

Department of English Seminar

Corpus linguistics and the analysis of the discourse: The case of the lexical item *civilised world*



Professor Wolfgang Teubert
University of Birmingham, UK

Date: 24 November 2010, Wednesday

Time: 6:45 - 8:00 pm

Venue: Rm BC305, 3/F, Core B, PolyU campus

Abstract

While people in the (white) English speaking world have been using the phrase *civilised/civilized world* for many years, it exploded in frequency in the days and months following the September 11 attacks. The result can be described as a new lexical item with strong collocational capacities. British and American media keep telling us, in recurrent phraseology, who belongs to it, who attacks it, how it defends itself and what nations have to do to become members. Analysing the British and American media in terms of how they define nations as belonging to an uncivilized or a civilised world and how such definitions are received and reacted on by media in other countries shows how America and Britain exercise a hegemony of global discourse. An investigation of the lexical item(s) *civilised/civilized world* thus demonstrates how corpus linguistics can be used to find discourse patterns and to objectify the results of discourse analysis.

About the speaker

Wolfgang Teubert holds a PhD from Heidelberg University in German and English language and literature. Before he joined the English Department at the University of Birmingham, he was senior research fellow at the Mannheim Institut für Deutsche Sprache, responsible for European research projects. He is now research professor in corpus linguistics, teaching and supervising postgraduate students in corpus linguistics and in related fields.

Wolfgang's main interests are the philosophy of language, applications of corpus linguistics in multilingual language technology and translation, semantic change and critical discourse analysis. He is the editor of the *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, and he is (together with M.A.K. Halliday, Colin Yallop, and Anna Cermakova) co-author of *Lexicology and Corpus Linguistics: an Introduction* (Continuum 2004).

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