FUNDAMENTAL EVALUATIVE ADJECTIVE PATTERNS IN BRITISH BROADSHEET AND TABLOID NEWSPAPER DISCOURSE

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Abstract

News discourse has been analysed from different angles including the critical approach, stylistic approach, corpus-linguistic approach, cognitive approach, diachronic approach, socio-linguistic approach etc. [1]. Yet, these approaches do not focus on analysing attitude/evaluation as such. That is why this study sets out to explore and compare expressing attitude/evaluation via two lexicogrammatical patterns which were identified by Hunston and Sinclair [2] and amended by Bednarek [3]. The adjective lexicogrammatical patterns 'it v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause' and 'v-link ADJ prep' seem to be the most prominent carriers of evaluative language in a corpus of six British English online 'popular' and 'quality' newspapers. The paper compares not only the frequency of the patterns in the corpus but also the differences in the use of the patterns between the quality and popular newspapers.

Keywords

Evaluation; Patterns; Adjective; Newspaper; Discourse; Corpus.

Introduction

The concept of attitude was analysed by Martin and White in Appraisal Theory [4], where attitude is divided into judgemental proposition (opinion) and emotional reaction (emotion). Attitude can be expressed explicitly for example via evaluative adjectives such as *possible*, *clear*, and *important* or implicitly as in *the children were restless during his lesson*, in which case the evaluative meaning is difficult to be recognized. The concept of evaluative lexicogrammatical pattern, which will be discussed in the paper, was introduced by Hunston and Sinclair [2] and further amended by Hunston and Francis [5], and Bednarek [1], [3].

1 The Aim of the Research

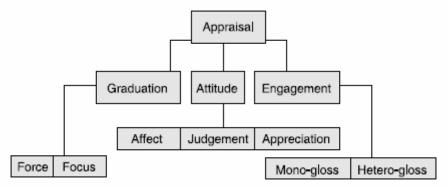
The aim of the paper is to compare two evaluative adjective patterns, 'it v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause' and 'v-link ADJ prep, which were found in the corpus of British English online broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, in terms of frequency and expressing attitude (opinion and emotion). The two lexicogrammatical patterns explored in this study seem to be the most prominent carriers of evaluative language in the mentioned corpus. The findings presented in the article are a part of a wider dissertation research on expressing attitude in news discourse.

2 Theory

2.1 The Concept of Evaluation

Linguists often fail to agree on a unifying definition of evaluation, but they do agree on the fact that evaluation is comparative, subjective, and value-laden [6]. Evaluation can be

comprehended differently, for example, Thomson and Hunston use the term *evaluation* to describe a speaker's/writer's opinion-related meanings [6], Conrad and Biber use the term *stance* to refer to attitudinal stance, epistemic stance, and style stance [7]. Martin and White use the term *appraisal* which represents a "multi-perspectival model", which takes into consideration textual, ideational, and interpersonal factors [4]. This paper is based on Martin and White's Appraisal Theory, whose detailed sub-division can be seen in Figure 1. Figure 1 shows that the term appraisal is too broad; hence this study focuses only on the attitude subcategory. Further, the study adapts the used terminology to the needs of the research. Therefore, the terms *opinion* and *emotion* will be employed in the text. *Opinion* includes judgement and appreciation and "labels positive or negative quality" of evaluated phenomena; *emotion* includes affect and indicates "emotional reactions of human subjects" [3].



Source: Adapted from [4].

Fig. 1: Martin and White's appraisal system

2.2 Local Grammar of Evaluation

The notion of grammar patterns was first introduced in Francis [9] where she describes a new corpus-driven approach to grammar that was adopted by a team of linguists led by John Sinclair. Huston and Francis [5] later describe a pattern as:

"...phraseology frequently associated with (a sense of) a word, particularly in terms of the prepositions, groups, and clauses that follow a word. Patterns and lexis are mutually dependent, in that each pattern occurs with a restricted set of lexical items, and each lexical item occurs with a restricted set of patterns".

Based on this definition Hunston and Sinclair [2] identified six basic patterns that usually occur with evaluative or subjective adjectives and can be easily parsed to identify evaluation. Bednarek [3] challenged these patterns and offered a more detailed subdivision which could disclose more precisely what function of evaluation the patterns realise whether opinion or emotion. Table 1 displays Hunston and Sinclair's patterns in comparison to Bednarek's.

