

The Word List Distribution in Social Science Research Articles

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Abstract

This study investigates the distribution and coverage of words in New General Service List (NGSL) and the Academic Word List (AWL) in social science research articles. Sixty-four open-access English social science research articles published in 2013-2015 in the ScienceDirect General category were selected and compiled to the Social Science Corpus (SSC). The AntWordProfiler 1.4.0 was utilized to calculate the frequency and coverage percentage of words from the two word lists. Word families in level 1 and level 2 of the NGSL were utilized over 70 percent, whilst level 3 word families were used around 60 percent of the entire SSC. Similarly, 99.65 percent of the AWL word families were discovered. Regarding coverage, the NGSL word families accounted for over 70 percent and the AWL word families covered around 14 percent revealing significant coverage of both word lists. The top 10 NGSL word families represented journals subject areas from which they were derived, whilst the top 10 AWL word families were used more repeatedly and linked with social science research areas. The finding of high distributions and coverage corroborated that the NGSL and the AWL significantly contribute to vocabulary pedagogy in preparing students for reading and writing social science research articles. Additionally, some pedagogical implication guidelines of the NGSL and the AWL such as flash cards, quizzes, and written tests were also introduced.

Keywords: academic word list, new general service list, word list coverage, word list implication

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