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<President> BUSH IS A <?>: Construal of semantic preference within and across discourse communities

A growing body of corpus-based work has provided strong evidence that semantic and pragmatic meanings are conventionally encoded in recurrent lexicogrammatical patterns to a much greater extent than was traditionally recognized (for recent overviews, see Partington, 2004; Stubbs, 2001a, 2001b). The major emphasis of this work to date has been on phrasal and semantic patterns as elements of the structure of a language as a whole, rather than as meanings particular to specific registers or discourse communities. This paper reports the results of a study of how semantic preferences and prosodies are construed and constrained within and across a number of specific discourse communities, through the investigation of a corpus of discussions and debates that arose in multiple internet bulletin board and weblog communities in reaction to a controversial interview of the U.S. President with an Irish television journalist on June 24, 2004. Collocations and semantic preferences prominent in the representation of a) the U.S. President and b) the television journalist within each community will be compared with those prominent in other communities, and continuities and discontinuities will be discussed in light of current thinking on semantic schemas.

Partington, A. (2004). "Utterly content in each other's company": Semantic prosody and semantic preference. *International journal of corpus linguistics, 9:1*, 131-156.
Stubbs, M. (2001a). On inference theories and code theories: Corpus evidence for semantic schemas. *Text, 21:3*, 437-465.
Stubbs, M. (2001b). *Words and phrases: Corpus studies of lexical semantics*. Oxford: Blackwell.