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¹ Bednarek uses the terms evaluative category (opinion) and evaluative response (emotion) [1].

Tab. 1: Evaluative patterns

Pattern	Hunston and Sinclair (2000)	Bednarek (2009)
1.	it v-link ADJ clause	a, it v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause
		b, it v-link ADJ for/of n to-inf
		c, V it ADJ finite/non-finite clause
		(find/consider)
		d, it V n V ADJ to-inf
		e, V it as ADJ/ V it ADJ
2.	There v-link	There v-link
	something/anything/nothing ADJ	something/anything/nothing ADJ
	about/in/with / ing-clause/n	about/in/with / ing-clause/n
3.	v-link ADJ to-inf	a, v-link ADJ to-inf
		b, v-link ADJ that
4.	v-link ADJ that clause	v-link ADJ prep
5.	pseudo cleft	
	what v-link ADJ prep v-link that	
	clause/n	
	what v-link ADJ v-link clause/n	
	what n V ADJ v-link clause/n	
6.	general nouns	
	ADJ n <i>about</i> n v-link clause/n	
	ADJ n v-link clause/n	

Source: [2], [3]

3 Corpus and Methodology

The corpus which was used to conduct the comparison of the evaluative adjective patterns was newly designed for the needs of a dissertation thesis². Table 2 shows that the corpus comprises 741 mostly front page articles from British English online newspapers. The newspapers chosen are *The Sun*, *The Express*, and *The Mirror* for the tabloids, and *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph* for the broadsheets. The texts were collected between 18th September, 2011, and 8th October, 2012.

Tab. 2: Quantitative description of the corpus

	Broadsheets	Tabloids	Total
Number of articles	339	402	741
Number of word tokens	273,014	261,197	534,211

Source: Own

As seen in Table 2, which displays a quantitative description of the corpus, there are 339 broadsheet newspaper articles and 402 from the tabloids. There are more tabloid articles because they tend to be shorter and in order to achieve a similar, comparable number of tokens, more tabloid articles had to be collected. The total number of word tokens is 261,197 in the tabloid sub-corpus, and 273,014 in the broadsheets sub-corpus. The larger size of the corpus allowed a complete description of the evaluative patterns, and revealed their relation to the expression of opinion or emotion.

² A pilot study was conducted about a year ago, where all the patterns had been compared and conclusions had been drawn, yet after some pier view recommendation, adjustments were made. This article presents new findings, and focuses only on the two most prominent patterns.

To detect the analysed patterns in the corpus, Antconc software was used. The corpus was morphologically tagged (by the part-of-speech tagger Q-Tag) as the patterns include both lexical items and word classes. Link verbs such as *be, remain, prove, become, look, feel, seem, appear, turn, smell, taste, sound, prove,* and *turn out* were searched for along with evaluative adjectives. The link verbs *be, become,* and *seem* appear to be the most frequent link verbs in the corpus.

The manual selection yielded 509 instances of the two evaluative patterns, see Table 4. The outcome for each pattern in the broadsheet and tabloid sub-corpora was further classified according to whether it expressed emotion or opinion. The type/token ratios were calculated and compared across sub-corpora. The tabloid and broadsheet sub-corpora were not only compared in terms of patterns, but also in terms of lexical items that are most frequently used in the sub-corpora and in the corpus as a whole.

4 The Analysis

Table 3 displays the analysed patterns with examples from the corpus.

Tab. 3: The analysed adjective evaluative patterns with examples

Pattern	Ex. no.	Example	Source
<i>it</i> v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause	(1)	It is unclear what Scott was doing	B_Dec_09
	(2)	It was wrong that many young people in work have to stay at home	B_Jun_25
v-link ADJ prep	(3)	he was responsible for all the postings made on October 3 and 4.	T_Oct_12_08
	(4)	to be very embarrassing for the Metropolitan police	B_Apr_12

The examples in the text are labelled with 'B' as broadsheet and 'T' as tabloids, the abbreviation of the month and day follows. As the collection started in September 2011 and finished in October 2012, some months appear twice in the corpus; that is why the months are sometimes labelled with the year number as in the example (3). *Source: Own*

Table 4 represents quantitative results of the two patterns, along with relative occurrence per 10,000 words. It shows that the total number of patterns (tokens) found in the corpus is 509. There is not a marked difference in the overall number of patterns between broadsheets (256) and tabloids (253); however, the partial results of the two analysed patterns are different. The patterns are discussed below.

