

**Nicholas Groom, Maggie Charles and Suganthi John** (eds.). *Corpora, grammar and discourse. In honour of Susan Hunston* (Studies in Corpus Linguistics 73). Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 2015. xvi, 310 pp. ISBN 9789027210708 (hardback). Reviewed by **Sabine Bartsch**, Technische Universität Darmstadt.

*Corpora, Grammar and Discourse. In Honour of Susan Hunston* is the title of a volume aiming to capture the diverse research fields covered by Susan Hunston in the course of her outstanding career. It is a volume of articles from some of her principal research areas, written by leading international scholars in different fields of linguistics that honours Susan Hunston's work in corpus linguistics and applied linguistics on the occasion of her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The volume is comprised of twelve chapters written by scholars working in different fields of linguistics plus an editor's foreword and a comprehensive bibliography of Hunston's publications. An introductory chapter entitled "Corpora, grammar, and discourse analysis. Recent trends, current challenges" by the editors **Nicholas Groom, Maggie Charles and Suganthi John** serves as an introduction and backdrop, setting the scene for the wide spectrum of topic areas covered by the volume. The chapter offers a very apt introduction to the development and current state of play in corpus-based research on linguistic phenomena at different levels of linguistic organization. It thus also offers an insight into the nature of the work associated with research by Susan Hunston and the authors of the volume.

Apart from offering a broad spectrum of examples from diverse areas of corpus linguistics, the selection of articles in the volume reflects the underlying notion that it is "increasingly unnecessary or even problematic to regard grammar and discourse analysis as sharply differentiated research areas" (p. 13), thus capturing the general tenet underlying much of Hunston's work bridging lexis and grammar as prominently exemplified by her work on pattern grammar (in collaboration with Gill Francis and Elisabeth Manning). The volume at the same time showcases some of the breadth of modern corpus linguistics by showing how its scope has progressively widened from studies of lexis and grammar to

incorporating the written as well as the spoken mode, while increasingly embracing the study of discourse, particularly in the sense of studies of social interaction and variation as well as ideology.

Chapter 1 written by one of Hunston's long-standing collaborators, **Geoff Thompson**, entitled "Pattern grammar and transitivity analysis" offers a review of the possibilities afforded by an interaction between transitivity analysis as proposed within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics with pattern grammar. Based on the example of the verb 'demonstrate', Thompson offers a thorough analysis of the transitivity patterns of this verb that are shown to pose some descriptive and theoretical challenges to modelling within the SFL transitivity framework due to the multiplicity and ambiguity of the associated participant choices. These modelling issues are, as Thompson aptly shows, based on a wide array of corpus examples, not resolved very well by SFL transitivity theory. Thompson thus proposes complementing SFL-style transitivity analysis with pattern grammar modelling in order to capture phenomena such as grammatical metaphor, that are shown to obtain in many of the verb's construction patterns, in order to capture finer constraints on choice at the level of wording and lexico-grammar.

Chapter 2 on "Using COBUILD grammar patterns for a large-scale analysis of verb-argument constructions: Exploring corpus data and speaker knowledge" by **Ute Römer**, **Matthew Brook O'Donnell** and **Nick C. Ellis** offers a study of a select set of verb-argument constructions (VACs) based on the COBUILD Grammar Patterns 1: Verbs (Francis *et al.* 1996). The research reported in the paper studies selected verb-argument constructions in a parsed instance of the British National Corpus-XML version (BNC-XML). The aim of the paper is to investigate the distribution and variability of a particular set of VACs in the British National Corpus (BNC) and to subsequently test both native speaker and learner intuitions for the level of overlap with findings in the BNC data and the intuitions reflected by either group of language users. The paper's merits are found on at least two planes: one being the exploration of methodological possibilities at the intersection between pattern grammar and corpus studies, while the other lies in the interdisciplinary stance of the paper resulting in a fruitful methodological interaction between corpus linguistic and psycholinguistic approaches exemplifying some of the possibilities of such synergetic pursuits. The paper in Chapter 3 "'Hugh's across all that': Some changing uses of prepositions" is authored by one of Hunston's long-standing collaborators, **Gill Francis**. It aims to highlight some features of very recent language change and innovation exemplified by changes in the usage patterns of a subset of English prepositions. The paper describes a study of newly increasing patterns of spatial

prepositions based on corpus data and informally collected usage samples. Francis bases her study on the BNC as well as more recent versions of the ukWaC (the UK version of the Web as Corpus initiative corpora) which also comprise new social media forms of interaction plus informally elicited data, thus allowing her to pursue her hypothesis that the changes she is seeing in the usage patterns of certain highly polysemous prepositions must also be assumed to be genre specific to some degree. In the paper, Francis not only provides a thorough corpus-informed linguistic analysis of the collocational and grammatical behaviour of the patterns under study, but also cross-checks her observations with their lexicographic treatment in monolingual dictionaries of English. The article provides some very interesting insights into phenomena of recent language change.

