Murderers, moonwalkers and markets: A corpus based critical discourse analysis of the International Baccalaureate (IB) in Canadian newspapers

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Abstract

This paper examines the discursive construction of the International Baccalaureate (IB) in a 1.5 million word corpus of Canadian newspapers to see how different discourses not only reflect public perceptions but also shape them. The study combines corpus-driven and corpus-based methods together with critical discourse analysis to identify patterns of language that work to build up 'notions of typicality' (Hardt-Mautner 1995) in discourses surrounding the IB. Collocational and concordance analysis reveal a positive discourse prosody (Stubbs 2001) with underlying ideas of quality and morality. These values and attitudes, indicative of wider public opinion (majority discourse), have real world implications in terms of advantaging one group while disadvantaging another.

Key words: corpus, CDA, CDS, International Baccalaureate, IB, media, collocation

1. Introduction

Murderers, an astronaut, the real estate market – what connects these three very diverse topics? The answer is the International Baccalaureate (IB), a three-tier program of studies for students in kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12), offered by the IB organization.[1] In the first case, a 2004 news story that made headlines across Canada reported on the sentencing of two murderers. This story received wide coverage and shocked the nation because of the horrific nature of the crime which involved the bludgeoning of one of the killer's parents and disabled sister. Amidst all the gory details of the crime, the men, who were 19 years old at the time of the murders, were described as 'close friends and brilliant students in an international baccalaureate program'.

In the second case, a 1999 news story about Julie Payette, Canada's second woman in space and part of a seven-person crew going to the International Space Station, noted among her long list of achievements the 'International baccalaureate (1982)'. And in the third case, a recent trend was reported in a number of Canadian provinces of how real estate markets are 'heating up' and triggering 'bidding wars' in neighbourhoods where schools offer IB programs.

Each of the articles appears to assume that readers have some familiarity with, and therefore understand the passing reference to *International Baccalaureate*. Since little or no explanation is provided about what the IB is,

these references appear to be accessing existing discourses surrounding the term, leaving the reader to draw inferences and conclusions based on associated values and assumptions. What might these discourses, values and assumptions be and how widespread are they?

The three very different semantic fields in which *International Baccalaureate* is mentioned in these articles, i.e., crime, space exploration, and real estate, suggest a phenomenon that is discursively constructed because it is not a fixed object confined to a single domain. Instead, *International Baccalaureate* appears to be flexible and to occur in a variety of contexts according to need (such as selling a house or listing a person's accomplishments). It also seems to indicate something different from a mere school curriculum. For example, substituting the words 'high school program' or 'primary school program' in any of the stories mentioned above would not have carried the same sort of weight. So although the IB is in fact a curriculum for students in kindergarten to grade 12, this aspect is backgrounded (van Leeuwen 1996) in the three news reports, in order to convey a different meaning.

With the important role that media play in both constructing and reflecting social reality (e.g., Baker 2006; Mautner 2008, 2009b), the aim of this study is to discover how *International Baccalaureate* is represented in the Canadian press, what values and attitudes appear to be associated with it, and what the implications of this representation might be in the wider social context. To address these questions, this study uses corpus linguistics combined with aspects of critical discourse analysis, referred to as 'a new 'hybrid' form of analysis' (Baker 2014: 213). This approach has become increasingly popular (Baker and Levon 2015; see also Baker and McEnery 2015) and is well suited for discovering overall linguistic trends, i.e., 'notions of typicality' (Hardt-Mautner 1995) through large amounts of naturally occurring data, with a view to making explicit underlying assumptions that link lexical items to social practice and vice versa.

This paper is divided into the following sections. First, I situate the International Baccalaureate (IB) in the context of this research and explain why its representation might be considered 'problem-oriented' (Wodak and Meyer, 2016: 31). Second, I review relevant literature focussing on how corpus approaches to critical discourse analysis (CDA; also called critical discourse studies [CDS], see e.g., Wodak 2013: xxi) help identify trends and assumptions that work to construct groups in positive or negative ways. Third, I describe the data, the tools, and the analytical framework. Finally, I discuss the findings and offer some concluding remarks.

2. Situating the International Baccalaureate (IB)

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is a series of educational programs for students aged 3 to 19 offered in schools around the world. Originally created for a transient population in need of a portable and recognized curriculum, it has evolved to become an alternative to local curricula in countries such as Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada (e.g., Bagnall 1994, 2010; Bunnell 2011, 2012; Daly 2012; Paris 2003; Tarc & Beatty 2012). For example, the number of IB schools in Canada has increased from 47 in

1992 (Bagnall 1994) to 375 today (IBO 2017). However, with this move into publicly funded schools, issues of equity (i.e., only some have access) and the apparent debasing of the other curricula have started to emerge (e.g., W. Baker 2014; Doherty 2009; Resnik 2012; Tarc 2009; Whitehead 2005). The adoption of IB programs in publicly funded schools can be seen as problematic in terms of 'who benefits' – an important CDA/CDS question – and even more so, who does <u>not</u> benefit in this situation (Baker et al. 2013b), i.e., students, teachers, and even schools that are excluded from enjoyment of extra resources and favourable treatment.

