Employing Biber's Lexical Bundles to Explore Discourse in Malala Yousafzai's Autobiographical Narratives

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Abstract

This study employs Biber's lexical bundle framework to investigate the discourse in Malala Yousafzai's autobiography, I Am Malala. Utilizing corpus stylistics, this analysis examines the structural and functional roles of lexical bundles, frequently occurring word clusters, by applying Biber's (1999) structural taxonomy and Biber's (2004) functional classification. The bundles were analyzed using the AntConc software, focusing on their contribution to narrative cohesion and emotional depth. By categorizing lexical bundles into high-, mid-, and low-frequency groups, this study elucidates how they are structurally utilized (e.g., noun phrases, prepositional phrases) and functionally employed (e.g., stance expressions, discourse organizers, and referential expressions). These bundles organize key transitions, emphasize significant comparisons, and convey emotional nuances in Malala's narrative. The findings highlight how Malala's linguistic choices, informed by Biber's framework, enhance her persuasive impact as an advocate of girls' education. Additionally, this study presents opportunities for future research, including comparative studies and cross-cultural analyses using corpus linguistics.

Keywords: lexical bundles, corpus stylistics, Discourse, autobiography analysis, Malala Yousafzai

Introduction

Malala Yousafzai emerged as a prominent advocate for girls' and women's education after the 2012 assassination by the Taliban. Despite the attack intended to silence her, it amplified her global influence. At age 17, she became a Nobel laureate and established the Malala Fund to promote girls' education worldwide. Malala has also authored several publications, including the critically acclaimed memoir "I Am Malala," and contributed to the Oscar-nominated documentary short "Stranger at the Gate" in 2022. Her efforts have garnered widespread recognition and accolade globally. A corpus, defined as a collection of electronically stored texts, is increasingly being utilized in language pedagogy and the analysis of linguistic features. According to McMenamin (2002), style is intrinsically linked to consistent choices made by a writer. Similarly, Jefferies and McIntyre (2010) conceptualized style as the individual language choices made by a writer from the alternatives provided by the language as a whole. Eyoh (2005) further characterized style as encompassing distinctive speech habits and linguistic markers that identify a group of writers over a specific period. Collectively, these elements underscore how corpora can serve as effective tools for analyzing particular linguistic features and enhancing language-teaching methodologies (Coniam, 2004). Corpora are recognized as valuable resources in language pedagogy, particularly through the application of corpus stylistics, which facilitate learners' comprehension of style-creating linguistic features and enhance their linguistic competence (Shadiev & Yang, 2020). Corpus stylistics, which integrates computational data analysis with human intuition, especially when applied to literary texts, effectively cultivates students' language proficiency and expands their linguistic

competence (Mahlberg). Furthermore, discourse can be conceptualized as written or spoken communication or debate, which is a fundamental framework for analyzing language usage in diverse contexts (Gee, 2014). Autobiography is a self-authored account of a writer's life. In contrast to biographies, which are composed of individuals other than the subject, autobiographies are written by the subjects themselves, providing a personal perspective on their thoughts, experiences, and interpretations of life events. According to Smith (2001), autobiography provides a comprehensive introspection of an author's life from a first-person perspective. A Memoir by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb, *"I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban,"* is a book on individualistic activism that has shaken the foundations of oppression. Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani women's education activist and the youngest Nobel Peace Prize winner, presented her powerful story of surviving a Taliban attack—a testament to her unyielding commitment to education. This book chronicled not only her personal story and struggle for survival, but also the acute pressures of teenage life within a politically unstable and beleaguered environment. Christina Lamb, a British journalist noted for war reporting, provides Malala's account with historical and complex geopolitical interpretations influencing Malala's life. This collective work clarifies the point of personal tragedy, world justice, and the point of change in education. Additionally, their work emphasizes education as an indispensable part of societal transformation. Lexical bundles, first introduced by Biber et al. (1999), are frequently occurring sequences of three or more words used in natural discourse, identified through a frequency-driven approach based on specific thresholds in the text. These bundles, which can be idiomatic or non-idiomatic, vary in structure and are essential for analyzing language patterns.

