



HAL
open science

Sketching out Lexico-Grammatical Patterns in Promotional Discourse Moves with Data Driven Learning

Julie McAllister, Mary Catherine Lavissière

► **To cite this version:**

Julie McAllister, Mary Catherine Lavissière. Sketching out Lexico-Grammatical Patterns in Promotional Discourse Moves with Data Driven Learning. Recherche et pratiques pédagogiques en langues de spécialité - Cahiers de l'APLIUT, 2023, 42 (2). hal-04598404

HAL Id: hal-04598404

<https://hal.science/hal-04598404>

Submitted on 3 Jun 2024

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Sketching out Lexico-Grammatical Patterns in Promotional Discourse Moves with Data Driven Learning

*Apprentissage sur corpus : identification de schémas lexico-grammaticaux dans
le discours publicitaire*

Julie McAllister and Mary Catherine Lavissière



Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/apliut/10904>

ISSN: 2119-5242

Publisher

APLIUT

Provided by Nantes Université



Electronic reference

Julie McAllister and Mary Catherine Lavissière, "Sketching out Lexico-Grammatical Patterns in Promotional Discourse Moves with Data Driven Learning", *Recherche et pratiques pédagogiques en langues* [Online], Vol. 42 N°2 | 2023, Online since 05 December 2023, connection on 03 June 2024.

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/apliut/10904>

This text was automatically generated on December 19, 2023.



The text only may be used under licence CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. All other elements (illustrations, imported files) are "All rights reserved", unless otherwise stated.

Sketching out Lexico-Grammatical Patterns in Promotional Discourse Moves with Data Driven Learning

Apprentissage sur corpus : identification de schémas lexico-grammaticaux dans le discours publicitaire

Julie McAllister and Mary Catherine Lavissière

Introduction

- 1 Data-driven learning (DDL) has been shown to be an effective way to help students of foreign languages improve their repertoire and use of second language (L2) vocabulary and writing skills as well as to work on spoken language skills (Boulton & Vyatkina, 2021). While studies in general language learning abound, DDL is a method that has been less often the subject of articles about English for specific purposes (ESP). In addition, DDL has more often concentrated on smaller units of discourse, such as terms, collocations, and lexico-grammatical units. Few DDL studies about ESP have concentrated on larger units, such as moves (Swales, 1990) and genres (Bhatia, 2008), with the notable exception of English for academic purposes (EAP). Our research team at Nantes Université aims to fill this gap in several professional ESP settings, including marketing, as studied in this article.
- 2 Specifically, we present a study on promotional texts to fill these gaps related to professional ESP in the DDL literature. These texts include descriptions promoting specific products offered by companies in the mobile phone sector and published in brochures or on their websites. First, we present the context of the study. Second, we present the literature about DDL, persuasive language, and moves in ESP outside of academic English. Third, we present our methods of data collection and analysis; fourth, our results. Finally, we discuss the interpretation of results given the current literature and conclude with some future perspectives.

1. The Context

- 3 The study carried out for this article was conducted with 40 second-year students (M2) in a master's programme in international trade within the Applied Foreign Languages Department (LEA) at Nantes Université. This is a pluridisciplinary and vocational programme combining the study of business management subjects with two foreign languages aimed at preparing students for international careers in marketing, communications, business development, and export sales. All students (27 females and 13 males) had attained a B2 or C1 proficiency level in English on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). None had any experience with corpora or corpus analysis tools.
- 4 The study examines an ESP course, which ran over five weeks for a total of 15 hours in the 2021-2022 academic year. Each session lasted three hours. The specificity of this course lies in its coordination with the financial management class in which students work in teams of three or four on a computer-based business simulation (CBS) game called Cesim Global Challenge¹. The main aim of CBS is to simulate the impact of business decisions and help students experience situations which are as representative as possible of a professional context (Antheaume, Catalo & Ismai, 2012). The business simulation game was played in French over the same period for a total of 21 hours. To that end, the 40 M2 students were divided into eleven groups. Each group represented a different company which were all competing against each other in the global mobile phone market. This context provides the scenario for the ESP class. In keeping with the goal of providing students an authentic professional experience, the ESP class aimed to train students on how to write the type of promotional text they might encounter in their future careers in the workplace. More specifically, the objectives of the ESP course were to train students to identify and analyse lexical, rhetorical, and stylistic features of promotional discourse, particularly persuasive language, through DDL activities and then to apply this knowledge in a writing task to promote their company's products.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Data-driven Learning and ESP

- 5 Data-driven learning (DDL) is a method of teaching foreign languages that uses authentic examples of language via corpora and tools developed for corpus linguistics (Boulton & Vyatkina, 2021). While the use of corpora and corpus methods are growing in teaching foreign languages, the development of this method has been slower in the field of teaching and learning ESP, except in EAP. Early literature on using DDL to teach ESP explores the roles of teacher and learner in an approach that aims to give direct access to language used in professional domains. Gavioli (2005), for example, highlights the importance of weighing the effort that DDL entails for students and teachers with its benefits. This includes making choices about the extent to which the corpus should be "hard" specialised texts as opposed to "softer" texts aimed at a non-specialised audience (Gavioli, 2005, p. 134). Her studies show that, while often associated with

innovative technology, DDL used in ESP settings must still focus on traditional questions about how to choose material and encourage learner autonomy.

- 6 Many recent studies about DDL as a teaching method for ESP use empirical methods and include a variety of different speciality areas. However, English for academic writing purposes dominates the literature. This latter focus explains why most of the studies reviewed by Boulton (2012) used written corpora to teach academic vocabulary and writing. Few studies aimed to teach about larger units of language such as genre, discourse or text type (Boulton, 2012, p. 281). In sum, with the exception of EAP², larger units of language (Charles & Frankenberg-Garcia, 2021; Chen & Flowerdew, 2018), such as genres, discourse, and text type are not often present in the DDL and ESP literature (Boulton, 2012, p. 281). We discuss this issue further in the next two sections of this article.