Although Canada ranks second highest in the world in terms of number of IB schools, research focussing on the impact of Canada's adoption of IB programs is relatively minimal. This paper is part of a larger study examining the discursive construction of the IB in the Canadian context, the aim of which is to discover the values and attitudes associated with the *International Baccalaureate* label, which appear to have become 'naturalized' (Baker 2010: 124) or taken for granted, as the three newspaper stories above seem to indicate. Suggestion of a hegemonic discourse surrounding the IB was found in the first stage of the study, which involved surveying admissions officers in Canadian universities about their views of the IB (Fitzgerald 2015, in press). This was seen as an important initial step in the research process (Baker 2005) and was based on similar surveys conducted in the United Kingdom (Jenkins 2003), Australia/New Zealand (Coates et al. 2007), and the United States (Daly 2012; Tarver 2010). What was notable about all of these was the uniformity of responses with respect to their positive views of the IB. In each case, participants rated the IB higher than their local curriculum, but also reported a lack of knowledge about what the program actually entailed. The consistent pattern of responses from so many different countries suggested the existence of a (positive) hegemonic IB discourse. As Stubbs (2001b: 215) argues, 'Repeated patterns show that evaluative meanings are not merely personal and idiosyncratic, but widely shared in a discourse community. A word, phrase or construction may trigger a cultural stereotype'.

To see whether a similarly positive view of the IB occurs outside the university context, the research was expanded to the public domain to see how the IB is represented, in what sorts of contexts it appears, and what types of linguistic patterns surround it, by looking at non-IB generated material as a way to identify wider societal trends. That is, the corpus used in this study is made up solely of articles produced by newspapers across Canada, and does not include any promotional and/or other material produced by the organization itself.

3. Literature review

Linking macro level social practice to micro level linguistic choices and vice versa is a key aspect of corpus based CDA/CDS research (e.g., Baker and McEnery 2005; Baker et al. 2013; Mautner 2008, 2009a). According to Mautner (2009b: 123), 'the way labels...are used reflects social attitudes, perspectives and categorizations. And the labels, in turn, shape the way in which social structures and relationships are perceived'. In this regard, to observe that a certain attitude or perspective is manifested linguistically, it is important to study not just the individual words or phrases themselves but

also how they relate to or are embedded in the wider social, historical and political context, with each influencing and shaping the other. This dialectical relationship between a discursive event and the social structures framing it is a key tenet of this approach. Understanding how widespread or common such attitudes or perceptions might be, and how powerful or hegemonic their tendencies are, can be explored through corpus analysis, using large amounts of text and computer software tools to uncover patterns in the language. Corpus analysis makes it possible to uncover the semantic relations associated with particular words, phrases and expressions, and thereby determine the webs of meaning they convey. Discovering the particular types of 'semantic load' or 'semantic aura' (Mautner 2009b: 127-128) that words and phrases carry provides insight into the kind of ideological work they are doing, and their association with particular social issues and attitudes. A further benefit of the 'useful methodological synergy' (Baker et al. 2008) of corpus based CDA/CDS is that it helps guard against the potential shortcomings of each approach, such as inadvertently cherry-picking a few examples on the one hand, or focusing solely on decontextualized data on the other (e.g., Baker 2006; Mautner 2009b).

This approach was pioneered by Hardt-Mautner (1995) in her study of EC/EU discourse in the British press, where a clear mismatch between the qualitative (CDA) approach and the quantity of data to be analyzed required the use of corpus tools to aid the analysis. Later studies focussed on the discursive construction of various groups, such as refugees and asylum seekers in UN and newspaper texts (Baker and McEnery 2005; see also Baker et al. 2008; Gabrielatos and Baker 2008), gay men in different social contexts (Baker 2005), the elderly and the unemployed in large corpora of general English (Mautner 2007, 2009b), Muslims and Islam in the British press (Baker et al. 2013a, 2013b), and Trans people and foreign doctors in the British press (Baker 2014; Baker and McEnery 2014). In each case, recurring linguistic patterns were found that tended to embody values and attitudes towards different groups which were not always explicit or easily intuited. As O'Halloran and Coffin (2004: 279) put it, there is a certain 'feel' to something but we are unsure why.

Referred to as semantic or discourse prosody (Baker 2006; Louw 1993; Stubbs 2001), such attitudes and values are reflective of the response of a wider social community (Stubbs 2001), rather than a solely personal one. The repeated patterns of words and phrases contribute to the 'incremental or cumulative effect of discourse' (Baker 2006: 13) 'priming' (Hoey 2005) particular interpretations that gradually come to be viewed as common-sense ways of thinking or are taken for granted (Stubbs 1996). Using a large corpus allows us to observe how words behave in relation to their frequency and patterns of usage. Such recurring patterns often point to dominant discourses or habitual ways of talking about particular groups, which further work to reinforce stereotypes.

For example, in his study of *bachelor* and *spinster*, Baker (2006) noted that while both words refer to unmarried adults and could be viewed as semantic equivalents, each carries a very different discourse prosody as evidenced by the words that collocated (co-occurred) with them, making one appear in a more positive light than the other. Similarly, Mautner (2009b) analyzed

collocations of the word *unemployed* as it occurred in a corpus of British newspapers, and found that it co-occurred with negative attributes such as *desperate, disadvantaged, divorced, homeless*. The important point here is that such associative meanings have less to do with simple description (e.g., a person who is unmarried or a person who does not have a job) and more to do with societal value judgments. Through a word's 'collocational profile' (Mautner 2007: 52), it is possible to gain insight into the typical kinds of values and attitudes associated with it. As these become entrenched and taken for granted through frequent repetition, a word can become primed so that even when it appears without the usual collocates, it still carries the meanings that have come to be associated with it, making such usage difficult to challenge. As Tognini-Bonelli (2001: 111) makes clear, 'words which are co-selected do not maintain their independence'.

4. Analytical Framework

This study uses corpus tools to obtain a collocation profile of *International Baccalaureate (IB)* as it occurs in a specialized corpus of Canadian newspapers. Collocates are also examined in a large corpus of general English to further aid interpretation (e.g., Baker 2013; Mautner 2007). The aim is to uncover the cumulative effects of language and gain a fuller understanding of how a picture is built up from word-level to more abstract evaluative attitudes or auras surrounding *IB*.[2] Three interrelated concepts are important for this purpose: (i) collocation; (ii) semantic preference; and (iii) discourse prosody. Although the distinction between some of these is not always clear-cut (Stubbs 2001), they are presented separately below for the purposes of discussion. Drawing on these concepts, the present study aims to discover which words tend to occur in close proximity to *IB,* and whether they contribute evaluative or descriptive meanings.