Tab. 4: Presentation of the analysed patterns in broadsheets and tabloids

	Broadsheets		Tabloids		Total	
Patterns	raw freq.	per 10,000	raw freq.	per 10,000	raw freq.	per 10,000
<i>it</i> v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause	147	5.4	97	3.7	244	4.6
v-link ADJ prep	109	4.0	156	6.0	265	5.0
Total	256	9.3	253	9.6	509	9.5

Source: Own

4.1 Pattern 'v-link ADJ prep' (prep complementation pattern)

Pattern 'v-link ADJ prep' is the most frequent pattern of my corpus. It occurs 265 times in the corpus; see Table 4. Table 5 further shows quantitative results concerning portraying opinion and emotion via this pattern. Generally, it can be said that the pattern is unique because of its high frequency and also because of the fact that that the tabloids make use of this pattern more than the broadsheets³ (6.0 times per 10,000 words in the tabloids vs. 4.0 times in the broadsheets). Table 5, in addition, reports that the most noticeable difference lies in terms of expressing emotion. The tabloids use it 3.7 times per 10,000 words compared to 'only' 1.8 times in the broadsheets. The next section illustrates more explicitly how emotion and opinion are expressed via this pattern.

Tab. 5: Pattern 'v-link ADJ prep'

Pattern 'v-link ADJ prep'								
Evaluation	Broads	roadsheets Tabloids			Total			
opinion/emotion	raw	per	raw	per	raw	per		
	frequency	10,000	frequency	10,000	frequency	10,000		
Emotion	50	1.8	96	3.7	146	2.7		
Opinion	59	2.2	60	2.3	119	2.2		
Total	109	4.0	156	6.0	265	5.0		

Source: Own

4.1.1 Emotion

In total, emotion is expressed 2.7 times via this pattern per 10,000 words. As mentioned above, the tabloid/broadsheet ratio is 1.8 to 3.7. The difference in the use of this pattern in the tabloids can be considered marked. The most frequent adjectives used to portray emotion are *concerned*, *worried*, and *proud* in the tabloids, and *unhappy*, *worried*, and *concerned* in broadsheets, see examples (5), (6), and (7).

- (5) Many Conservative MPs are unhappy about aspects of... (B_Oct_11_25)
- (6) His lawyers are particularly concerned by the deterioration of his mental... (B_Feb_13)
- (7) He was proud of me. (T_May_04)

In total, there are 39 types of adjectives used in this pattern in both the tabloids and broadsheets. A more detailed analysis of the 'emotion' category adjectives shows that both types of newspapers have a tendency to express insecurity via this pattern (48% in the broadsheets and 25% in the tabloids). While the second most frequent emotion category in the tabloids is happiness (16.7%), the broadsheets portray unhappiness (14%). The findings indicate that the tabloids do not overuse negative emotion expressions as much as the broadsheets. The tabloids show 52 cases of negative emotion over 46 positive ones, the negative/positive ratio in the broadsheets is 37:14.

Further, the most frequent prepositions used in the broadsheets with adjectives conveying emotion are *about* and *by*. The 'main' preposition in tabloids is *for*, see example (4) in Table 3, followed by *about*. The findings prove that when emotion is expressed, the adjective is frequently complemented by the *about*-prepositional phrase, ⁴ see example (5).

³ Further research of this corpus and other patterns (a part of the author's dissertation thesis) revealed that this situation is unique as the broadsheets tend to overtake the tabloids in employing the evaluative patterns, mainly in expressing opinion.

⁴ "... adjectives followed by *about* typically construe Affect," [11].