Research Objectives

1. Determine structural arrangements in the narrative style of Yousafzai's autobiography.

2. Identify discourse functions utilized by Malala Yousafzai in her autobiographical recount.
3. Assess how lexical bundles enhance the structural and functional effectiveness of the discourse in Malala Yousafzai's autobiography

Research Questions

1. How are structural arrangements manifested in the narrative style of Yousafzai's autobiography?

2. What discourse functions are predominantly utilized by Malala Yousafzai in her autobiographical recount?

3. How do lexical bundles contribute to the structural and functional effectiveness of discourse in Malala Yousafzai's autobiography?

This investigation addresses a significant gap in the linguistic analysis of Yusafzai's autobiography. Previous research, such as that conducted by Altam and Pathan (2021) and Kusrini (2020), has primarily employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine various aspects of her language, including its metaphorical and persuasive elements. Notwithstanding the valuable insights gained from these investigations, no research has yet been undertaken using a corpus stylistic approach that integrates language analysis with stylistics, specifically utilizing Biber's structural and functional taxonomy models. This study aims to address this gap by employing the corpus software tool Antconc to analyze the structural and functional taxonomies of lexical bundles in Malala's autobiography, thereby offering a focused and novel contribution to the field of linguistic research.
This study employs corpus stylistics to analyze Malala Yousafzai's autobiography, elucidating her role as a global advocate of girls' education. By examining her linguistic choices rather than thematic content, this study aims to elucidate how her eloquence enhanced her persuasive impact, particularly in promoting women's education and empowerment.

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Volume: 3, No: 1   **January-March, 2025**

26

Literature Review

Ghulam et al. (2022) discuss the composition and functionality of 100 common four-word lexical bundles were identified using a corpus-based analysis approach in KPK high school certificate-level biology textbooks using the AntConc software. This study further categorizes these lexical bundles into their structural and functional taxonomy, as proposed by Biber et al. (2004), who demonstrated that word bundles comprising subordinate clause fragments, verb phrases with passive verbs, and prepositional phrases are prevalent in biology textbooks. Most bundles have major functional applications, including discourse organizers and reference expressions. This means that such bundles are important in teaching English for academic purposes. The data presented in this study highlight the importance of awareness of vocabulary bundles and their usefulness in educational institutions. The article provides insights into practical improvements in teaching skills in the English language and academic writing in academic settings in Pakistan. In this research, the authors applied the approach of analysis of Malala's speech using Critical Discourse Analysis. This research aims to explain and analyze the latent messages and ideologies in her speech and the ways in which she uses figurative and persuasive language to express her thoughts. Therefore, this theoretical framework is applied in this study to investigate ideological, discursive practice, and sociocultural aspects at the micro-level within the text. The findings reveal that Malala makes use of figurative and persuasive undertone in relation to advocating for going to school for girls, women's rights, and the need for educational equality for World Eastern children. Therefore, it may be stated that through this study, it has been found that language helps build a center for social change and empowerment. Kusrini, Teguh R. A. (2020) conducted a critical discourse analysis based on Halliday's theory of systemic functional linguistics to analyze the transitive systems in Malala's speech. The CDA uses Fairclough's framework, which consists of three phases: description, explanation, and interpretation. Halliday's analysis revealed six types of transitive processes. Material processes were the most frequently used, accounting for 35% of the total. A total of 1163 cases were identified that contained transitive processes were identified. Thus, this study showed that Malala's speech is mainly based on material, psychological, and relational processes. The study also shows that Malala discursively constructed a pro-liberal feminist ideology by considering women's rights. In conclusion, this study aims to identify how speakers articulate their ideological positions based on Malala's speech. Saba Naz (2021) highlighted the changing trend in social media, particularly on Twitter and Facebook in committing hate speech with reference to one of Malala Yusafzai's case. It recognizes that, in the present epoch, the digital era has been an important part of daily life, fostering the growth of hate speech and other behaviors based on caste, skin color, gender, or culture. This study critically examines the instances of hate speech observed in South Asia by studying how users discuss Malala. This study used quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the labels found in the Malala case, showing both widespread and harshly hate speech components within that region. While the findings of this analysis require some action to reduce the negative impacts of hate speech, it also reveals that social media has a high potential for positive use in favor and humanity. Fauzi and Ilahi (2017) studied the persuasive language used by Malala Yousafzai during her address at United Nations headquarters. The speech was significant, as it followed the Taliban attacks on children's and women's education worldwide. Critical Discourse Analysis will support this research in examining Malala's speech, demonstrating that she displayed resilience and determination in the face of adversity. Moreover, recent research has indicated that Malala's speech could serve as effective instructional material for English Language Teaching (ELT), to be utilized by educators to impart various language skills in the classroom, as the instruction focuses on persuasive language. This study further underscores the pedagogical potential of authentic presentations for language instruction. Ivascu & Handeland (2014) examined language, gestures, and non-verbal communication, as well as the complex interrelationships among these elements in communication. Drawing on data from Malala Yousafzai's speech at Harvard University, this paper discusses how monologues can effectively address audiences using verbal and nonverbal resources. The authors define