4.1 Collocation

Collocation refers to words that tend to occur near each other more often than we might expect if the words were in random order, such as *innocent bystander* (Baker et al. 2006). Understanding words in relation to the company they keep (Firth 1957: 6) is useful for discovering the kinds of attitudes or assumptions they embody, and how these attitudes 'imbue words with meaning' (Baker 2016: 140). Observing the behaviour of words in relation to their collocates also allows for unexpected or surprising findings about seemingly innocuous words (e.g., Stubbs 2001; Tognini-Bonelli 2004). What might appear at first glance to be a straightforward description could turn out to be more evaluative. In addition, as Hunston (2002: 119) argues, collocations can become 'fixed phrases that represent a packaging of information' and, as such, be more difficult to challenge or perhaps even notice as they get picked up and repeated, thereby contributing to what Baker (2006) calls the incremental effect of discourse.

4.2 Semantic Preference

Based on the idea that there are many ways to say the same thing, moving

beyond individual words to semantically related groups allows for the identification of dominant discourses, i.e., what is typical in the wider society. Semantic preference is defined by Stubbs (2001: 65) as 'the relation not between individual words, but between a lemma or word-form and a set of semantically related words'. For example, Mautner (2007) found that the word *elderly* tended to co-occur with groups of words related to the semantic domain of disability, frailty and care, while Baker (2006: 87) found that the word *refugee* showed a semantic preference for quantification. The semantic categories associated with particular words help reveal how they are typically represented 'independent of speakers', thereby providing insight not only into the different layers of meaning, but also how a lexical item might function in the wider social context.

4.3 Discourse Prosody

According to Stubbs (2001: 65), discourse prosody is related to semantic preference but expresses speaker attitude and is evaluative. Unlike semantic prosody (Louw 1993; Sinclair 1991), Stubbs argues that discourse prosody not only maintains the relation to speakers, but also works at a more abstract level, having 'great lexical variability' (88). As such, meaning is built up through repeated and shared usage, having a cumulative positive or negative effect. Analysis of such trends and patterns makes it possible to identify societal value judgements associated with lexical items (Mautner 2007), giving them an evaluative aura of meaning which is 'an indication that something is good or bad' (Hunston 2004: 159). As such, discourse prosody contributes to meaning that may not be evident through intuition or a small selection of texts, but which can be detected through numerous examples made possible by a large corpus (Partington 2004).

5. Method

5.1 The Corpus

Articles for the specialized IB media corpus were obtained through two online news databases, Canada Newsstand Complete and LexisNexis Academic, using the search terms *international* AND *baccalaureate, ib* AND *diploma* OR *student*. These search terms were determined based on prior knowledge and encounters with the topic. All Canadian newspapers (national, regional, local, and community (paid or free)) available at the time of the search were included to ensure maximum representation of public attitudes and perceptions.

Selecting all the articles provided by the two databases avoided the possibility of selection bias, i.e., inadvertently focusing only on articles that suited my purposes. In addition, it also allowed for a greater unsolicited window into public opinion (Mautner 2008), as it included not just powerful elite sources, but letters and opinion pieces from parents, students and other members of the public. As such, the IB media corpus is varied, containing maximum coverage on the topic as available on the two news databases (McEnery and Hardie 2012; Seale 2003). It is also important to note that the IB media corpus contains articles that are produced and reproduced (constructed) by

different segments of society rather than generated by the IB organization itself.

Once the data were cleaned by removing repeated or erroneous articles (e.g., section 1B being misread as IB) and deleting extraneous information such as author names, publication dates, etc., the final IB media corpus contained 2,326 articles from 1977 to 2016 and consisted of 1,521,796 words. Articles were not sorted by genre, i.e., editorial opinion, letters, features, etc. (see Baker et al. 2013b: 266), but grouped together according to newspaper since the focus of the study was to establish overall trends in terms of how *IB* was talked about in general rather than how it occurred in specific contexts.

As Mautner (2009b: 133) states, it is important to verify interpretations against a larger reference corpus, particularly when using a small specialized corpus, to see what kind of 'collocational baggage' words carry in the 'wider universe of discourse'. The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA; Davis 2015), a corpus of 520 million words comprising texts from fiction, magazines, newspapers, academic and spoken genres from 1990-2015, was used as a reference corpus to compare words or patterns found in the IB media corpus to how the words behave in general English and the semantic preferences and discourse prosodies they exhibit. COCA was selected because it covers a time period closest to that of the IB media corpus and, due to close geographical proximity, also contains a similar variety of English (Baker 2013).

5.2 Data and Analysis

Different corpus tools yield different results and therefore, as Anthony (2013) argues, the tool is as important in the analysis as the corpus data. For this study, AntConc (Anthony 2014), a freeware corpus analysis toolkit, was used. AntConc provides a number of ways that corpus data can be sorted to make different patterns visible. It also allows collocations of search terms to be obtained through a statistical choice of Mutual Information (MI) or t-score. MI is a measure of collocational strength: the higher the number, the stronger the collocation (Baker 2006, 2016); t-score, on the other hand, measures certainty and therefore tends to highlight high frequency grammatical words (Mautner 2007). For this study, the MI statistic was chosen because it favours content words over grammatical ones, and also indicates the strength of relationships between words, i.e., the likelihood of them occurring next to each other rather than separately. This statistic also identifies rare or less frequent words as collocates, which was important because of the size and specialized nature of the corpus, where rare but strong collocations might reveal additional (minority) discourses (see Baker et al. 2013a: 262; Gabrielatos and Baker 2008: 11). An MI score of 3 or above was required, which has generally been accepted as evidence for collocation (e.g., Baker 2006; Hunston 2002; Mautner 2007) as well as a minimum joint frequency of 5 (Baker 2014; Mautner 2007). In addition, proper names and function words were excluded from the list.