4.1.2 Opinion

The pattern 'v-link ADJ prep' is a very productive pattern of opinion with 119 occurrences in my corpus. Opinion is represented more often in the tabloids (2.3 times per 10,000 words) compared to 2.2 times in the broadsheets, however, the difference is negligible. Opinion is expressed via 66 types of adjectives, therefore we could conclude that newspapers use a much wider range of adjectives to indicate judgemental proposition (emotion was expressed via 39 types). Broadsheets make use mainly of the adjectives *responsible* and *good*, tabloids of *responsible* and *guilty*, see examples (3) in Table 3 and (8) below. An interesting point is that only a few adjectives are repeated several times while most of the adjectives have been found only once, which explains the high number of adjective types used in this pattern.

(B_Oct_11_12)

The preposition *for* is most frequently used in both the sub-corpora. Broadsheets then use *of* (7 times), and other prepositions, e.g. *to*, *about*, *with*, *in*, *without*, *at*, *from*, etc., but their frequency is lower. There is a notable drop between *for* and of regarding the quantitative results. *For* is used 27 times and *of* only 7 times, hence it could be assumed that broadsheets mainly rely on the preposition *for* in the pattern 'v-link ADJ prep' to express opinion. The situation in tabloids is different, the usage of the prepositions *for* and *of* is almost equal (17:16 occurrences).

4.2 Pattern 'it v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause'

The pattern 'it v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause' is the second most frequent pattern in this corpus, see Table 4. In contrast to pattern 'v-link ADJ prep', where expressing emotion played an important role, the pattern 'it v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause' expresses only opinion, see Table 6.

Tab. 6: Pattern 'it v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause' – quantitative results

Pattern 'it v-link ADJ finite / non-finite clause'								
Evaluation	Broadsheets		Tabloids		Total			
opinion/emotion	raw	per	raw	per	raw	per		
	frequency	10,000	frequency	10,000	frequency	10,000		
Emotion	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Opinion	147	5.4	97	3.7	244	4.6		
Total	147	5.4	97	3.7	244	4.6		

Source: Own

Table 6 further points at the fact that this pattern is significantly more frequently used in the broadsheets than in the tabloids.

4.2.1 Dependent Clauses

The *that*-clause, *to*-infinitive clause, *wh*-clause, *if/whether* clause, *how*-clause or *ing*-clause represent the 'thing evaluated' (in Hunston and Sinclair's terms [2]) in this pattern. Table 7 displays all the types of complementation in the pattern '*it* v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause', quantitative results are included.

Tab. 7: Pattern 'it v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause' – different kinds of complementation

Ex.			Evaluative	Thing evaluated	No.	Source
no.	it	link	adjective	finite or non-finite clause		
(9)	it	was	essential	that Greek unity government restored confidence in the markets before	118	B_Nov_06
(10)	it	is	useless	to persist.	106	B_Nov_07
(11)	it	is	unclear	whether the handshake on Wednesday morning will be in private or in public	7	B_Jun_22
(12)	it	is	unclear	if the same will happen today.	2	B_Jun_22
(13)	it	is	unclear	how Italy is going to refinance	4	B_Nov_06
(14)	it	is	unclear	what will happen to those	5	B_Jun_22
(15)	it	was	difficult	telling Sarah what to do.	2	T_Jan_01

Source: Own

Table 7 shows that both sub-corpora have a tendency to use *that/to*-inf clauses as complementation and this complementation is not to be considered as marked (117 occurrences of *that*-clause and 106 of *to*-inf clause). However, other dependent clauses are worth mentioning. Firstly, the *if/whether* and *wh*-clauses occur only in broadsheets, see examples (11), (12), (14). Secondly, my corpus, in addition to Bednarek's pattern description from Table 1, also shows four instances of *how*-clauses, which can also be found only in the broadsheets, see example (13) in Table 7. Thirdly, the most notable finding concerns the interrogative dependent clauses, which follow only the adjective *unclear* or negated adjective *clear*. No other adjectives are used with these dependent clauses in the sub-corpora. This finding points to the typical pattern behaviour where choice of an adjective is closely interwoven with the choice of a dependent clause. Fourthly, the *ing*-complementation occurs just twice in the corpus, once in each sub-corpus, examples (16) and (17) below.