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Volume: 3, No: 1   **January-March, 2025**

27

language as not being limited solely to words; rather, it encompasses words, images, gestures, and non-verbal behaviors that address the audience. In this context, this paper advocates an understanding of how verbal and non-verbal elements can collaborate while elucidating their role as complementary tools in spoken discourse. Indeed, the multimodal assessment of speech provides valuable insights into the components of effective communication. Kienpointner (2021) presents a compelling account of Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani student who survived a Taliban assassination attempt and subsequently delivered a notable speech at the United Nations' Youth Assembly. This study examines analytical thinking in communication, emphasizing on her primary arguments and strategies for verbal expression. It also analyzes how Malala responds to the verbal and non-verbal cues of the Taliban without compromising communicative effectiveness. In this study, a theoretical framework of strategic maneuvering in pragmatic dialectics is employed for the critique of speech. The research elucidates her courage and adept at strategic communication skills in the face of adversity, which reflects upon her resilient character as an advocate for peace and education. Putri (2020) studied discourse deixis in Malala Yousafzai's address in the United Nations Youth Assembly using pragmatic analysis. This paper sets out to original both the justification of women 'sand girls' education as articulated by Malala and her rationales for targeting this issue. After data were collected and coded, a qualitative method called descriptive non-participant observation was used to analyze the transcripts of Malala's speech. Using Fairclough's critical discourse analysis theory, the study concluded that Malala used certain words and sentences in a strategic manner to drive home her ideology, symbolizing "book and pen" as symbols against terrorism It talked about the issues and obstacles faced socially and educationally by girls in Pakistan due to resistance from militant groups as well as focusing on provision of quality education. Mao (2022) conducts corpus stylistics through a close reading of a science fiction novel, "The Time Machine," utilizing the stylistic theory proposed by Leech and Short (2007), in conjunction with a corpus-based approach. This investigation focuses on writing style and themes by examining lexical and rhetorical features extracted using WordSmith 7.0, and AntConc. The framework adopted categorizes stylistic features into lexis, grammatical categories, figures of speech, and cohesion in context. This approach provides a comprehensive analytical framework for examining literary works, which encompasses semantic annotation, part-of-speech tagging, and statistical analysis applied meticulously, facilitating research on lexical density, vocabulary utilization, and narrative structures in this novel and in a reference corpus comprising award-winning science fiction works. It not only contributes to the field of corpus-based fiction stylistics, but also demonstrates the significance of examining science fiction literature from a stylistic perspective, offering nuanced insights into its literary complexities and thematic depth.

Methodology
The researcher experimented with the study of lexical bundles in Malala Yousafzai's autobiography using the AntConc software. They first collected and digitized excerpts to build a text corpus for analysis. With the help of its robust data analysis capability, the software could detect these lexical bundles easily, organize them by frequency and structural types most frequently used (e.g., nouns or prepositional phrases), roles within the narrative, and combined quantitative and qualitative methods to dig deeper into their function. On the quantitative side, the researcher decided to divide lexical bundles by their frequency: high-, mid-, and low-frequency bundles will thus show how they shape the structure of a story (how it works with complex narrative types) and its emotional impact. They focused quantitatively on the extent to which these bundles function and where they are (compared to numerical measures of distribution and importance), as well as qualitatively on what large numbers of such bundles actually do for a living, using pie charts to map their functional roles and determine how similar or different they are. Doing this in a multidimensional approach not only improves the validity of the results but also provides better insight into how these lexical bundles enhance coherence, effectivity, and emotional engagement in those who read Malala's powerful autobiography.

Theoretical framework

The researcher investigated Malala Yousafzai's discourse using Biber's (1999) Structural Analysis model and the 2004 functional taxonomic lexical analysis, tracking the frequency of lexical bundles using AntConc. Lexical bundles are recurrent strings of words that serve as fundamental units of packaging information. Biber et al (1999) conducted a study dealing with the analysis of these word clusters and their findings in Malala's writing.