The aspect of text and genre specificity of lexical, grammatical and discourse organizational phenomena is taken up from various perspectives by the following set of papers. In Chapter 4, **Michael Stubb's** article is concerned with the question of "The textual functions of lexis". He reviews the contribution of lexis to textual organization. Likewise, the paper by **Michael Hoey** and **Matthew Brook O'Donnell** entitled "Examining associations between lexis and textual position in hard news stories, or *according to a study by...*" is concerned with the phenomenon called textual colligation, i.e. the fact that there are perceived primings for textual organizers in prominent discourse positions such as text-initial position. Methodologically, the study – based on hard-news stories – makes use of a combination of the Key Words function and concordance sorting as implemented in the WordSmith Tools. **Martin Warren's** study entitled "*I mean I only really wanted to dry me towels because ...: Organisational frameworks across modes, registers, and genres*" is also concerned with a discourse organizational lexical co-occurrence phenomenon that Hunston (2002) has described as 'clause collocation'. It describes the co-selection of words or phrases with particular types of clauses forming so-called 'organisational frameworks' within the discourse. These frameworks are shown to be in clear variation across registers, modes and genres. **Marina Bondi's** paper, entitled "*Probably most important of all. Importance markers in academic and popular history articles*", studies how importance markers serve to establish coherence in academic discourse, thus contributing to the dissemination of knowledge in academic articles. "Chatting in the academy. Informality on spoken academic discourse" by **Paula Buttery**, **Michael McCarthy** and **Ronald Carter** studies the increase of forms commonly associated with informal discourse situations in spoken interactions within the academia in contexts such as university lectures and in class settings. In Chapter 9, which is likewise concerned with spoken aca-

demic English, **Karin Aijmer** presents a study of the use of “General extenders in learner language” by Swedish learners of English. The study is based on a corpus of Swedish learner production of English as collected in the LINDSEI project. The paper presents a study of differences in the usage of general extenders by learners and native speakers. A further study from the context of foreign language learners’ language production is presented by **Dave Willis** and **Jane Willis** in their chapter entitled “Language description and language learning.

The pedagogic corpus and learners as researchers”. The paper argues that foreign language teaching methodology should make more use of learners’ creativity, rather than treating them as passive receptors of rules prescribed from simplified grammatical descriptions. Much in the fashion of Tim Johns and others, they are advocating a foreign language learning and teaching approach in which the learner discovers and develops his/her own model of the language by actively engaging with the text, thus discovering the underlying rules based on authentic corpus examples rather than invented and simplified examples.

In her chapter under the title “‘What *we contrarians* already know’: Individual and communal aspects of attitudinal identity”, **Monika Bednarek** offers a discourse analysis of ‘attitudinal identity’ as an aspect of evaluation in the context of the construal of identity in publicly mediated texts, based on data from the Australian national radio channel ABC’s scientific radio series Ockham’s Razor. The last chapter in the volume is also a study in the field of critical discourse analysis (CDA). In his paper “Does Britain need any more foreign doctors? Inter-analyst consistency and corpus-assisted (critical) discourse analysis”, **Paul Baker** aims to highlight how corpus data can contribute to cope with analyst bias in discourse studies. By means of a comparative analysis of a corpus about foreign medical doctors in the UK (aka The Foreign Doctor Corpus), Baker shows commonalities and differences in the analyst’s (anonymous) evaluation of the representation of foreign doctors in the corpus under study. Baker critically evaluates the contribution of corpus approaches in critical discourse analysis, observing that they cannot be claimed to be able to entirely remove analyst bias, but serve to identify “majority findings” (p. 295) prevalent among analysts. The paper offers a critical evaluation of the analysts’ contributions to the study as well as a careful reflection on the methodology of corpus-based critical discourse analysis, including the contributing analysts themselves and the impact of their research backgrounds as well as the tools and approaches used and the linguistic features and techniques by means of which analysts arrived at their evaluations. The paper is measured in its assessments and points to issues that would require further research on the fruitful interaction of corpus-based approaches and critical discourse analysis.

The articles collected in this volume offer contributions from a wide spectrum of linguistic research, thus exemplifying corpus linguistics as the broadening field of research it has evolved into in recent years. Rather than focusing solely on mainstream corpus linguistic research, the selection of papers in this volume offers insight into a wide spectrum of areas of linguistics in which corpora and corpus linguistic methods are being used.

The volume honours the diverse research areas of Susan Hunston through bringing together work by a distinguished set of international scholars representing research in many areas of Hunston's own scholarship. This volume will be of interest to a diverse readership including students and researchers in different areas of grammar and discourse studies, and who are interested in the use of corpora in other areas of applied linguistics such as English as a foreign language, foreign language pedagogy and critical discourse analysis.

### **References**

- Francis, Gill, Susan Hunston and Elizabeth Manning. 1996. *Collins COBUILD grammar patterns I: Verbs*. London: Harper Collins.
- Hunston, Susan. 2002. *Corpora in applied linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.