2.2. DDL, Moves and ESP

- 7 Approaches combining corpus linguistics with discourse analysis have developed considerably over the last few decades (Baker, 2006; Baker & McEnery, 2015; Flowerdew, 2012; Handford, 2012). As stated above, studies in professional discourse have tended to be focused at the lexical and grammatical levels, relying on quantitative techniques like keywords, collocates, and concordances to provide insight into the workings of language in use, rather than on general patterns of discourse organisation (see Cheng, 2017 for a comprehensive review of key studies). Bhatia's (1993, 2004, 2008) pioneering work on professional genres provides a rhetorical move framework to analyse specialised professional discourse across a wide range of professional contexts, but it is not specifically concerned with corpus linguistics. Studies from this perspective have traditionally been qualitative and based on a detailed analysis of a small number of texts (Upton & Cohen, 2009). On the other hand, research by Henry & Roseberry (1996, 2001), Connor and Upton (2004), Biber et al. (2007) and Upton & Cohen (2009) proposes an approach merging corpus-based methods with discourse and genre analysis to investigate the common linguistic features of the moves of both spoken and written professional and academic discourse. Upton and Cohen (2009) cite two key advantages of this approach: greater representativeness of the text sample and automated investigation of distributional patterns across discourse contexts. Methodologically, Biber et al. (2007) identify two approaches: top-down and bottom-up. In the top-down approach, rhetorical move types of a genre are determined first and then all texts in a corpus are analysed in terms of this functional/communicative framework before moving on to an examination of the linguistic characteristics of each move (see Kanoksilapatham, 2007 for application of this approach). In contrast, in a bottom-up perspective, the lexico-grammatical corpus analysis comes first, and the move boundaries in a text emerge from the corpus patterns (see Flowerdew, 2012 for a review of studies).

2.3. DDL and Persuasive Language

- 8 One study which does make the link between larger and smaller discourse units is Labrador et al.'s (2014) research on the rhetorical structure and persuasive language in the promotional subgenre of online advertisements. As highlighted by Bhatia (2004,

p. 60), promotional genres share a broad communicative purpose of “promoting a product or service to a potential customer”. More specifically, promotional activity is intended both to inform and promote, in order to convince a selected group of people of the value of a product and ultimately persuade them to buy it (Bhatia, 2004; Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2001). Persuasion, according to Perloff (2020), is “a symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their own attitudes or behaviour regarding an issue through the transmission of a message in an atmosphere of free choice” (p. 8). A key persuasive strategy of promotional discourse then is to offer “a product description that is good, positive, and favourable” (Bhatia, 2004, p. 64). This, according to the author, is one of the most important moves in promotional discourse and is achieved through the subtle use of description and evaluation (for move structure, see Appendix A).

- 9 Adopting a top-down method based on Bhatia’s (2004) rhetorical move structure found in advertisements for the analysis of a corpus comprising 100 online advertisements in English, Labrador et al. identified two main rhetorical moves: one for identifying the product and another for describing it. The latter move was further divided into two steps: one including objective features to describe the product and the other focusing on evaluating the product positively in order to persuade the customer to buy it. Following on from this macro-analysis, the authors then identified the specific linguistic devices used to achieve persuasion in the substep on positive evaluation. Specifically, they describe “persuasive language” as being “creative and attention-drawing [...] to appeal to readers” (Labrador et al., 2014, p. 40) and list a number of its linguistic features: emotive words, informal expressions, a colloquial and personalised style used to get closer to the potential customer through the use of the second person pronoun, imperatives, contractions, and subject omissions. Fuertes-Olivera et al. (2001) also highlight the preference for using commands, rhetorical questions, repetition and informal conversation. Another feature of persuasive language is the high frequency of adjectives including compound adjectives and multiple modifiers. For Hunston (2011), adjectives are the word class most associated with evaluation. They can indicate emotion, qualities (human or not), and attitudes. Evaluative language is defined by Hunston (2011, p. 1) as “that language which indexes the act of evaluation or the act of stance-taking” and is an important part of the act of persuasion. By combining DDL, moves and lexico-grammatical elements, the study provides ESP students with rhetorical guidelines and linguistic resources to help them effectively write persuasive texts in the field of marketing and advertising.

2.4. Sketch Engine for ESP

- 10 Sketch Engine³ (Kilgarriff et al., 2014), is a particularly good tool for constructing, analysing and comparing both small, specialised corpora and larger corpora. A number of researchers (Boulton & Cobb, 2017; Handford, 2012; Henry & Roseberry, 2001) particularly favour the use of small, specialised corpora as they make it possible to combine qualitative and quantitative analytical approaches to allow for interpretation of the genre in question, especially professional genres. Sketch Engine may also be used to identify smaller units of language, such as collocations and grammatical constructions (Hirata & Hirata, 2018, 2019; Kim, 2019; Muftah, 2023; Schaeffer-Lacroix, 2016, 2021; Zare, 2020) in specialised corpora. In these studies, results from exchanges with the students show that they appreciated Sketch Engine, which contrasts with Xu’s

observation that Sketch Engine may be too complex for language learning purposes (Xu, 2022).

- 11 In terms of using Sketch Engine to teach ESP, with the exception of Kilgarriff et al. (2015)'s study about teaching business English, most research has mainly focused on EAP, specifically vocabulary acquisition and writing skills. Vincent et al. (2021) and Cangir (2022) use Sketch Engine to provide guidance for academic writing. Therova & McKay (2022) use the Concordance and Word Sketch functions of Sketch Engine to explore how self-compiled corpora helped a small group of learners prepare for doctoral study. Results from semi-structured interviews show that students felt that self-compiled corpora were relevant and helped to acquire discipline-specific vocabulary as well as the long-term adoption of the DDL method. These studies show the potential for Sketch Engine to help students learn language units such as lexico-grammatical units from small, specialised corpora. Our research question is therefore: can DDL help students to recognise and use persuasive language patterns in non-academic ESP writing?

3. Methodology

- 12 This study is informed by three corpora. The first two are genre-specific corpora compiled for the creation of DDL task materials for use by students in class; the third is a learner corpus composed of texts written by students participating in the study.

3.1. Corpus Use and DDL Activities to Notice Persuasive Language

- 13 Writing promotional texts requires knowledge of the typical rhetorical structure of this text type. Thus, the forty international trade master's students involved in the programme were first introduced to the theoretical underpinnings of promotional genres and, more specifically, to the nine rhetorical moves found in a typical advertisement (Bhatia, 2004, see Appendix A), to help them gain an insight into the communicative methods and conventions of the discourse community. Given that the focus of the business simulation game was the mobile phone sector, the corpora compiled for this study came from two main companies, Samsung and Apple, chosen because they were the two main leaders of the global mobile phone market in 2022 with their Galaxy and iPhone product ranges respectively.⁴ Students first carried out a manual analysis of a promotional brochure⁵ from Samsung's website for its Galaxy S20 product range comprising 2,080 words to identify its move structure according to the nine-move structure mentioned above and in Appendix A. Specific emphasis was placed on move 4, which comprises two main parts, one describing the product to be sold and the other one evaluating it positively to persuade the reader to purchase it. As highlighted in the Labrador et al. (2014) study explored in section 2.3, one of the steps within this move concerns persuasive characteristics associated with the description of the product. As well as analysing moves, students also considered the role of the visual elements of the brochure which contribute to the communicative goals of the text and express persuasion; however, this was not the focus of the class.
- 14 In order to give students a better understanding of persuasive language and associated lexico-grammatical patterns, we compiled two specialised corpora of authentic mobile phone product descriptions in Sketch Engine. The first comprised 21,500 words⁶ and

was retrieved from Samsung's website as well as from the brochure mentioned above. The second, totalling 3,200 words, related to the Apple iPhone and was retrieved from Apple's website⁷. Both are representative of the promotional genre. After an introduction to the basic concepts of corpus linguistics, students were then given access to Sketch Engine and taught how to use the functions "Wordlist", "Concordance", and "Word Sketch" to identify recurring words, collocations, lexico-grammatical patterns, and "keywords" for specialist terms employed in the corpus. The reference corpus for "keywords" was enTenTen, the English web corpus consisting of 52 billion words.

