used a wide range of research-oriented bundles to describe the content and procedures of their research in detail and also to show that their interpretation is based on empirical results and that the analytical method could be reliably replicated. Overall, the structural and functional analyses led the researcher to conclude that native social scientist writers have their own distinctive characteristics to describe their methodological decisions and argue their ideas based on the existing studies and the results obtained from data.

A comparative analysis between native and non-native corpora also revealed that non-native Malaysian social scientist writers overused and underused target bundles compared to their native counterparts. The results suggest that non-native writers are not able to produce a varied set of expressions. Moreover, the results of structural and functional analyses of target bundles between native and non-native corpora showed few considerable differences as far as the use of lexical bundles were concerned. However, it is interesting to note that non-native Malaysian social scientist writers used much less frequent participate-oriented bundles compared to their native counterparts.

The present study had some pedagogical implications for EAP course instructors and designers to use the useful list of lexical bundles in the class and integrate them into their ESL/EFL curricula. The findings of this study could also be beneficial for writing instructors in providing the teaching materials to raise the novice and non-natives' awareness of appropriate use of lexical bundles to achieve a more native-like style of academic writing.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senta Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**GUGUSAN LEKSIKAL DALAM PENULISAN AKADEMIK PENULIS  
PENUTUR ASAL DAN BUKAN ASAL**

Oleh

**REZA VASEGHI**

**Mei 2016**

**Pengerusi : Profesor Jayakaran A/L A.P. Mukundan, PhD**  
**Fakulti : Pengajian Pendidikan**

Gugusan leksikal (*lexical bundles*) merupakan kombinasi tiga atau lebih perkataan yang wujud secara kerap di dalam sesuatu laras bahasa atau genre (Biber et al.,1999). Gugusan leksikal ini telah menjadi focus pemerhatian ramai penyelidik akademik terutamanya dalam diskursus penulisan bagi tempoh dua dekad kebelakangan ini. Di sebalik hakikat penggunaan gugusan leksikal ini kerap ditemui di dalam diskursus penulisan akademik, ianya juga masih menjadi suatu kesukaran bagi penulis-penulis dari kalangan bukan penutur asal terutamanya dalam penggunaan perkataan bervariasi di dalam penulisan bidang saintifik mereka. Usaha meneroka penggunaan gugusan leksikal dalam penulisan akademik di dalam sesuatu disiplin yang khusus adalah amat berguna memandangkan adanya bukti nyata peranan gugusan leksikal dalam menentukan keberkesanan penulisan akademik. Atas sebab tersebut, kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan korpus dan menyelidik penggunaan gugusan leksikal dalam penulisan artikel kajian yang dihasilkan oleh penulis-penulis dari kalangan penutur asal dan bukan asal (*native and non-native*) Malaysia yang berpengalaman dalam bidang masing-masing. Tambahan lagi, tujuan khusus kajian ini adalah untuk menyediakan dan menawarkan senarai gugusan leksikal yang berdasarkan aspek pedagogi yang boleh digunakan oleh penulis-penulis jurnal akademik dalam bidang sains sosial.

Satu kesatuan kumpulan tulisan-tulisan (*corpora*) berpandukan bidang yang khusus yang dinamakan '*Social Sciences Corpus (SSC) and Malaysian Corpus of Social Sciences (MCSS)*' telah dihasilkan untuk tujuan kajian ini yakni untuk meneliti penggunaan gugusan leksikal oleh penulis-penulis penutur asal dan bukan asal Malaysia dalam bidang sains sosial. Bukti terkumpul dalam korpus penulis-penulis dari kalangan penutur asal dan bukan asal Malaysia ini berjumlah 2,007,037 dan jumlah perkataan adalah sebanyak 325,164. Kesatuan kumpulan tulisan-tulisan ini telah dihimpunkan dari jurnal-jurnal antarabangsa yang berpengaruh tinggi dalam bidang kajian ini.

Seterusnya, perisian AntConc 3.4.3 (Anthony, 2014) telah digunakan untuk mengumpul atau memilih kumpulan gugusan leksikal pilihan kajian dari ‘*Social Sciences Corpus*’ (SSC). Alat penyelarasan khusus juga telah digunakan ke atas data untuk membantu analisa kualitatif mengkaji fungsi khusus gugusan leksikal.