Lexical Bundle	Frequency	Structural Type	Function
one of the most	45	Noun Phrase with of-Phrase Fragment	Indicates possession or relationship
at the end of	42	Prepositional Phrase with Embedded of-Phrase	Provides temporal context
the fact that the	38	Noun Phrase with that-Clause Fragment	Expresses factual information or assertion
for the first time	36	Discourse Organizer (Topic Introduction/Focus)	Introduces new events or experiences
in terms of the	34	Prepositional Phrase	Provides a comparative context
it was hard to	31	Stance Expression (Epistemic Stance)	Expresses difficulty or emotional state
the end of the	29	Noun Phrase with of-Phrase Fragment	Indicates completion or finality of an event
the way in which	27	Prepositional Phrase	Describes manner or method
one of the things	25	Noun Phrase with of-Phrase Fragment	Indicates possession or one of many elements
the role of the	23	Noun Phrase with of-Phrase Fragment	Describes function or position of a subject

The selected files were analyzed to extract lexical bundles using corpus analysis software. The collected data were stored electronically, and one of the areas to be analyzed was centered on Malala Yousafzai's autobiography, which provides primary source proof on a variety of sites. AntConc was selected for its ability to conduct robust data analysis, which is necessary for identifying patterns in language. First introduced by Laurence Anthony in 2005, it is a very flexible open-source software that can run on several operating systems. AntConc is unique in its ease of use, with features such as frequency lists, concordance lines, and keyword analyses. It allows one to explore language research, particularly for educational purposes, with the help of these tools.

Analysis Table .1 . Analysis of Lexical Bundles: Frequency and Functions in Academic Discourse
Lexical Bundle Frequency Distribution
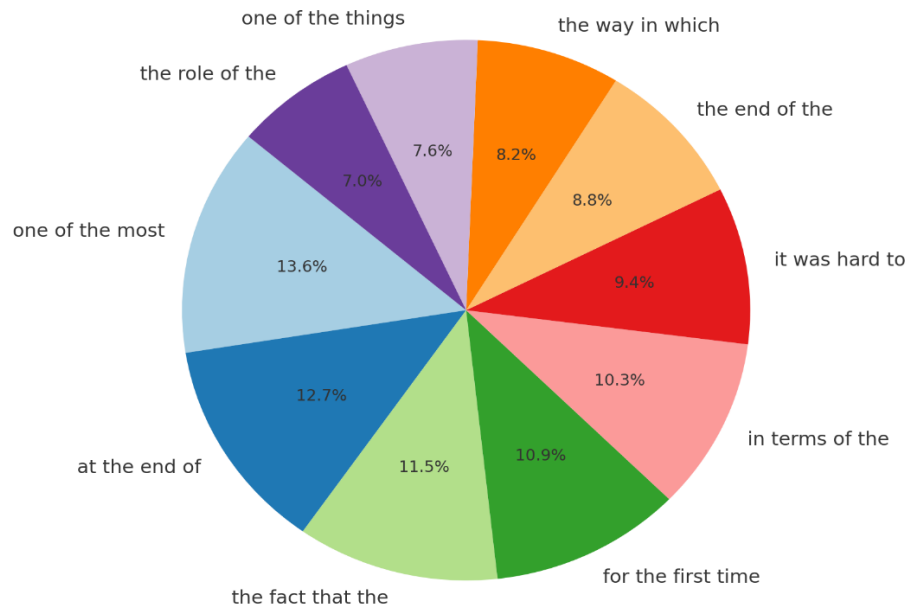
Pie chart: lexical bundles frequency distribution

That is reflected in the pie chart above, where we see those little green arcs of high-frequency lexical bundles like "one of the most" and "at the end of," all expressing a range of relationships between nouns like possession or time and providing factual evidence. Mid-ranking phrases, including "for the first time" and "in terms of the," help introduce novel topics or enable comparisons; low-ranking bundles such as "the way in which" and "the role of the" are used to specify means or functions. These distributions express the probability with which such bundles function to create meaning and context within a language.

These lexical bundles are grouped by frequency, structural type, and function in the following table. Rather, researchers want to draw attention to this configuration and suggest that the popularity of its combinations in Malala's autobiography reflects their role in the narrative form and discourse. Discourse analysis will not be meaningful unless we know how the frequencies of any class affect discourse.