- 15 The starting point was to analyse frequently occurring lexical items, particularly adjectives as they express evaluative meaning. The repetitive use of certain lexical items is a key rhetorical feature of persuasive writing. Awareness of the types of adjectives repeatedly used by professionals in the target business sector, in this case the mobile phone sector, is essential for successful ESP writing so that the students' writing resembles that of professionals. The students first used Wordlist to identify the most frequent adjectives, they then categorised them into two lists: evaluative and non-evaluative. Non-evaluative adjectives relate to the step associated with objective features of the product, which are not the focus of this article. Evaluative adjectives, which contribute directly to persuasiveness, were further divided into the categories identified by Hunston (2011): (1) adjectives indicating emotion, (2) adjectives indicating human qualities, (3) adjectives indicating qualities of things, and finally, (4) adjectives indicating attitudes. Appendix B shows some of the most frequent evaluative adjectives (in lemma form) occurring in the Samsung and Apple corpora as identified by the students. By comparing the two corpora, students were able to identify similarities in the type of adjectives used by two companies in the same sector.
- 16 Students then used Sketch Engine's Concordance tool to see the use of these adjectives in context and, more specifically, to identify examples of superlatives, comparatives, and multiple modification of single noun phrases which all express positive evaluation and contribute to persuasiveness. The latter involves the use of two or more adjectives in a single noun phrase, such as "lightning fast speeds; easy and fast sharing; revolutionary new ways of doing business; innovative new ways to connect; the groundbreaking new Galaxy S20", and is a specific feature of the genre. Word Sketch helped students easily identify the most frequent word combinations or collocations for adjectives for later use in their writing: results are presented in categories according to particular grammar relations (Figure 1). A visual representation of the collocations is also provided (Figure 2), which may facilitate second language information processing and learning for some students (Manoïlov, 2023). Distinct colours are used to represent the different grammatical relations, while the circle size associated with each word relates to frequency of the collocation in the corpus, so the bigger the circle the more frequently it appears. The visualisation is interactive, making the exploration of relationships among words easier.

Figure 1. Word Sketch of the Adjective “Fast” (Samsung corpus)

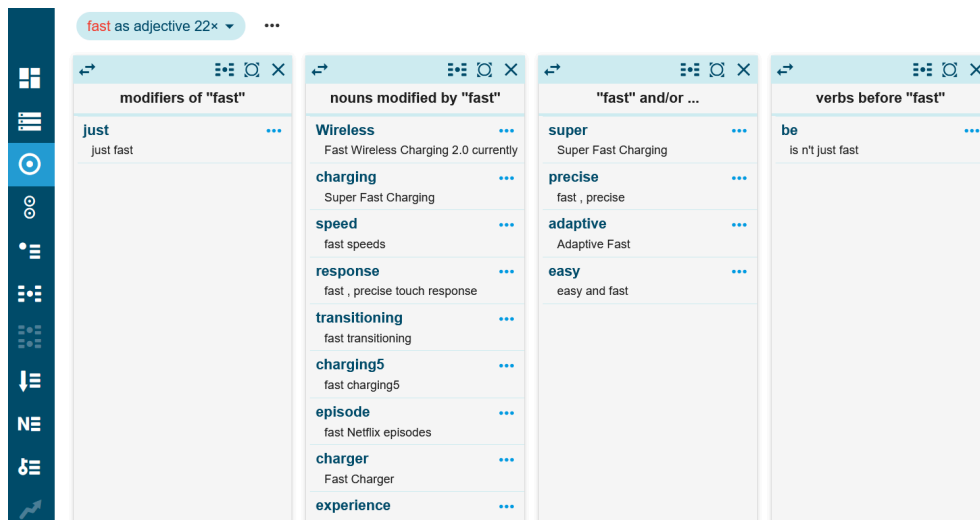
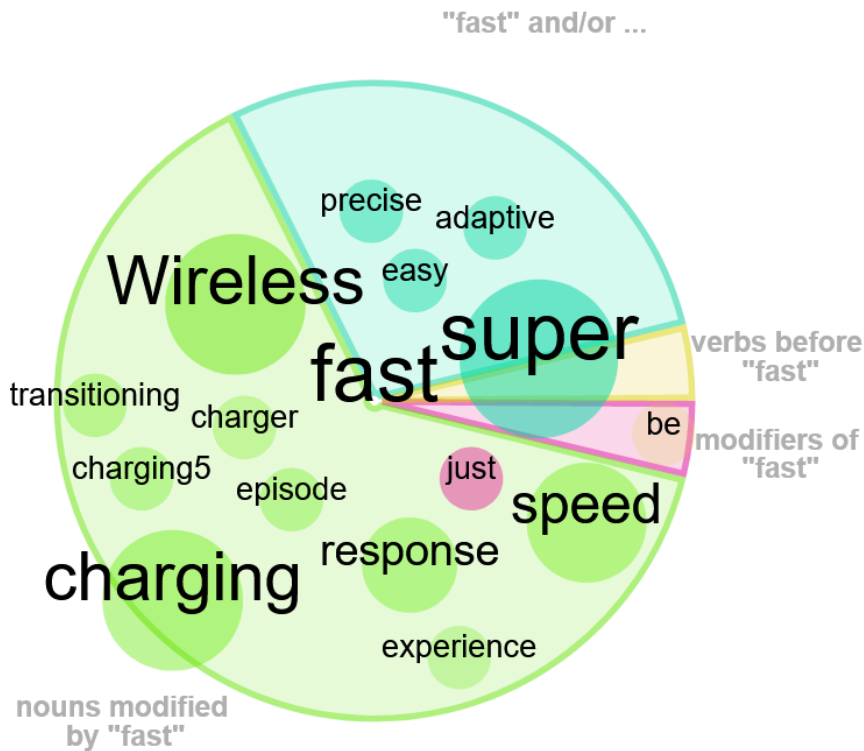


Figure 2. Word Sketch Visual Output for the Adjective “Fast” (Samsung corpus)



- 17 A key point highlighted by Kilgarriff et al. (2015) is the need to convert this receptive vocabulary knowledge gained through Sketch Engine into vocabulary available for active productive use. This aligns with Bhatia’s (2008) integrated approach, bringing together professional genres and professional practices to ensure that students are not only able to recognise and handle textual features of specialist professional genres, but can also apply this knowledge in the real professional world. The goal of the programme was, therefore, for students to incorporate the results of their analysis, both at a macro- and micro-level, into their writing. Following a task-based learning approach (Bygate et al. 2001; Ellis 2003), each group of students was assigned a

meaningful and realistic task of writing a promotional brochure for their company describing a new mobile phone product. The final productions also included visual elements. In the context of this task-based learning approach, the analysis of moves and DDL activities described above constituted pre-tasks. After completing these pre-tasks, students composed their own writing in groups, with the objective of taking into account what they had learned relating to persuasive language, lexico-grammatical features and the generic move structure of promotional discourse. Students co-constructed their productions online using Google Docs or Canva.