 (T_Jan_01)

It can be concluded that when this pattern is used, tabloids prefer using *that/to-*inf dependent clauses, whereas broadsheets have a tendency to exploit all means of complementation available for this pattern, yet *that* and *to-*inf clauses dominate.

4.2.2 Adjectives

The adjective clear is the most frequent adjective used in both sub-corpora, see example (18) below.

(18) It is clear that we are seeing the effect of the international economic (T_Oct_11_12) crisis on the UK labour market.

The adjective *clear*, in affirmative clauses, is only complemented by a *that*-clause. When the adjective *clear* is negated i.e. *not clear*, it is followed by a *wh/if/whether* clause. Altogether, there are 41 tokens of this adjective in this pattern in the whole corpus. Further, the broadsheet sub-corpus makes frequent use of the adjectives *important*, *right*, and *unclear*. The adjective *unclear* is only followed by a *wh/if/whether* clause, see Table 7 and example (1) in Table 3, while *important* and *right* are complemented by *that/to-*inf clauses. The tabloids have a tendency to use *right*, *important*, and *wrong*. *Important* and *right*, which are both used

frequently in both kinds of newspapers tend to express positive/approval meaning. Altogether, there are 57 types of adjectives used in the 244 instances of this pattern.

As the results have shown, there is not a great difference in the range of adjectives used in between the sub-corpora. Therefore, it was decided to apply Hunston's approach to 'it v-link ADJ that' pattern [5]. Hunston analysed this pattern in the New Scientist (a quasi-academic publication, which could be compared to broadsheets) and the Sun/News of the World (tabloid newspapers), and discovered that the occurrence of this pattern in her corpora was more or less the same regardless the type of publication (a similar situation can be found in my corpus); thus, she looked for a contrast elsewhere. The semantic categories of the used adjectives were compared and divided into following categories: 'clear', 'possible', 'important', 'surprising', 'good', and 'bad'. The research showed that the New Scientist predominantly uses adjectives carrying the semantic meaning of 'possible' and 'clear', while the Sun prefers 'important' and 'clear' [5].

My corpus findings show that the pattern 'it v-link ADJ finite / non-finite clause' is used in the broadsheets predominantly to assess the clarity or the importance of the proposition, the tabloid sub-corpus, on the other hand, has a tendency to associate this pattern with the 'good' or 'bad' scale. There are 11 different adjectives used to express the positive evaluation and 12 to express negative ('bad') evaluation. Both the relatively high representation of the 'good' and 'bad' evaluative categories and the broad range of the different adjectives used to express the evaluation suggest the importance assigned to these categories in the tabloid newspapers. Generally, it can be concluded that the good or bad evaluative expressions prevail over the expressions of epistemic and deontic stance ('clear', 'possible' and 'important'). The broadsheet sub-corpus findings appear to be quite different. As mentioned earlier 'clear' and 'important' classes are the most important classes in the broadsheet sub-corpus, followed by the 'possible' class, where the variety of used adjectives is the greatest (12 types of adjectives). The findings indicate that the broadsheets predominantly focus on epistemic stance rather than assessing the proposition as 'good' or 'bad'.

Conclusion

To sum up, this paper compared two most frequent evaluative adjective patterns which appeared in a corpus of six British English online newspapers. The findings have proved that the distinction of the patterns lies more in the function than the frequency. There is a marked difference in the use of the pattern 'v-link ADJ prep', especially, in terms of expressing emotion. The tabloids significantly overtake the broadsheets in using this pattern to express emotion. However, when used, both the sub-corpora have a tendency to portray insecurity. The tabloid sub-corpus, in addition, makes higher use of adjectives that express the 'good' and 'bad' scale via the pattern 'v-link ADJ prep' as in pattern 'it v-link ADJ finite/none finite clause'. Opinion is expressed more or less equally via this pattern.