High-Frequency Bundles (40-45 occurrences)

- **"one of the most" (45 occurrences)**:
  - **Structural Type**: Noun Phrase with an of-phrase fragment.
  - **Function**: This linguistic construct typically denotes a possession or relationship, emphasizing salient qualities or distinctions.
  - **Effect on Discourse**: This analysis indicates that Malala often uses comparative or hierarchical language, placing significant importance on particular individuals, events, and circumstances. The repeated use of this phrasing adds weight to her narrative, highlighting the key elements of her experiences, emotional responses, and perspectives.

- **"at the end of" (42 occurrences)**:
  - **Structural Type**: Prepositional Phrase with Embedded Phrases
  - **Function**: Provides temporal context.

- **Effect on Discourse**: Malala often uses this phrase to mark the end of important events or phases of her life. The frequent use of this expression reflects the structure of her narrative, which likely shifts between different stages or transitions, thus creating a clear sense of time. This rhetorical device helps to guide readers through the chronology of their experiences.

Mid-Frequency Bundles (30-39 occurrences)

- **"the fact that the" (38 occurrences)**:
  - **Structural Type**: Noun Phrase with that-Clause Fragment.
  - **Function**: Expresses factual information or assertions.
  - **Effect on Discourse**: This linguistic feature demonstrates how Malala employs factual statements or assertions, thereby enhancing the clarity of her arguments or personal convictions for the reader. The utilization of this rhetorical device strengthens her narrative voice, as she frequently draws attention to certain incontrovertible truths or realizations.

- **"for the first time" (36 occurrences)**:
  - **Structural Type**: Discourse Organizer (Topic Introduction/Focus).
  - **Function**: Introduces new events or experiences.
  - **Effect on Discourse**: Through the frequent introduction of new events and experiences, Malala demonstrates numerous pivotal moments in her life. The recurrence of this rhetorical device emphasizes key instances of change or revelation, underscoring the transformative nature of her experiences. Repetition imparts dynamism to the narrative, consistently directing attention to new beginnings..

- **"in terms of the" (34 occurrences)**:
  - **Structural type**: Prepositional phases
  - **Function**: Provides a comparative context.
  - **Effect on Discourse**: This linguistic feature facilitates Malala's comparative analysis of diverse concepts, phenomena, or entities. Its prevalence indicates her frequent engagement in evaluative processes wherein she assesses situations by juxtaposing various aspects, thereby enhancing the analytical nature of her discourse. This rhetorical device may be employed when Malala contrasts her past experiences with her current circumstances, or when examining disparate social and political contexts.

Lower-Frequency Bundles (20-30 occurrences)

- **"it was hard to" (31 occurrences)**:
  - **Structural Type**: Stance Expression (Epistemic Stance).
  - **Function**: Expresses difficulty or emotional state.
  - **Effect on Discourse**: The recurrence of this linguistic element conveys the psychological challenges Malala has encountered. Through the frequent use of this phrase, she emphasizes the adversities she faced, imbuing her narrative with emotional complexity. This rhetorical device facilitates reader empathy for her tribulations, rendering her account more intimate and accessible.

- **"the end of the" (29 occurrences)**:
  - **Structural Type**: Noun Phrase with an of-phrase fragment.

- **Function**: Indicates completion or finality of an event.
- **Effect on Discourse:** This linguistic pattern potentially facilitates Malala's conclusion of descriptions of specific events or phases. The recurrent use of this lexical bundle underscores a sense of closure in her narrative, whether in relation to her personal experiences or broader historical and political occurrences.

- **"the way in which" (27 occurrences)**:
  - **Structural type**: Prepositional phases
  - **Function**: Describes the manner or method.
  - **Effect on Discourse**: This linguistic construction likely indicates an explication or delineation of processes or events. The frequency of its occurrence suggests that Malala frequently provides detailed accounts of how phenomena transpire or how she perceives event unfolding. It imparts descriptive, expository quality to her discourse, enabling her to elucidate her comprehension of occurrences.

- **"one of the things" (25 occurrences)**:
  - **Structural Type**: Noun Phrase with an of-phrase fragment.
  - **Function**: Indicates possession or one of the many elements.
  - **Effect on Discourse**: This textual element facilitates Malala's introduction of the significant aspects and characteristics of her narrative. This indicates that she frequently enumerated or emphasized specific points within broader discussions, which enabled her to focus on particular themes or ideas while maintaining a larger context..