3.2. Post-course Evaluation Survey

- 18 An online questionnaire⁸ was administered in the month following the course to measure students' perceptions of corpus use within a task-based learning approach, particularly its usefulness for their business writing skills, and to explore general attitudes to the pedagogical approach. Twenty-eight out of the forty participating students responded equating to a 70% response rate. The survey used a 5-point Likert scale for seventeen of the twenty-two closed questions and also included two open questions to reveal students' reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of the course.

3.3. Learner Corpus

- 19 Data was collected by analysing eleven written productions: one from each of the eleven groups of students participating in the programme. A sample production is provided in Appendix C. The visual elements have been removed as the focus of this paper is to analyse the linguistic content which expresses persuasion. Nevertheless, it should be noted that images were often used to represent specific moves, in particular move 2 (targeting the market). The texts were written after DDL intervention as an end-of-course assignment during regular class time and also outside of class time with all students having full access to Sketch Engine and other documents. At least two or three members of each group contributed to the writing task. The resulting corpus is composed of 2,438 words. The study adopts a mixed methods approach to examine students' productions. First, we applied corpus analysis techniques to conduct a quantitative analysis of students' written productions in Sketch Engine based on Wordlist and Concordance. Then, we conducted a qualitative analysis of productions to demonstrate the take-up of moves, language, and linguistic features identified in Sketch Engine (see Appendix C example).

4. Results

4.1. Learner Corpus Analysis

- 20 In this study, we first examine students' productions for evidence of understanding of the rhetorical move structure of promotional discourse. Then, we look more closely at the language used by students in the productions to check for appropriation of Sketch Engine results. This should provide some insight into the impact of the pedagogical approach on students' writing.

- 21 Analysis of the eleven productions shows that overall, this structural feature was well understood. However, only two groups successfully applied all nine moves identified by Bhatia (2004). The majority of groups, nine in total, applied seven moves, as is shown in the sample production in Appendix C. The moves that were frequently excluded were move 6 (celebrity or user endorsement), 7 (offering incentives), and 8 (using pressure tactics). These moves were also absent from the Samsung Galaxy S20 product range brochure used for analysis in the pre-task, demonstrating a limitation of the corpus used. Using further examples of physical brochures from a range of companies would have given students greater exposure to additional moves, which they could then have emulated.
- 22 With respect to using persuasive language and, in particular, evaluative adjectives identified through Sketch Engine DDL activities, Sketch Engine's Wordlist frequency analysis of the learner corpus shows that students used 176 different adjectives for a total of 292 occurrences. This proved that students had understood the effect of repetition as a rhetorical device in promotional discourse where repetition is used to emphasise the positive qualities of a product. This frequency equates to a ratio of one adjective for every three nouns, which was the same ratio as found in the Apple and Samsung corpora. Furthermore, virtually all but four of the adjectives identified by students in the Samsung and Apple corpora, as seen in Appendix B, appear in their productions demonstrating their ability to use the language they experienced in the DDL task. A list of the most frequent adjectives used in the students' productions can be seen in Table 1. We will now examine some examples in more detail.

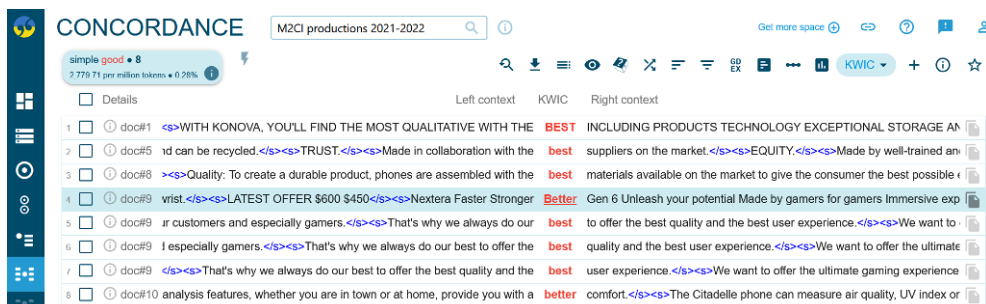
Table 1. Sketch Engine Wordlist Output for Learner Corpus Identifying Most Frequent Adjectives Used in Students' Productions⁹

| Item (Out of 176 total items) | Frequency in learner corpus (Out of 292 total occurrences) |
|----------------------------------|---|
| high | 10 |
| good | 8 |
| new | 8 |
| perfect | 6 |
| great | 6 |
| <i>honest</i> | 6 |
| late | 5 |
| powerful | 5 |
| first | 4 |
| environmental | 4 |
| <i>long-lasting</i> | 4 |

| | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| innovative | 4 |
| green | 4 |
| fast | 4 |
| daily | 4 |
| unique | 3 |
| robust | 3 |
| sustainable | 3 |
| long | 3 |
| smooth | 3 |
| favourite | 3 |
| Total Sample | 100 occurrences |
| | |

23 As we can see in Appendix B, “good” was one of the most frequent adjectives used in the Samsung and Apple corpora mainly in the comparative and superlative form to differentiate a company’s product from its competitors. Similarly, it was the second most frequent adjective in the students’ productions and, as the concordance output in Figure 3 shows, it was consistently used in the comparative and superlative form. Some collocations and phrases used by students closely resemble the expert corpora: “assembled with the best materials” is like Apple’s phrase “made with better materials”; “the best user experience” is similar to Samsung’s “best video chat experience”. Other examples in Figure 3 show creative adaptation of the original adjective: “best suppliers, best quality” and so on. We can also see use of multiple modifications of a single noun phrase: “faster, stronger, better” Generation 6.

