

ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the linguistic phenomenon of “shell nouns” and its use in English monological, academic, written and spoken texts. The main objective of the thesis is to compare the use of “shell nouns” in written and spoken texts in terms of their semantic classification, position in lexico-grammatical patterns, discourse functions, and potential frequency of occurrence. The thesis raises questions concerning the overall impact of written and spoken register, frequency of occurrence, semantic classification of shell nouns, functions in lexico-grammatical patterns, as well as anaphoric and cataphoric relations. The primary material used for the analysis of spoken academic English was the British Academic Spoken English corpus, while a custom corpus created from academic articles was used for the analysis of written text. The theoretical part defines the concept of “shell noun” and related terms, semantic classification, lexico-grammatical patterns, and discourse functions related to the phenomenon. The analytical part then describes the research, provides quantitative results regarding the potential occurrence, and analyses selected shell nouns with the aim of verifying the hypotheses of this thesis.

KEYWORDS

shell nouns, academic language, English, discourse functions, corpus linguistics

