The network of words: an analysis of the collocate PETIT in French collocations

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Analysis

1. Les toilettes [specific]

2. Un endroit retiré (souvent fig.) [non-specific]

Analysis Procedure

1. Identify a way to systematise collocations by the semantic and syntactic nature of their collocates

Step 1 Criteria:
1. possesses a strong semantic core
2. composed of a noun (the base) and an adjective (PETIT, i.e. the collocate)
3. included in articles of three dictionaries that we draw from in our study (Répertoire encyclopédique, Arboisè, et al)

2. To explore the advantages that this system might have compared to the system of modern dictionaries

Step 2 LF:
- All LF are defined in the bottom half of the dictionary
- Semantic analysis defines the various meanings in relation to the context of use
- Syntactic analysis defines the set of grammatically determined vocabulary

3. Our System:
- Defines collocates by their nature (how they modify bases)
- Does not define any syntactic trends or uses of collocations

4. Results & Discussion

5. Definitions - LF

6. References


definition kickstarts research (Hausmann & Blumenthal, 2006).

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1. Introduction & Research Goals

This research has two goals:
1. To identify a way to systematise collocations by the semantic and syntactic nature of their collocates
2. To explore the advantages that this system might have compared to the system of modern dictionaries

Our study analyses 10 French collocations whose adjectival collocate is PETIT, by drawing from Igor Mel‘čuk’s Meaning-Text Theory (MTT), which uses Lexical Functions (LF) to understand the nature of words and their combinations (Mel’čuk, 2003). By manipulating already established LF, we aim to propose a systematic model that can be used to understand and define collocations and collocates.

Despite its long history, the collocation was rarely studied before the mid-20th century. As a result, modern dictionaries do not sufficiently define them (Hausmann & Blumenthal, 2006).

DEFINITION OF THE COLLOCATION
- A non-arbitrary binary word pairing composed of a BASE and a COLLOCATE
- The base is independently chosen and maintains more or less its original meaning
- The collocate is dependently chosen in response to a base, and changes its meaning depending on the context.
- Collocations are more or less figurative depending on the context and the strength of their semantic link.

Methodology

Drawing from Igor Mel’čuk’s MTT (1995; 2003) our study uses LF to analyse the semantic and syntactic natures of the collocate PETIT.

LF (ex. Magn - intensifiers, Oper - direct object verbs, etc.) identify and label a clear semantic or syntactical connection. Our research applies this concept and relates it to the nature of collocations. We will see if it is possible to identify the way in which collocates modify the meaning of bases through the use of already established LF, as well as some created for our study.

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