Figure 3. Sketch Engine Concordance Output Showing Comparative and Superlative Forms of the Adjective “Good” in Students’ Productions



24 The adjective “new” was among the top three adjectives used in the Samsung and Apple corpora and this is also the case in the learner corpus. A common pattern was “new” + brand name, for example, “new iPhone, new Galaxy S20, new Galaxy device and

also new” + technology (“new ultra-wide camera, new architecture, new sensor-shift optical image”). Students seem to emulate this pattern in their writing as can be seen in Figure 4. New is used with two brand names created by the students for their companies: “our new EGO 4”+ and “the new Viridis 5”. We can also see examples of the adjective + technology form: “our new patented screen, the new senior citizen smartphone”. Finally, in the Apple corpus, the imperative form of the verb “discover” was used with “new games” to arouse an emotive reaction in the target audience: “discover exciting new games”. This form also seems to have been adopted by students (see Figure 4): “discover a new world; see the world from a new angle”. The imperative form is typical of an informal, conversational style used to create a personal dialogue and link with the customer. This technique was adopted in all student productions.

Figure 4. Sketch Engine Concordance Output Showing Uses of the Adjective “New” in Students’ Productions.

| Document ID | Left context | KWIC | Right context |
|-------------|--|------|---|
| doc#0 | our solution: thanks to our revolutionary core process 3.0 technology, our | new | EGO 4+ offers the ultimate battery that can last 24 hours. This out |
| doc#10 | try anymore about your screen getting cracked at the first fall. Our | new | patented screen is made out of a combination of sapphire crystal and a cc |
| doc#13 | Build a green future with veridis! Sustainability for everyone THE | NEW | VERIDIS 5 FROM 499\$ Built from a robust 100% recycled stainless steel |
| doc#15 | a Cienega Blvd Inglewood, CA 90301, USA Opening REMINDER | NEW | POP-UP STORE - FOREVERPHONE 1 Battle Bridge Ln, London SE1 2H |
| doc#17 | Google Assistant. Powerful battery, simple charging. The | new | senior citizen smartphone made in France 5G Characteristics Easy-to-use |
| doc#18 | tailed training book with large pictures. HoloS See the world from a | new | angle For those that like to spend hours watching videos but find their scr |
| doc#10 | idy to unfold your world and travel to the Citadelle star. Discover a | new | world and enjoy your daily life. Reach the top and rise. Pro |
| doc#10 | ing, as well as advanced sleep analysis monitoring. Try our brand | new | mindfulness module to sooth yourself. Discover all the information |

- 25 Analysis of the sample student production in Appendix C shows how the rhetorical devices of repetition and anaphora as well as evaluative language encountered in Sketch Engine were used by the students in their writing. They also adopted typical features of the promotional genre such as commands, used 17 times, and personalisation (you/your), used 23 times. Analysis of the other written productions shows that these features, as well as rhetorical questions, were used by all groups. Many of the adjectives used in the sample production of a 14-page brochure to promote a gaming phone aimed at young users are taken directly from the Samsung and Apple corpora (perfect, favourite, expandable, powerful, fast) and most are used repetitively. However, the adjective + noun combinations are often different from the original corpora. In the original Samsung corpus, “favourite” was used with the nouns: movie, apps, and photo. In the student production, we see it used with: movie, game, and streaming platform. Similarly, the pattern “perfect for viewing and editing” of the original corpus was changed by the students to “perfect for streaming”. They have mastered the persuasive technique of using superlatives: “the fastest connection, the fastest 5G wireless”, and “the smoothest gaming experience”, as well as the use of multiple modifiers: “a stable and lasting connection”. Overall, students did not simply copy adjectives and word combinations they had seen in their analysis, they explored their own creativity to develop ideas further, particularly in the use of emotive language and evaluative adjectives.

4.2. Survey Results

- 26 The post-course questionnaire results show an overall positive impression of the usefulness of the pedagogical approach. As can be seen in Table 2, the median scores of

usefulness are relatively high ranging from 3.7 to 4.3 on a 5-point scale with more than 70% of students (out of a total of 28 respondents) rating all aspects of the course. The use of authentic promotional texts for analysis, including web content used in Sketch Engine, and the writing task itself were rated as being the most useful aspects of the course by more than 85% of students (i.e. 24 out of 28). Studying promotional discourse moves and language features got the next highest scores (4.1 and 4 respectively). Interestingly, while the score attributed to the usefulness of Sketch Engine was positive (3.7), suggesting students found it helpful, it was the lowest for all the criteria considered. Responses to the open questions shed light on this and will be examined later. As regards the functionalities of Sketch Engine, students found Wordlist, Keywords and Concordance the most useful for their requirements.

Table 2. Overall Perceptions of the Benefit of Corpus Use and the Study of Promotional Discourse

| Question | Median score (out of 5 where 1: not all at useful and 5: very useful) | % of students rating it useful (4) or very useful (5) (n=28) |
|---|---|--|
| Q1 Usefulness of studying promotional discourse moves. | 4.1 | 81% |
| Q2 Usefulness of studying the language features of promotional discourse. | 4 | 78% |
| Q3 Benefit of using Sketch Engine to analyse the language of promotional discourse. | 3.7 | 70% |
| Q4 Benefit of using authentic brochures and web content for analysis. | 4.3 | 89% |
| Q5 Usefulness of the writing task. | 4.3 | 85% |
| Q6 Usefulness of linking the course to the business simulation game. | 4.1 | 81% |

- 27 Overall, findings suggest that students found the approach beneficial for their ESP learning. In terms of specific learning outcomes, 89% of students strongly agreed that the course helped them gain a better understanding of promotional discourse, while 81% saw value in the approach for their writing skills and, more particularly, for fostering skills they could use in the workplace. Two-thirds of respondents (18 out of 28) declared having gained a better understanding of corpus-based analysis techniques. However, just under half the respondents (48%) said they would consider using Sketch Engine in the workplace.
- 28 In terms of the strengths of the course, a thematic analysis (Bardin, 2007) of twenty-two students' responses to the first open question highlights seven common themes across the individual accounts (Table 3). The results support the findings of the closed questions in Table 2: students particularly appreciated analysing authentic promotional

content from the Internet and company brochures using Sketch Engine and declared it gave them a better understanding of how promotional discourse works in practice (n=8). Another recurring theme, as mentioned by six students, is that of the link between the business game and the pedagogical approach. The application of corpus analysis to a realistic business setting was perceived to have value by students (n=6). This active approach (n=3) was also seen to stimulate creativity (n=3). Finally, the teacher's supportive role in providing feedback was highlighted by four students as being a strength.

