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What do math students write in english class: Towards a corpus study

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The aim of the paper is to look at how young mathematicians view the subject of mathematics in relation to other subjects and topics. The study could help understand the process of thought and the trends of interest in the student population which could assist in creating better-tailored language acquisition tasks.

The research procedure included creating a corpus of various essays written by B2 to C2 level students of Mathematics and Statistics over a period of seven years and building machine-readable text files. The quantitative research method was corpus analysis. The qualitative research method was semantic field analysis.

Lexemes with the root MATH* formed the core of the field of study. Semantic relationships were determined and categorized, revealing the attitude of the author towards both the topic of the essay and the science they study. The students had pre-set topics and free-choice themes for essays. The results varied: the majority of the essays where the student had a pre-set topic contained a denser and more elaborate semantic field of MATH[EMATICS] than those with a freely chosen topic.

The semantic field study reveals that the students express eagerness and confidence in their chosen field and view it as the basis of other sciences and even art, as well as a connecting tissue between real life and science.

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Recommendation (for student section)

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