

Typical features of press releases vs business news reports in the lexical bundle spotlight

Sylvie De Cock & Sylviane Granger

Centre for English Corpus Linguistics, Université catholique de Louvain

This paper reports on research that set out to investigate the extent to which the lexical bundle approach can help uncover typical features (Biber & Barbieri, 2007) of two business genres, namely corporate press releases and business news reports. In our study, 3-word lexical bundles were extracted from a 1-million-word corpus of press releases (BeRel) and set against those found in a similar-sized corpus of business news (BeNews). An examination of the key bundles (keyword analysis; Bondi, 2010) in each corpus reveals that the bundles that are typically used in BeRel differ significantly from those found in BeNews, particularly in the expression of stance. The specific focus of the paper is on the lexical bundle types which can be seen to reflect the respective communicative purposes of the two genres under study: mainly informational in the case of news reporting and informational as well as promotional and persuasive in that of press releases (Bremner, 2014; Catenaccio, 2008). Our findings show that, despite the fact that press releases are to some extent preformulated to resemble news reports (Jacobs, 2006), there are marked differences in the way the actual information is presented. The impersonal framing in news reports (e.g. *there* bundles and anticipatory *it* bundles) stands in stark contrast to the more personal framing in news releases (e.g. *we* and *I* bundles). In addition, the more personal self-centered approach of press releases combined with the routine foregrounding of firm intentions/promises (e.g. *will* bundles) and the focus on positive elements (e.g. bundles with positively laden adjectives) tie in well with their promotional role (e.g. among their stakeholders and the general public). The persuasive function of press releases (to persuade journalists to cover the news) is for example reflected in the bundles found in quotes from high-ranking figures which are invariably included in the releases (e.g. *we are excited*).

References

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