Table 3. Strengths of the Course - Themes Reported by 22 Students

| Theme | Number of students reporting the theme ¹⁰ |
|--|--|
| Studying authentic content with Sketch Engine helps understanding of promotional discourse | 8 |
| Link to the business game | 6 |
| Teacher's role/support | 4 |
| Link with future career | 3 |
| Stimulating creativity | 3 |
| Active learning approach | 3 |
| Fostering of teamwork | 3 |

- 29 The second open question asked students what improvements they would recommend for the course. Out of the thirteen responses to this question, nine related to Sketch Engine use. Some students found it difficult to use and seemed to be overwhelmed by it (n=4). Others felt they probably would not use it in the future and questioned its usefulness (n=4). In general, students felt that we should have spent more time on it to explore the tool more fully (n=5). On the other hand, a number of students would have preferred to spend more time on the writing task (n=3).

5. Discussion

- 30 This study demonstrates that using DDL methods to identify and learn lexico-grammatical expressions of persuasive language improves students' professional writing skills. We used an integrated approach combining DDL for expressions of persuasive language— via Sketch Engine— with active task-based productive use in a realistic professional context, as advocated by Kilgarriff et al. (2015). By exploiting Sketch Engine to explore small genre-specific corpora, in this case promotional product descriptions from two companies in the mobile phone sector, DDL offers foreign applied languages students the main rhetorical and lexico-grammatical patterns of this particular text type. Students were able to analyse these features specific to their corpora and then apply this knowledge to their own specialised writing. Analysis of

students' productions, both qualitatively and with the Sketch Engine tool, shows their ability to use evaluative language encountered in Sketch Engine DDL pre-task activities as well as knowledge of the conventions and rhetorical move structure of the promotional genre. The integrated approach helped students write authentic promotional texts that closely resemble those of the companies they studied.

- 31 The survey results show that students were generally favourable to the approach and felt they had gained a better understanding of how promotional discourse and corpus linguistics tools work, despite not being familiar with DDL prior to the class. Overall, students considered the approach as useful for developing their writing skills and stimulating their creativity. More specifically, it was deemed to have fostered skills they could use in the workplace. However, students also noted difficulties with using Sketch Engine and some were overwhelmed by it as found in Hirata & Hirata's research (2018, 2019). These findings seem to align with Xu's (2022) conclusion regarding the complexity of Sketch Engine for language learning purposes. Several students also mentioned the time factor. It would seem, therefore, as suggested by Chen & Flowerdew (2018), that more time should be devoted to practising with corpus tools to enable students to become more autonomous and confident in their use of corpora.

Conclusion

- 32 This study shows that exploration of specific corpora enabled students to identify the vocabulary and lexico-grammatical patterns of specialised marketing texts allowing them to reach sufficient mastery of the targeted professional language. They developed their knowledge on two levels. First, they became more familiar with lexico-grammatical expressions used in authentic corpora in the domain of advertising and marketing. Second, they began incorporating these lower level units into higher level concepts such as move or genre. This integration is necessary for students to move beyond expression to the use of specialised language in professional settings.
- 33 Specifically, the study illustrates how an integrated approach combining corpus-based methods with discourse analysis and task-based learning is beneficial for students' professional writing skills by enabling them to recognise and apply higher level discourse structure and lower level units, such as collocations or lexico-grammatical units in a professional setting. The approach adopted for this study can be easily replicated in other business sectors and used to help students write promotional descriptions of other products in other sectors. This is because the rhetorical structure will remain the same and the Sketch Engine tool enables them to gain insight into the specialised language of a given sector through the creation of small, specialised corpora. In this way, we can help students become competent performers in professional settings and bridge the gap between academic research and application in the workplace, as advocated by Bhatia & Bremner (2017). However, the training needs of students with limited experience of corpora must be taken into account and sufficient practice time with the tools needs to be built into the course. As a final note, several research projects, such as Lexhnology (ANR-22-CE38-0004), aim to incorporate teaching on smaller discourse units, such as lexico-grammatical units, with larger discourse units, such as moves, in non-EAP professional language. We hope to develop similar tools for the other ESP programmes taught in LEA.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agence Nationale de Recherche. (2023, 2026). *Lexhnology : Modélisation linguistique et computationnelle de la structure discursive des textes juridiques appliquée à l'apprentissage des langues*. Agence nationale de la recherche. <https://anr.fr/Projet-ANR-22-CE38-0004>
- Antheaume, N., Catalo, M., & Ismail, H. (2012). *Computer-based business simulations as revealers of cultural and learning differences. The case of business administration and business informatics students in Egypt*. Working Papers hal-00694411.
- Baker, P. (2006). *Using corpora in discourse analysis*. Continuum.
- Baker, P. & McEnery, T. (2015). *Corpora and discourse studies: Integrating discourse and corpora*. Palgrave and MacMillan.
- Bardin, L. (2007). *L'analyse de contenu*. Presses Universitaires de France.
- Bhatia, V.K. (1993). *Analysing genre: Language use in professional settings*. Routledge.
- Bhatia, V.K. (2004). *Worlds of written discourse: A genre-based view*. Continuum.
- Bhatia, V. K. (2008). Genre analysis, ESP and professional practice. *English for Specific Purposes*, 27(2), 161–174. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2007.07.005>
- Bhatia, V.K., & Bremner, S. (2017). *The Routledge handbook of language and professional communication*. Routledge.
- Biber, D., Connor, U., & Upton, T. A. (2007). *Discourse on the move: Using corpus analysis to describe discourse structure*. John Benjamins.
- Boulton, A. (2012). Corpus consultation for ESP: A review of empirical research. In A. Boulton, S. Carter-Thomas, & E. Rowley-Jolivet (Eds.), *Corpus-informed research and learning in ESP* (pp. 261-291). John Benjamins. <https://benjamins.com/catalog/scl.52>
- Boulton, A., & Cobb, T. (2017). Corpus use in language learning: A meta-analysis. *Language Learning*, 67(2), 348-393. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12224>
- Boulton, A., & Vyatkina, N. (2021). Thirty years of data-driven learning: Taking stock and charting new directions. *Language Learning & Technology*, 25(3).
- Bygate, M., Skehan, P., & Swain, M. (eds.). 2001. *Researching pedagogic tasks: Second language learning, teaching and testing*. Longman.
- Cangir, H. (2022). Using corpus tools for academic writing in EFL settings: A data-driven learning approach. In G. Yangın-Ekşi, S. Akayoglu, & L. Anyango (Eds.), *New directions in technology for writing instruction* (pp. 171-191). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-13540-8_9
- Charles, M., & Frankenberg-Garcia, A. (Eds.). (2021). *Corpora in ESP/EAP writing instruction. Preparation, exploitation, analysis*. Routledge.
- Chen, M., & Flowerdew, J. (2018). Introducing data-driven learning to PhD students for research writing purposes: A territory-wide project in Hong Kong. *English for Specific Purposes*, 50, 97-112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2017.11.004>

