

1. Sentence comprehension

A) Do 1a) and 1b) express the same meaning? If not, what is the difference? (10%)

1a) I don't even want to read a paper about, let alone a book by Schwarz.

1b) I hardly want to read a paper about, let alone a book by Schwarz.

B) What can we infer from 2a) and 2b)? What makes the inferences possible? (10%)

2a) Ivy doesn't get up for lunch, let alone breakfast.

2b) Ivy didn't make it to Taichung, let alone Tainan.

2.

Biber and his colleagues' pioneering work laid the foundation for the research on lexical bundles and led to many more fruitful studies by others on the topic. Their approach, according to Simpson-Vlach and Ellis (2010: 490), has:

the advantage of being methodologically straightforward, but results in long lists of recurrent word sequences that collapse distinctions that intuition would deem relevant. For example, few would argue with the intuitive claim that sequences such as 'on the other hand' and 'at the same time' are more psycholinguistically salient than sequences such as 'to do with the', or 'I think it was', even though their frequency profiles may put them on equivalent lists.

A main reason for the low psychological salience of lexical bundles like *to do with the* and *I think it was* appears to be that they are structurally and/or semantically incomplete. It is important to note most of the lexical bundles identified by frequency alone are structurally/semantically incomplete, a fact fully acknowledged by Biber and his colleagues, as well as other scholars working on lexical bundles (e.g., Carter & McCarthy, 2006). In fact, of all the lexical bundles they identified, only 15% in conversation and 5% in academic writing are complete structures (Biber & Conrad, 1999). The structurally and/or semantically incomplete lexical bundles are fine results produced by an objective, data-driven method, but, as Simpson-Vlach and Ellis (2010) note, they are not psycholinguistically salient and "seem neither terribly functional nor pedagogically compelling."

Text adapted from

Liu, D. (2012) The most frequently-used multi-word constructions in academic written English: A multi-corpus study, *English for Specific Purposes* 31(1):25-35

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Lexical bundles are strings of words that “show a statistical tendency to co-occur” (Biber & Conrad 1999). They are automatically identifiable based on frequency with the use of a computer program because they are “recurrent expressions, regardless of their idiomaticity, and regardless of their structural status” (Biber et al., 1999). With the understanding of lexical bundles as such, provide brief answers to A) and B) below according to the adapted text.

- A) What seems to be the drawback of searching recurrent word sequences based on an automatic retrieval program? (10%)
- B) Out of the two approaches mentioned – automatic retrieval vs. intuition-based generation, which one is more likely, according to Liu (2012), to yield results that are “psycholinguistically salient”? Justify your answer. (10%)
3. Provide a title for the following article by Sydney Lupkin (taken from ABC News on 1/9/2013) and summarize the article in less than 150 words (10% for the title and 20% for the summary).

Speaking two languages can actually help offset some effects of aging on the brain, a new study has found.

Researchers tested how long it took participants to switch from one cognitive task to another, something that's known to take longer for older adults, said lead researcher, Brian Gold, a neuroscientist at the University of Kentucky. As he spoke to ABCNews.com from his cell phone, he said he was also in a grocery store choosing between gala and granny smith apples — a perfect example of switching between cognitive tasks in everyday life.

“It has big implications these days because our population is aging more and more,” Gold said. “Seniors are living longer, and that's a good thing, but it's only a good thing to the extent that their brains are healthy.”

Gold's team compared task-switching speeds for younger and older adults, knowing they would find slower speeds in the older population because of previous studies. However, they found that older adults who spoke two languages were able to switch mental gears faster than those who didn't.

But don't go out and buy Rosetta Stone just yet. The study only looked at life-long bilinguals, defined in the study as people who had spoken a second language daily since they were at least 10 years old.

First, Gold and his team asked 30 people, who were either bilingual or monolingual, to look at a series of colored shapes and respond with the name of each shape by pushing a button. Then, they presented the participants with a similar series of colored shapes and asked them to respond with what colors the shapes were by pushing a button. Finally, researchers presented participants with a series of colored shapes, but they mixed prompts for either a shape or a color to test participants' task-switching times.

The bilingual people were able to respond faster to the shifting prompts.

Researchers then gathered 80 more people for a second experiment: 20 young bilinguals, 20 young monolinguals, 20 old bilinguals, and 20 old monolinguals. This time, researchers used fMRI scans to

monitor brain activity during the same shape- and color-identifying tasks. Gold and his team found that bilingual people were not only able to switch tasks faster — they had different brain activity than their monolingual peers.

“It allows a sort of window into how the brains of people who have different cognitive processing abilities and are processing the same stimuli in different ways,” said Kristina Visscher, a neurobiologist at the University of Alabama School of Medicine who did not work on the study.

Visscher called bilingualism a “beautiful natural experiment,” because people grow up speaking two languages, and studies have shown that they reap certain cognitive benefits from switching between languages and determining which to respond with based on what’s going on around them. The University of Kentucky researchers took it a step further by using brain imaging, which she said was “exciting.”

Gold said he grew up in Montreal, where he spoke French at school and English at home, prompting relatives to question whether his French language immersion would somehow hinder his ability to learn English.

“Until very recently, learning a second language in childhood was thought of as dangerous,” he said. “Actually, it’s beneficial.”

4.

Communication in English involves a process of selecting individual words and putting those words together in the correct order to make sentence.

Write a well-structured essay of no more than 300 words to show your position of the idea given above. Include in your essay concrete and relevant examples so that you can convincingly argue for the points you want to make. You are encouraged, though not obliged, to support your idea with a theory that can further support your arguments. (30%)