Selanjutnya, dua lagi kerangka analisis yang telah diubahsuai yang telah dirangka oleh Biber et al. (1999) dan Hyland (2008a) telah digunakan dalam kajian ini untuk mengklasifikasi kesatuan kumpulan tulisan-tulisan mengikut struktur dan fungsi masing-masing. Tambahan lagi, satu siri kriteria saringan data telah digunakan oleh penyelidik untuk menghasilkan senarai gugusan leksikal yang bermakna, ringkas dan boleh diajar serta untuk menghadkan bilangan gugusan leksikal untuk analisa seterusnya dalam aspek ciri-ciri tatabahasa dan pragmatik. Adalah penting untuk dinyatakan bahawa ciri-ciri tersebut telah dikenalpasti sebagai satu keputusan metodologi untuk mencapai tujuan kajian ini.

Penemuan-penemuan asas menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakan gugusan sasaran dalam SSC adalah dihasilkan dari gabungan tiga perkataan dan gugusan tersebut mewakili satu laras yang khusus. Dalam aspek analisa struktur, penemuan menunjukkan bahawa penulis-penulis dari kalangan penutur asal dalam bidang sains sosial lebih gemar menggunakan frasa kata-nama, sendi-nama dan kata-nama atau frasa kata-sifat dengan fragmen klausa dalam penulisan akademik mereka. Analisa fungsi pula menunjukkan bahawa penulis-penulis dari kalangan penutur asal menggunakan banyak gugusan leksikal yang berorientasikan kajian dalam menjelaskan kandungan dan prosedur kajian mereka secara terperinci dan juga dalam membuktikan bahawa interpretasi mereka berasaskan keputusan empirikal dan ianya boleh digunapakai untuk menafsirkan kaedah analisis. Secara keseluruhan, analisa struktur dan fungsi telah menerajui penyelidik untuk merangkumkan bahawa penulis-penulis dari kalangan penutur asal dalam bidang sains social memiliki ciri-ciri khusus dalam menjelaskan keputusan metodologi mereka dan dalam berhujah tentang idea-idea mereka yang berasaskan kajian-kajian sedia-ada dan data terkumpul.

Analisa perbandingan di antara kesatuan kumpulan tulisan-tulisan (corpora) penutur asal dan bukan asal Malaysia dalam bidang sains sosial telah membuktikan bahawa penulis-penulis bukan penutur asal menunjukkan penggunaan lebih kerap dan lebih jarang gugusan sasaran berbanding dengan penulis-penulis dari kalangan penutur asal. Hasil kajian mencadangkan bahawa penulis-penulis bukan penutur asal tidak berupaya menghasilkan set ungkapan atau ekspresi yang pelbagai. Tambahan lagi, dapatan kajian berasaskan struktur dan fungsi gugusan sasaran yang diguna oleh penulis-penulis dari kalangan penutur asal dan bukan asal menunjukkan perbezaan ketara dari segi penggunaan gugusan leksikal. Bagaimanapun, penulis-penulis dari kalangan penutur bukan asal Malaysia dalam bidang sains sosial didapati menggunakan gugusan *participate-oriented* yang lebih sedikit berbanding dengan penulis-penulis dari kalangan penutur asal.



Kajian terkini ini memiliki implikasi pedagogi ke atas tenaga pengajar dan pereka kursus EAP dalam menggunakan senarai gugusan leksikal yang berguna dalam pengajaran dan dalam usaha mengintegrasikan gugusan leksikal ke dalam kurikulum ESL/EFL. Hasil kajian ini juga berguna kepada tenaga pengajar bidang penulisan dalam menawarkan bahan pengajaran untuk tujuan melahirkan kesedaran tentang penggunaan gugusan leksikal yang betul di kalangan penulis-penulis baru dan bukan penutur asal agar wujudnya gaya bahasa yang seakan-akan penulis dari kalangan penutur asal dalam semua penulisan akademik mereka.



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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 05 May 2016 to conduct the final examination of Reza Vaseghi on his thesis entitled "Features of Lexical Bundles in Social Science Research Articles of Native and Non-Native Expert Writers of English" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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