- Cheng, W. (2017). Corpus analyses of professional discourse. In V. Bhatia and S. Bremner (Eds), *The Routledge handbook of language and professional communication* (pp. 13-25). Routledge.
- Connor, U. & Upton, T. (eds.). (2004) *Discourse in the professions: Perspectives from corpus linguistics*. John Benjamins.
- Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Flowerdew, L. (2012). Corpus-based discourse analysis. In M. Handford & J.P. Gee (eds), *The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 174-187). Routledge.
- Fuertes-Olivera, P. A., Velasco-Sacristán, M., Arribas-Baño, A., & Samaniego-Fernández, E. (2001). Persuasion and advertising English: Metadiscourse in slogans and headlines. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 33, 1291-1307.
- Gavioli, L. (2005). *Exploring corpora for ESP learning*. John Benjamins.
- Handford, M. (2012). Professional communication and corpus linguistics. In K. Hyland, M. H. Chau, & M. Handford (Eds.), *Corpus applications in applied linguistics* (pp. 13-28). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Henry, A., & Roseberry, R. L. (1996). A Corpus-based investigation of the language and linguistic patterns of one genre and the implications for language teaching. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 30, 472-489.
- Henry, A., & Roseberry, R. L. (2001). Using a small corpus to obtain data for teaching a genre. In M. Ghadessy, A. Henry, & R.L. Roseberry (Eds.), *Small corpus studies and ELT* (pp. 93-133). John Benjamins.
- Hirata, Y., & Hirata, Y. (2018). Students' evaluation of SkELL: The Sketch Engine for language learning. In S. K. S. Cheung, L. Kwok, K. Kubota, L.-K. Lee, & J. Tokito (Eds.), *Blended learning. Enhancing learning success* (Vol. 10949, pp. 368-377). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-94505-7_30
- Hirata, Y., & Hirata, Y. (2019). Applying 'Sketch Engine for language learning' in the Japanese English classroom. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 31(2), 233-248. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12528-019-09208-z>
- Hunston, S. (2011). *Corpus approaches to evaluation. Phraseology and evaluative language*. Routledge.
- Kanoksilapatham, B. (2007). Rhetorical moves in biochemistry research articles. In D. Biber, U. Connor., & T.A. Upton (Eds.), *Discourse on the move: Using corpus analysis to describe discourse structure* (pp. 73-119). John Benjamins.
- Kilgarriff, A., Baisa, V., Bušta, J., Jakubíček, M., Kovář, V., Michelfeit, J., Rychlý, P., & Suchomel, V. (2014). The Sketch Engine: Ten years on. *Lexicography*, 1(1), 7-36. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40607-014-0009-9>
- Kilgarriff, A., Marcowitz, F., Smith, S., & Thomas, J. (2015). Corpora and language learning with the Sketch Engine and SKELL. *Revue Française de Linguistique Appliquée*, 1, 61-80.
- Kim, H. (2019). The perception of teachers and learners towards an exploratory corpus-based grammar instruction in a Korean EFL primary school context. *Primary English Education*, 25(1), 123-152.
- Labrador, B., Ramón, N., Alaiz-Moretón, H., & Sanjurjo-González, H. (2014). Rhetorical structure and persuasive language in the subgenre of online advertisements. *English for Specific Purposes* 34, 38-47.

- Laricchia, F. (2022, October 18th). *Share of mobile phone shipments worldwide 2015-2022, by vendor*. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/632168/global-mobile-phone-market-share-by-vendor/>
- Manoïlov, P. (2023). Can visual representations facilitate EFL information processing and learning? *Recherche et pratiques pédagogiques en langues*, 42 (1).
- Muftah, M. (2023). Data-driven learning (DDL) activities: Do they truly promote EFL students' writing skills development? *Education and Information Technologies*, 28 (10). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-11620-z>
- Osman, H., & Turiman, S. (2022). Technology-based student-centred ESP writing with genre-based teaching approach. *LSP International Journal*, 9, 45-59. <https://doi.org/10.11113/lspi.v9.18387>
- Perloff, R.M. (2020). *The Dynamics of persuasion: communication and attitudes in the 21st century*. Routledge.
- Schaeffer-Lacroix, E. (2016). Talking about German verb particles identified in concordance lines - from spontaneous to expert-like metatalk. *Language Awareness*, 25(1-2), 127-143. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2015.1122023>
- Schaeffer-Lacroix, E. (2021). Integrating corpus-based audio description tasks into an intermediate-level German course. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 31(2), 173-192. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12294>
- Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge University Press.
- Therova, D., & McKay, A. (2022). Introducing data-driven learning on a PhD pre-sessional programme. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, 16(1), Article 1.
- Upton, T. A., & Cohen, M. A. (2009). An approach to corpus-based discourse analysis: The move analysis as example. *Discourse Studies*, 11(5), 585-605.
- Vincent, B., Nesi, H., & Quinn, D. (2021). Exploiting corpora to provide guidance for academic writing: The BAWE Quicklinks project. In *Corpora in ESP/EAP Writing Instruction*. Routledge.
- Xu, X. (2022). A genre-based analysis of questions and comments in Q&A sessions after conference paper presentations in computer science. *English for Specific Purposes*, 66, 63-76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2021.12.002>
- Zare, J. (2020). Awareness of discourse organizers and comprehension of academic lectures: The effect of using concordancers. *Current Psychology*, 39(2), 419-427. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00579-1>

APPENDIXES

Appendix A. Move structure in promotional discourse (Bhatia, 2004, p. 65)

1. Headlines (for reader attraction)
2. Targeting the market

3. Justifying the product or service
 - *by indicating the importance of the need of the product or service and/or*
 - *by establishing a niche*
4. Detailing the product or service
 - *by identifying the product or service*
 - *by describing the product or service*
 - *by indicating the value of the product or service*
5. Establishing the credentials
6. Celebrity or typical user endorsement
7. Offering incentives
8. Using pressure techniques
9. Soliciting a response

Appendix B. A sample of frequent evaluative adjectives in lemma form from the Samsung and Apple corpora as identified by students using Sketch Engine Wordlist

| Item | Frequency in Samsung corpus (out of 2,182 total occurrences) | Frequency in Apple Corpus (out of 435 total occurrences) |
|----------|---|---|
| good | 40 | 11 |
| new | 34 | 9 |
| fast | 22 | 5 |
| bright | 13 | 4 |
| easy | 13 | 7 |
| smooth | 13 | 0 |
| big | 12 | 1 |
| powerful | 11 | 1 |
| high | 11 | 1 |
| advanced | 10 | 2 |
| late | 10 | 6 |
| free | 9 | 3 |
| secure | 5 | 4 |
| smart | 3 | 4 |
| rich | 2 | 2 |

| | | |
|-----------|-----|----|
| beautiful | 1 | 4 |
| efficient | 1 | 3 |
| Total | 210 | 67 |

Appendix C. Sample written production by a group of 3 students (348 words): evaluative language, personalisation and moves

Appendix C

Colour code:
 White in grey: use of the second person pronoun denoting the personalisation features of promotional discourses
 Yellow: evaluative moves, exemplification showing narrative use of evaluative adjectives taken from the corpus studied
 UKO Photo by Samsung (presenting a mobile phone in generation Z terms)

Entertainment wherever you go
 Friends of yours playing on their phone

BE FREE
 Be free to enjoy and play on-the-go. UKO is the perfect phone to play your favorite game on with 3000mAh battery that allows you to play for 24 hours. The freedom to take it wherever you go.