Collocations provide a useful entry point into the data, highlighting the most salient lexical patterns. However, due to the specialized corpus, once collocations were identified, all occurrences of the word were examined to see

how they behaved. This was done by manually scanning concordance lines, which can be sorted alphabetically to the left or right of the search term, making it easier to spot patterns. They also provide the immediate context (co-text) in which the search term appears, and can be expanded to reveal more text as required. Looking at all the occurrences of the word was considered important in order to ensure that no instances that related to *IB* were overlooked, and also to see how the words behaved when they were not co-occurring with *IB*.

5.3 Discovering Discourse Prosody through Collocations

The node word chosen to obtain collocates was *baccalaureate*,[3] since a preliminary scan of concordance lines showed that, on occasion, this was the term used rather than *international baccalaureate*. The default span for collocates on AntConc is five words to the left and right of the search term or node. However, in the IB media corpus, the node *baccalaureate* occurs in varying phrasal structures that occupy most of this span, e.g., *International Baccalaureate (IB) World School*. Since *international* and other words such as *program* or *diploma* are more likely to be present within the 5-word span and reference to *IB* is often presented in formulaic chunks, a 5L/5R span for collocates of *baccalaureate* was considered too narrow to identify words that frequently co-occur with *International Baccalaureate* [+phrase]. Therefore, to obtain a more representative set of collocates, the span was expanded to 10 words to the left and right of the node (see Baker 2006; Baker et al. 2013b; McEnery and Hardie 2012).

A list of the 100 strongest collocates (see Appendix 1) was obtained to gain insight into the dominant representation of IB in the corpus. To understand how collocates were used in context, concordance lines and, when necessary, full articles, were examined. Collocates that indexed similar concepts were grouped together according to semantic categories that emerged (see Appendix 2). Although the process of grouping and labelling is subjective (e.g., Marchi and Taylor 2009), it helps to draw out semantic preferences and related discourse prosodies. This article discusses the strongest 10 collocates, which are presented in Table 1.

Category	Collocations
Global outlook	*international*
Geographical location	*geneva, swiss, switzerland*
External oversight/regulation	*examiner, authorized, candidacy, monitored*
Names and types of curricula	*programme*
Attributes	*rigorous*

Table 1: Top 10 collocates for baccalaureate organized by category

Since the semantic category of geographical location was the most unexpected and therefore interesting, it is discussed first, while global outlook is deferred to the end of this section.

5.3.1 Geographical location: *geneva, swiss, switzerland*

The occurrence of these three collocates in the top 10 indicates strong association with the node word. The IB is *administered, based, created, established, founded, headquartered* in Geneva, from where it reportedly oversees hundreds of schools around the world. Concordance lines of these three collocates reveal references to *united nations*, *UNESCO,* and *non-profit educational foundation*, as well as to *children of diplomats* and *military personnel*. All of this suggests that these three collocates realize a link between *IB* and UN agencies. This link is further reinforced by frequent descriptions of the IB as created in the wake of the second world war and having a mission to create a more peaceful world.

United Nations General Assembly took a detour on the way to	*Geneva*	and convened at McNally high school
The diploma was developed in the 1960s in	*Geneva*	for children of **United Nations**
Founded in the 1960's - C chartered foundation under the	*Swiss*	Civil code with headquarters in Geneva - Consultative status with the **United Nations Education**

Table 2: IB linked to UN

As can be seen in Table 2, through the collocates *geneva* and *swiss,* the IB is explicitly linked to the UN. Expanded concordance lines show that such references typically occur when relating IB genealogy, as the IB organization began in Geneva. Although it now also has offices in other parts of the world (Singapore, the US, the Hague), the connection to Switzerland remains strong, as indicated by the three collocates. The connection between the IB and UN agencies, based on their common geographical location, has been commented on by some researchers (e.g., Cambridge 2002) and, in fact, became so strong that this relationship had to be explicitly disavowed by the IB organization in response to vocal opposition to the organization's 'UN values' in the United States (IBO 2014).

The collocates *switzerland* and *swiss* both tend to occur in descriptions of the IB as a non-profit organization, as shown in Table 3:

International Baccalaureate Programme is **a nonprofit** foundation, based in	*Switzerland*	established 44 years ago. MYP aligns
Baccalaureate concept is a **non-profit** international educational foundation based in	*Switzerland*	that has four programs for children aged 3-19.
IBO (International Baccalaureate Program) is a **non-profit**	*Swiss*	educational program established in 1968.

Table 3: IB as non-profit organization

The repetition of *non-profit* together with *switzerland* and *swiss* when describing the IB seems to be accessing a discourse of aid or philanthropy, constructing it as an organization concerned with humanitarian values. This suggests that the IB organization has a charitable or benevolent aspect, motivated not by personal gain or profit but rather by a more virtuous principle or belief in a greater good.