The pattern 'it v-link ADJ finite/none finite clause' occurs almost equally in the corpus as the pattern 'v-link ADJ prep', yet the pattern plays a totally different role. The pattern 'it v-link ADJ finite/none finite clause' is only used to express opinion, it is predominantly used in the broadsheets where it mainly constructs epistemic and deontic stance, while the tabloid subcorpus shows an emphasis on the 'good' and 'bad' scale of evaluation. There is one more notable difference between the two sub-corpora: While the tabloids predominantly use the that/to-inf clause complementation, the broadsheets are more inventive and also employ interrogative dependent clauses (such as if/whether/wh/how clauses). The adjective clear

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⁵ Groom also analysed the pattern 'it v-link ADJ *to*-inf/that' but he introduces different meaning groups i.e. ADEQUACY, DESIRABILITY, DIFFICULTY, EXPECTATION, IMPORTANCE, and VALIDITY [12].

stands out the most in this pattern as it is the most frequently used lexical item in this pattern and it shows some lexicogrammatical regularities such as when negated, only dependent interrogative clauses follow it, and when used in a positive way, only that clause follows.

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ZÁKLADNÍ EVALUATIVNÍ ADJEKTIVNÍ VZORCE V BRITSKÉM SERIÓZNÍM A BULVÁRNÍM TISKU

Novinový diskurz byl již mnohokrát analyzován. Ať už se jednalo o přístup kritický, stylistický, kognitivní, diachronický, sociolingvistický či přístup korpusní lingvistiky, tyto přístupy se nezaměřovaly na analýzu evaluace v textu. Proto se tento článek pokusí popsat a porovnat dva lexikogramatické vzorce, které byly poprvé identifikovány a popsány Hunstonovou a Sinclairem a upravený Bednarkovou. Na korpusu britských online bulvárních a seriózních novinových článků se ukázalo, že lexikogramatické vzorce 'it v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause' a 'v-link ADJ prep' jsou nejčastěji používány k vyjádření evaluace. Tento článek porovnává nejen četnost výskytu těchto vzorců v daném korpusu, ale zaměřuje se také na rozdíly užití, které tyto vzorce vykazují v jednotlivých pod korpusech.

Grundlegende evaluative adjektivische Formeln in der britischen seriösen und boulevard-presse

Die Zeitungssprache ist schon viele Male analysiert worden. Ganz gleich, ob es sich dabei um einen kritischen, stilistischen, kognitiven, diachronischen, soziolinguistischen oder einen korpuslinguistischen Ansatz handelt, all diese Ansätze beschäftigen sich nicht mit der Evaluation im Text. Daher versucht dieser Beitrag zwei lexikalisch-grammatische Formeln zu beschreiben, welche zum ersten Mal von Hunston und Sinclair beschrieben und später von Bednarek systematisiert worden sind. An Hand eines Korpus von Artikeln britischer Online-Boulevard-Zeitungen hat sich gezeigt, dass die lexikalisch-grammatische Formeln 'it v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause' und 'v-link ADJ prep' zum Ausdruck von Evaluationen am häufigsten Verwendung finden. Dieser Artikel vergleicht nicht nur die Häufigkeit des Auftretens solcher Formeln, sondern richtet die Aufmerksamkeit auch auf die Unterschiede im Gebrauch, welche diese Formeln in einzelnen Unterkorpora aufweisen.

PODSTAWOWE EWALUACYJNE ADJEKTYWNE WZORCE W BRYTYJSKIEJ PRASIE POWAŻNEJ I BRUKOWEJ

Dyskurs dziennikarski był już analizowany wielokrotnie. Bez względu na to, czy było to podejście krytyczne, stylistyczne, kognitywne, diachroniczne, socjolingwistyczne czy podejście lingwistyki korpusowej, podejścia te nie skupiały się na analizie ewaluacji w tekście. Dlatego też w niniejszym artykule podjęto próbę opisania i porównania dwóch wzorców leksykogramatycznych, które po raz pierwszy zostały zidentyfikowane i opisane przez Hunston i Sinclaira i zmodyfikowane przez Bednarkovą. Na korpusie brytyjskich brukowych i poważnych artykułów gazetowych online okazało się, że wzorce leksykogramatyczne 'it v-link ADJ finite/non-finite clause' i 'v-link ADJ prep' są najczęściej stosowane do wyrażenia ewaluacji. Artykuł nie tylko porównuje częstotliwość występowania tych wzorców w danym korpusie, ale skupia się także na różnicach w zastosowaniu, jakimi charakteryzują się te wzorce w poszczególnych podkorpusach.