ONE-CLICK
 Use smart AI to take better photos and videos. 30MP photo lens with 1-inch light sensor sensor provides you with all of your favorite photos and videos in our beautiful format.

BE FUN
 Stay connected in the most fun way. Equipped with 16 lenses, 50x zoom, get into your multiplayer game. 100% fun, 100% connected.

VIDEO GAME IMMERSION
 UKO has a 200Hz native refresh rate and a high-tech processor delivers you the smoothest gaming experience. With UKO you have access to the most fun games.

BE CREATIVE AND COLOURS TO YOUR LIFE
 Take your creative side to the next level. With its 108MP camera and accessories, make your photos come to life in any way.

BE CREATIVE AND COLOURS TO YOUR LIFE
 No need for a computer, just use easily edit images and videos directly on your phone.

BE LIGHT AS A FEATHER
 Its light and thin design allows you to see the lighter color and enjoy it.

BE SOCIAL
 Moments carry life's memories and UKO allows you to share your moments with friends and family with 30MP camera and 16MP.

BE ECO-FRIENDLY
 Connect with nature. Having a 100% recycled plastic and recycled metal will reproduce the planet. Our innovative team has designed a sustainable and covered with eco material, converting the sun light into the energy for your phone. UKO will be able to watch how much charge is left and have the power of the light which charges the battery in.

Key features
 108MP camera with 10x optical zoom
 1620x2520px with the open internal screen
 Soft UI DE—backgrounds that connect with nature
 Protection technology with color display (P2)

Contact us NOW! www.facebook.com/SamsungCompany
 www.instagram.com/SamsungCompany
 8295 S 1st Avenue #840 Inglewood, CA 90709, U.S.A

1. Headline
 1. Reader attraction
 2. Target Market
 2. Target market
 3. Justification: establishing need & niche
 4. Product details
 Objective features
 Positive evaluation
 5. Credentials
 2. Target market
 3. Justification: establishing need & niche
 4. Product details
 Objective features
 Positive evaluation
 5. Credentials
 4. Product details
 Positive evaluation
 5. Credentials
 4. Product details
 Objective features
 5. Credentials
 8. Feature details
 9. Soliciting response

NOTES

1. For more information, go to <https://www.cesim.com/fr/simulations/cesim-global-challenge>
2. Osman & Turiman (2022) propose using both move analysis and bundles to analyse a corpus of eight sustainability reports. However, their method for determining the moves and the steps of the report neither comes from the literature nor is it explained in detail in the article.
3. Sketch Engine offers individual and institutional academic licences for a limited or unlimited number of users based on the size of the university ranging from €380 (for 5 users) to €3,600 per year for university-wide access. <https://www.sketchengine.eu/>
4. According to Statista (Laricchia, 2022), Samsung held around 23 percent of the global mobile phone market and Apple came second with 18 percent in 2022.

5. <https://image-us.samsung.com/SamsungUS/samsungbusiness/pdfs/brochures/HHP-CARRIERAGNOSTIC-S20SERIESBRO-FEB20T-3-5-20.pdf>
 6. This figure refers to the word count obtained after the data were compiled by Sketch Engine.
 7. Copyright laws have been respected as both Samsung and Apple grant users permission to use the content from their websites for personal, non-commercial purposes.
 8. <https://forms.gle/qQkCvcNeE2RioMPK9>
 9. All adjectives in this list also appear in the Samsung and Apple corpora except for those in italics.
 10. Some students mentioned several themes in their response.
-

ABSTRACTS

This paper contributes to data-driven learning (DDL) literature about English for specific purposes. We examine the potential of DDL, via Sketch Engine, for learning and using persuasive language in a task-based approach to promotional discourse. This study took place in the applied foreign languages department of a French university (Langues étrangères appliquées - LEA). The LEA students' written productions demonstrate mastery of lexico-grammatical patterns for persuasive language encountered through Sketch Engine DDL activities. Students were generally favourable to the approach and considered it useful for developing their professional language skills.

Cet article contribue à la littérature sur l'apprentissage sur corpus (ASC) de l'anglais de spécialité. Nous examinons le potentiel de l'ASC, avec Sketch Engine, pour l'apprentissage et le déploiement du langage persuasif dans le cadre d'une approche par les tâches qui vise le discours promotionnel. Cette étude s'est déroulée dans le département de langues étrangères appliquées d'une université française (LEA). Les productions écrites des étudiants en LEA démontrent la maîtrise des unités lexico-grammaticaux du langage persuasif identifiés avec Sketch Engine. Les étudiants sont généralement favorables à l'approche et la considèrent comme utile pour développer leurs compétences linguistiques professionnelles.

INDEX

Mots-clés: analyse de discours, anglais de spécialité, apprentissage sur corpus, corpus spécialisé, genre professionnel, rédaction en L2

Keywords: corpus-based language learning, data-driven learning, discourse analysis, English for specific purposes, professional genres, second language writing, specialised corpora

AUTHORS

JULIE MCALLISTER

Julie McAllister is an associate professor in the Applied Foreign Languages Department of Nantes Université, France, where she teaches English for specific purposes (logistics and marketing) and is co-director of the international logistics and supply chain management master's programme.

Her research interests include second language acquisition, technology mediated language learning and the use of specialised corpora in a didactic perspective, including the analysis of English promotional discourse and the analysis of learner corpora. She has written a number of publications on language learning in blended contexts and on English for specific purposes. Email address: Julie.Mcallister1[at]univ-nantes.fr

MARY CATHERINE LAVISSIÈRE

Mary Catherine Lavissière is an associate professor of applied languages at Nantes Université, France. Trained in English and Spanish linguistics, she focuses on language for specific purposes, genre, morphosyntax, and historical linguistics. Her recent work includes analysing macrodivisions in legal genres, including US Supreme Courts opinions and maritime contracts. She is the principal investigator for Lexhnology ANR-22-CE38-0004, which uses artificial intelligence to model macrodivisions in case law for teaching and learning purposes. Marycatherine.Lavissiere[at]univ-nantes.fr