A further aspect is revealed in the use of *swiss* to indicate high quality, as in the concordance lines shown in Table 4below:

schools such as Edmonton's Jasper Place, which he calls the	*Swiss*	**Watch** of High Schools.' It ranks among
have held a constant value over time like the	*Swiss*	**franc,** whereas Ontario marks have eroded
world, including 300 in Canada. The program is governed by a	*Swiss*	-based organization and is widely regarded as one of the **most respected**
the International Baccalaureate Middle Years system, a **prestigious**	*Swiss*	program which emphasizes the importance

Table 4: IB linked to quality

Although the references to *Swiss watch* and *Swiss franc* may not be understood by everyone, the context in which they occur provides the requisite guidance as to how the recipient should interpret them, which is clearly positive. The latter two concordance lines are less ambiguous in their use of evaluative attributes (*most respected, prestigious*) to associate quality with s*wiss*. To see whether this notion of 'Swiss quality' also occurred outside the IB media corpus, a search in COCA was conducted and found a semantic preference for specific foods (*cheese, chocolate*), tools (*army knife, watch*), and finance (*bank(s), account(s)*), further reinforcing a discourse prosody of quality associated with *swiss*.

COCA was also searched to see how *switzerland* and *geneva* were used outside the IB media corpus. While *switzerland* collocates most strongly with *geneva,* followed by *germany, france, lausanne, basel,* showing a semantic preference for lexical items denoting different geographical locations, *geneva* collocates most strongly with *convention(s)* followed by words related to the activities of international organizations (*talks, meetings, conference*) and aspects of international law (*rights, peace*). Together, these suggest a discourse prosody of universality and global concerns, with a dimension of humanitarian values in terms of human rights and peaceful coexistence. The IB, by frequently being associated with *geneva* and *switzerland*, as well as being described as *non-profit*, thereby exhibiting a semantic preference for lexical items related to international concerns, also seems to acquire a humanitarian and philanthropic discourse prosody.

Thus, what might at first glance appear to be the provision of geographical

information in a purely descriptive fashion upon closer examination seems to draw on a discourse prosody of humanitarian values that transcend a particular nation (*UN*, *international*, *Geneva conventions*, *rights*) and high quality of service based on universal values. In other words, by repeating *swiss, geneva, switzerland,* associated values such as human rights, quality, and neutrality could influence how *IB* is viewed, indicative more of social attitudes than school curriculum (Mautner 2007).

5.3.2 External oversight/regulation: *examiner, authorized, candidacy, monitored*

These collocates were grouped together because they refer to regulatory aspects of the IB organization. The occurrence of four such collocates in the top 10 serves to construct *IB* as an organization that not only operates according to a set of rules, but also has official roles for oversight or accountability. This may add to the notion of quality and stability suggested by the s*wiss* group of collocates.

Of the 11 occurrences of *examiner,* seven refer to specific individuals who perform this function for the organization. The remaining five refer in general to *an international IB examiner* who evaluates the work produced by students enrolled in the IB program. Interestingly, the strongest collocates for *examiner* in COCA are *medical, office, forensic, report* about investigations into causes of death and autopsy reports. The idea of an 'international examiner' could thus suggest an impartial professional, skilled at sifting and evaluating, who will ultimately arrive at the truth of some matter in an objective way.

Concordance lines for the two collocates *authorized* and *candidacy* show that they refer to the process that schools must undergo before they are allowed to offer an IB program. The strongest collocate for *authorized* in COCA is *congress,* followed by *use, speak, force, act,* again suggesting official sanction or permission. Of the 11 concordance lines for *candidacy,* four show schools applying for *candidacy status* while five have either applied or been granted *candidacy*. Two schools are mentioned as considering whether or not to apply for *candidacy*. The repetition of *candidacy status* in contexts of schools celebrating upon obtaining this status (*toasted their latest victory*) or being referred to as winners (*the first school to receive*), suggests a positive discourse prosody associated with success and achievement or excellence (bringing to mind again the aspects of quality associated with *swiss*). A search in COCA shows that *candidacy* collocates most strongly with *his*, as in *his presidential candidacy*, followed by *announced, presidential, perot, clinton*, suggesting a semantic preference for words linked to elections. As such, *candidacy* may suggest notions of competition and fitness for purpose, i.e., even to be considered a candidate, certain requirements must be met, again reinforcing the discourse prosody of quality.

All occurrences for *monitored* in the IB media corpus refer to *examinations*, *schools*, *program* and *standards* which are monitored by *an international organization, the foundation* or *the IB*. Adverbs that occur with *monitored* are *internationally, carefully, closely*, suggesting that these different aspects of the IB, whether concrete (such as examinations and schools) or more abstract (such as standards) are subject to scrutiny to ensure that quality is

maintained. Similar collocates for *monitored* are found in COCA, the strongest being *closely*, followed by *being, carefully, progress, continuously*. This suggests a semantic preference for words related to care and precision, perhaps for reasons of accountability. This further contributes to the construction of *IB* as having quality assurance in a way that is set against the 'falling standards' prosody of mainstream education discourse (Stubbs 1996: 194).

5.3.3 Names and types of curricula: *programme*

Of the 165 instances of *programme*, almost all occur exclusively as part of the name of an IB curriculum (*diploma programme, middle years programme, primary years programme*) or as a general reference to *ib programme, international baccalaureate programme*. Ten instances which are not about the IB refer to musical performances (8) and sports in education (2). The word *program* occurs much more frequently in the corpus (2156) but has a less exclusive relationship with *IB* and appears lower down the list of collocates (#21). One obvious explanation for this difference has to do with American vs. British spellings, *programme* being the British variant of the American *program,* both of which are used in Canadian English. This type of usage can be seen in the following concordance line:

his call to open an International Baccalaureate	*programme,*	a **program** geared toward the school

In this example, both spellings are used, one specifically connected to *IB* and the other to describe it in a more general manner. Interestingly, while the words differ in spelling but seem to have the same meaning (as indicated in dictionaries and through a Google search), the two words exhibit rather different semantic preferences in COCA (which, as a corpus of American English, is expected to exhibit a linguistic distinction between the two spellings in a similar way to the IB media corpus). The strongest collocates for *programme* in COCA are UN organizations (*nations, united, environment, development, food*), followed by *education* and *health* (which also includes reference to the World Health Organization). On the other hand, *program* collocates most strongly with *nuclear, weapons* followed by *training, designed, welcome, pilot* suggesting different types of social concerns from high stakes (*nuclear, weapons, space*) to more specialized or specific events (*designed, training, welcome, pilot*). So in COCA, *programme* exhibits a semantic preference for UN-related words, whereas *program* has a wider range. In terms of *IB program/programme* then, a discourse prosody relating to events or activities of social importance seems to be suggested, as well as a further (implied) connection to UN organizations.