- **"the role of the" (23 occurrences)**:
- **Structural Type**: Noun Phrase with an of-phrase fragment.
- **Function**: Describes the function or position of the subject.
- **Effect on Discourse**: Through its emphasis on roles, this collection suggests that Malala frequently engages in reflection on responsibilities or functions pertaining to both herself and others. This approach introduces a contemplative dimension to the discourse as she evaluates the significance of various individuals or entities within her narrative.

- **"One of the most"** is the most frequent lexical bundle, occurring 45 times.
- **"At the end of"** follows closely with a frequency of 42.
- Other bundles like **"The fact that the"**, **"For the first time"**, and **"In terms of the"** have slightly lower frequencies, ranging from 38 to 34.
- The least frequent bundles on the chart are **"One of the things"** and **"The role of the"**, with frequencies of 25 and 23, respectively.

Summary of Frequency Effects on Malala Discourse.

High-frequency lexical bundles such as "one of the most" and "at the end of" serve to emphasize critical comparisons and transitions, thereby anchoring significant moments in the narrative. These elements provide structural coherence to autobiography and clarify a part of its emotional and factual content. Mid-frequency lexical bundles such as "for the first time" and "the fact that" help in holding up necessary events to show Malala's point of view. They carry much more weight, which makes the reader stick around because they want to follow

their new experiences, personal lessons, etc. In contrast, lower-frequency bundles such as "the way in which" and "it was hard to" provide more vivid picturizing and emoting. Although the sentences are rarer, they bring complexity and depth to the text, which helps portray Malala's story in a more real and colorful way. The distribution of these lexical bundles throughout autobiography creates a coherent and emotional narrative that effectively communicates the coherence and depth of commonalities during annotation.

Discussion

This article uses a corpus-based methodology deploying AntConc software to analyze the bundles in Malala Yousafzai autobiography and argues how these words, in combination, strengthen the structural and primal purpose of her narrative. This study affects a system of classification into different bundles based on this frequency and investigates how they contribute to coherence and emotional valence in the text.

For quantitative analysis, researchers identified and categorized significant lexical bundles into high-, mid-, and low-frequency levels to analyze their impact on narrative structure and emotional depth. The results indicate that high-frequency semantic bundles, such as "one of the most" or "at the end of," can be particularly important for marking salient comparisons and transitions. These clumps form effective weights for pivotal episodes in the narrative, illuminating the prevailing emotional and factual sequences that ring with the readers. The qualitative analysis focused on the functional roles of these lexical bundles and graphically represented their distribution and saliency. This approach also explains how the story would not hang together and achieve it as an effect, plus emotional strength. The use of lexical bundles in this study reveals that they are crucial for constructing Malala's narrative style by providing meaning and emphasis on key events and ideas. Ultimately, this increases reader engagement and creates a high level of emotional attachment to a text.

Conclusion

This study has effectively demonstrated how lexical bundles construct the story of Malala Yousafzai's memoir using a corpus-driven technique by AntConc. This analysis systematically identified and listed these bundles as evidence of their significance in enriching narrative structure and emotional depth, respectively. High-frequency lexical bundles help frame both key comparisons and transitions, contribute "unifying" cues to important moments in the story, and introduce emotional coloration into textual content. The mid- and low-frequency bundles made the arguments more understandable, and provided nuanced descriptions and emotional reactions that further developed the narrative. Overall, this study suggests that lexical analysis can be effective in understanding discourse construction through a thorough analysis of how lexical choices make salient reader engagements and intensify the impact on autobiography within page containers.

Recommendations for Further Research

Future research should build upon this preliminary work by examining the lexical bundles present in Malala's autobiography compared to those in other activist autobiographies to determine whether common patterns or unique stylistic characteristics define individual stories. A longitudinal study listening to Malala's use of lexical bundling, particularly in her post-autobiography speeches and writing slashes, for example, analyzes possible changes between Malala's narrative style over time and downstream effects. Through cross-cultural studies of lexical bundles in autobiographical narratives, it would be valuable to determine how they operate across languages and cultural contexts and draw attention to global rhetorical strategies. There are more advanced computational analysis tools that can be used, now that we have an understanding of how narratives shape and what goes through the narrator while producing his text. Exploring how lexical bundle research can be oriented towards applied pedagogy, which in turn may help address the teaching and learning of reading comprehension across subdisciplines/microgenres, would be a worthwhile topic for future investigation.

Further, it also aims to provide implications for the broader contribution of corpus linguistics in narrative research and to advance the understanding of discursive features in various genres and cultural narratives.

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