5.3.4 Attributes: *rigorous*

Of the 201 occurrences of *rigorous* in the IB media corpus, 177 refer to *IB*, most frequently with the word *academic* (26) plus *challenge, curriculum, program, studies*. Other words include *demanding, highly esteemed, intellectually challenging, more work, one of the most interesting programs, rich high school experience, pressure*. The remaining 24 refer to *schools, training, teaching* and *standards*. The frequency of *rigorous* in the vicinity of *IB* was noted by Doherty (2009: 12-13) in her study of IB discourse in

Australia, where she argues that 'if the IB is seen to 'own' the qualities of 'academic rigour', 'challenge', 'well-roundedness', such claims create and promote a perception of their absence in other curricula'. In the IB media corpus, the appearance of *rigorous* in the top 10 collocates confirms the strong bond between the two. Furthermore, concordance lines for *rigorous* also reveal comparisons with other curricula, as shown in Table 5. In this case, rather than implying or alluding, *IB* is explicitly constructed as being more rigorous than the regular curriculum.

recognized by European universities and requires a **far more**	*rigorous*	academic preparation than the standard U.S. high school diploma
internationally recognized diplomas are "**much more**	*rigorous*	than Alberta diploma curriculums, " says
also offers the International Baccalaureate, a	*rigorous*	program that expects **more** of students than the usual OAC demands-
took the international baccalaureate program, which is **more**	*rigorous*	than the regular curriculum

Table 5: IB as more rigorous than other curricula

Further examination in COCA found that the strongest collocate for *rigorous* is *standards,* followed by *training, research, testing, process*, *program,* and further down, *curriculum* and *academic*. This suggests a semantic preference for words relating to strict standards in the education and training domain. Thus, although dictionary and Google definitions of *rigorous* seem to carry a negative discourse prosody due to synonyms such as *strict, harsh, severe* (see also Partington 2004: 150), in the context of education and curriculum it seems to be a positive and desirable quality, something that sets it apart from the rest. Therefore, repeated references to *IB* as rigorous suggest that it has the kind of quality that is lacking in other (regular) curricula.

5.3.5 Global outlook: *international*

Unsurprisingly, *international* collocates strongly with *baccalaureate* and is the first lexical item in the top 10. However, more than a quarter of the occurrences (1178) in the IB media corpus occur outside the collocational threshold. Concordance lines show that the context of this collocate is diverse and touches on a variety of topics that concern society, from sports (*sport and recreation, olympic committee*) to education (*academic program, achievement tests, assessments, assignments)* to humanitarian or diplomatic concerns (*amnesty, agencies, aid)*. Other contexts appear to differentiate groups, e.g., *international and canadian, international and domestic, international and local*. These constructions work to present a binary opposition (Baker 2010), which might suggest opposing views, one being outward and global, the other inward and local. Furthermore, capacities or abilities are linked to the term, e.g., *international and intercultural*

understanding, international awareness, suggesting that such pluralistic attitudes are more likely to be found in things *international* than local or national.

There are also references to organizations other than the IB (***amnesty** international, international **monetary fund**, international **space station**, international **development agency***). As *international* in the name conveys, each of these is concerned (ostensibly) with issues beyond those of a single country. Similarly, *international baccalaureate* may also carry an aura or discourse prosody of an organization that has an outward, global concern rather than a parochial and narrow one, by virtue of its name.

In COCA, the strongest collocate for *international* is *community*, followed by *law, airport, trade, relations*. Other collocates include *development, organizations, aid,* and also *baccalaureate*. It would appear, then, that *international* tends to co-occur with, and thus has a semantic preference for, words denoting travel, regulation, and global concerns, suggesting a discourse prosody of universality and governance which impacts everyone around the world (the international community). As a context for *international baccalaureate*, this may lend it a significance that goes beyond just a curriculum for students aged 3 to 19.

5.3.6 Summary of findings

In summary, the 10 strongest collocates for *baccalaureate* point to the representation of an organization motivated by universal humanitarian concerns, adhering to strict standards that assure a high level of quality for its programs. The dominant discourse prosody seems to be positive, embodying values and attitudes that work to elevate the importance and role of *IB* beyond that of one curriculum among others. In other words, *IB* seems to attract lexical items that have more to do with particular social values than to curriculum (e.g., Baker 2006; Mautner 2007). To see what kinds of words might be expected in relation to *curriculum* in general English, a search was conducted in COCA. The strongest collocate was *school,* followed by *education, development, students, core, instruction.* We can see, then, how the collocational profile for *baccalaureate* constructs a quite different picture.

6. Discussion

The aim of this study was to discover how *International Baccalaureate (IB)* is represented in a corpus of Canadian newspapers in order to gain insight into how the Canadian public in diverse roles (as evidenced by the array of contexts and types of articles) views the IB, i.e., what values and attitudes are typically associated with the label, and the implications this representation might have in terms of its impact on the wider society. By using *IB* as a label, traits and qualities get carried over as part of the name and, as such, are not always mentioned explicitly but draw on the label and discourse prosody to bring them to the fore. Hoey (2005: 13) argues that 'every word is primed for use in discourse as a result of the cumulative effects of an individual's encounters with the word'. As such, if we repeatedly encounter words having positive or negative prosodies, we may be primed to expect a positive or negative meaning, and at the same time, reproduce and reinforce the prosody.

As Stubbs (1996: 92) points out,

> …if particular lexical and grammatical choices are regularly made, and if people and things are repeatedly talked about in certain ways, then it is plausible that this will affect how they are thought about.

Although Partington (2015: 241) reminds us that 'newspapers are usually critical of their society' and thus 'most social issues and groups will be spoken about more often in negative contexts than in positive ones', this is not the case for *IB* and the way it is talked about in this media corpus, which seems predominantly positive.

Through collocation analysis, it is possible to tease apart 'fixed phrases' (Hunston 2002) that contribute to the packaging of *IB*. As has been shown, there is a discourse prosody of global importance or prestige associated with the word *international* that may not be thought about consciously but, through repetition and reification, becomes taken for granted as part of the meaning of *IB*. Phrases such as *worldwide, around the world, all over the world, across the world, internationally recognized, globally recognized* are repeated in descriptions of the IB, emphasizing the idea that students have some sort of global access instead of being confined to their local institution or home country. The juxtaposition suggests an implicit 'international good, local bad' dichotomy. Presenting *IB* as recognizable no matter where one goes also enacts the 'international passport to education' (Blackburn 1991) idea that was central to its creation, since it was designed with itinerant lifestyles of the diplomatic world in mind. Again, there is an implied comparison, in which one is outward-looking and global whereas the other is insular and parochial.

A further aspect to the notion of universality and global importance is offered by Bunnell (2011: 67), who says that, for the IB, "international' means free of government and national identity'. Doherty (2009: 78) notes that this carries with it a 'moral discourse of internationalism' that emphasizes cooperation and unity across political and racial or ethnic boundaries as opposed to focusing solely on national or self-interest. This ideology of internationalism underpins the IB and formed a key part in its creation, which is reflected in the IB organization's mission statement (IBO 2017).

Other fixed phrases contributing to the packaging of *IB* information found in the collocation analysis are the repeated references to *geneva, switzerland* or *swiss-based*. Ostensibly mentioned in relation to the IB's history, the societal value judgements associated with these words become visible through their semantic preferences and discourse prosodies. What is interesting about the frequent repetition to Swiss-related terms is the absence of reference to other countries that played a key role in the development of the IB curriculum (the US, France, Germany, the UK). In addition, what also tends to get masked or obscured is that the highest number of IB schools in the world are in the US and Canada. This 'hugely disproportionate' (Bunnell 2011: 69) North American presence gets hidden in the emphasis on 'worldwide' and 'international'.

The absence of other countries and the repeated link to Switzerland may serve to emphasize the notion that *IB* does not favour any individual country but works for all equally. In her analysis of IB organizational discourse, Hahn

(2003: 102) found that the organization plays up its neutral and non-governmental aspect in order to convey the image of a UN-type organization with a firmly humanitarian and non-profit charitable mission, rather than that of a business engaged in education. In addition, with offices around the world, it actively promotes its international image, i.e., it transcends the nation (Hahn 2003) and is therefore ostensibly free of national bias. In this construction, what gets backgrounded is that this is in reference to a curriculum that was developed more for pragmatic than idealistic reasons (i.e., admission to universities rather than world peace). In most descriptions of IB history and the creation of the curriculum, emphasis is typically placed on the idealistic vision of the founders (Cambridge 2002; Hahn 2003).

References to *IB authorization* also appear as fixed phrases with little explanation, providing another example of packaging information. A school can call itself *IB World School* only when it is certified by the IB organization. This process takes several years and requires the school to 'measure up' to standards stipulated by the organization. Being successful at gaining this authorization gives a school the status associated with being named an *IB World School* and becoming part of the 'international community' of such schools. Being vetted and deemed suitable by the IB organization, described as having strict standards that are respected and applied around the world, works to elevate the status of the school. This becomes an important factor in situations where schools may be facing potential closure due to declining enrolment and reduced funding.

Returning to the question of who does <u>not</u> benefit (Baker et al. 2013b) as a result of this positive representation, it would appear that these are the ones who are not part of the IB community. The *non-IB* students, teachers and schools are disadvantaged through the construction of *IB,* whose dominant positive discourse prosody seems to be bound up with the construction of a negative other. Such a construction, through repetition, becomes normalized and therefore more difficult to challenge. However, there are signs of an emerging 'resistant discourse' (Baker 2006: 14). For example, a presentation at the 2016 IB Conference of the Americas noted a 'sense of resentment that often [provincial curriculum] requirements are less onerous' (IBO 2016).

7. Conclusion

This paper has examined the discursive construction of *IB* in the Canadian press to understand how different discourses not only reflect but also shape public perceptions. Through collocation analysis, patterns of language use were identified and analyzed in terms of their semantic preference and discourse prosody. Results suggest that the positive aura surrounding *IB* is actively co-constructed by different segments of society represented in the IB media corpus. As such, they help to shed light on how this representation contributes to the 'production, elaboration and circulation' (Baker and Levon 2016: 111) of discourses surrounding *IB*. The similarity of positive views regarding *IB* in very different contexts may also point to the occurrence of lexical priming.

Qualities that are routinely associated with the *IB* label simultaneously

construct a group that lacks those qualities and as a result are placed at a disadvantage. In the context of publicly funded education (ostensibly promoting equity), this gets manifested in an imbalance of resource allocation, overcrowded classrooms, and additional burdens placed on those not part of the *IB* world (e.g., Baluja and Hammer 2012). While care should be taken to not generalize findings beyond the corpus (Baker 2013), results do cohere with other studies that not only show a similar positive view, but also list the same catalogue of values and assumptions.

Notions of quality and morality associated with *IB* may help explain why an article about an astronaut's achievements would refer to her having once been an IB student. The article about the murderers referred to as 'brilliant' and students in the 'highly respected IB program', seems to suggest that they once had great potential but sadly did not live up to it. The expansion of *IB* value into the real estate market shows how influential public perceptions of the IB are, having real-world economic impact that goes well beyond the domain of a K-12 curriculum.

Notes

[1] Formerly called the IBO, both the organization and programs now generally get referred to by the single title International Baccalaureate (IB).

[2] For simplicity, the italicized acronym *IB* is used to refer to the node word *baccalaureate*.

[3] It is important to note that in this specialized corpus, all instances of baccalaureate refer to the International Baccalaureate. However, this would not be the case in other corpora where the word is associated with different types of qualifications.

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Appendix

Top 100 collocates for *baccalaureate* ranked by MI score

No.	Collocate	Joint frequency	Raw frequency	MI score
1	international	3039	4217	8.51157
2	examiner	7	11	8.20659
3	geneva	32	72	7.81427
4	authorized	11	27	7.68874
5	candidacy	6	11	7.56916
6	programme	61	165	7.54861
7	swiss	6	17	7.48169
8	rigorous	66	201	7.37754
9	switzerland	27	85	7.32969
10	monitored	6	10	7.32123
11	placement	88	281	7.30920
12	accredited	21	68	7.28905
13	introducing	15	50	7.24723
14	demanding	39	132	7.22520
15	enriched	46	157	7.21314
16	pyp	12	41	7.21160
17	honors	10	35	7.17684
18	advanced	129	459	7.15307
19	organization	95	339	7.14891
20	certification	14	50	7.14769
21	program	2156	7831	7.12335
22	introduction	12	44	7.10973
23	partial	10	37	7.09667

24	diploma	225	837	7.08889
25	accreditation	16	60	7.07730
26	respected	14	53	7.06363
27	enrolled	92	350	7.05655
28	academies	20	78	7.02072
29	renowned	14	55	7.01019
30	prestigious	61	244	6.98419
31	academically	56	230	6.94606
32	montessori	33	136	6.94113
33	primary	62	257	6.93277
34	designation	9	39	6.86872
35	challenging	59	259	6.85003
36	accelerated	10	44	6.84669
37	feasibility	5	23	6.78256
38	co-ordinator	38	175	6.78091
39	charging	8	37	6.77474
40	ibo	14	65	6.76918
41	equivalent	18	85	6.74473
42	examination	8	38	6.73627
43	examinations	9	45	6.66227
44	pre	54	274	6.64105
45	authorization	6	31	6.61496
46	immersion	95	503	6.57964
47	leads	11	59	6.56098
48	instrumental	5	27	6.55123
49	intensive	12	65	6.54679
50	implement	9	49	6.53941

51	approved	27	149	6.51991
52	coordinator	9	50	6.51026
53	prepares	16	89	6.50846
54	popularity	7	39	6.50615
55	regarded	5	28	6.49877
56	participant	5	28	6.49877
57	offer	151	852	6.48789
58	globally	9	51	6.48169
59	honours	27	155	6.46296
60	offers	91	523	6.46132
61	opt	5	29	6.44814
62	enhanced	14	82	6.43400
63	certificate	16	94	6.42961
64	graduated	34	201	6.42061
65	offering	60	356	6.41535
66	internationally	26	155	6.40851
67	implementing	7	42	6.39923
68	excelled	5	30	6.39923
69	earning	10	60	6.39923
70	status	22	133	6.38834
71	specialized	27	165	6.37276
72	expansion	13	80	6.36271
73	boasts	5	31	6.35193
74	diplomas	8	50	6.34034
75	bid	6	38	6.32123
76	introduce	7	45	6.29970
77	certified	9	59	6.27148

78	load	14	92	6.26799
79	administered	5	33	6.26173
80	bound	10	67	6.24003
81	programs	335	2247	6.23843
82	maintains	7	47	6.23696
83	middle	69	468	6.22235
84	brilliant	5	34	6.21866
85	prep	8	55	6.20283
86	candidate	20	138	6.19760
87	expand	18	125	6.18833
88	draws	6	42	6.17684
89	profit	22	155	6.16750
90	introduced	18	128	6.15412
91	moves	6	43	6.14289
92	completing	12	86	6.14289
93	geared	5	36	6.13620
94	secondary	245	1784	6.11993
95	offered	92	679	6.10049
96	applying	12	90	6.07730
97	ib	455	3422	6.07329
98	recognized	47	355	6.06711
99	maintaining	9	68	6.06666
100	establish	7	53	6.06363

Appendix 2

Top 100 collocates for *baccalaureate* organized by category

Category	Collocations (top 10 in bold)
Global outlook	***international****, globally, internationally*
Geographical location	***geneva****, **swiss**, **switzerland***
External oversight/regulation	***examiner****, **authorized**, **candidacy**, **monitored**, accredited, certification, accreditation, designation, feasibility, charging, examination, examinations, authorization, approved, offer, offers, offering, status, expansion, bid, certified, administered, candidate, expand, offered, applying*
Names and types of curricula	***programme****, placement, pyp, program, partial, diploma, montessori, primary, pre, immersion, certificate, specialized, diplomas, programs, middle, prep, secondary*
Attributes	***rigorous****, demanding, enriched, honors, advanced, respected, renowned, prestigious, academically, challenging, accelerated, equivalent, leads, instrumental, intensive, prepares, popularity, regarded, honours, enhanced, excelled, boasts, load, brilliant, draws, geared, recognized*
Institutional	*introducing, organization, introduction, academies, ibo, implement, implementing, introduce, profit, introduced, moves, ib, establish*
People	*enrolled, co-ordinator, coordinator, participant, opt, graduated, earning, bound, maintains, completing, maintaining*