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Semantic Prosody in Icelandic:
Focusing on the adverb *gersamlega*

1. Introduction[1]

In the last decade, many different corpora of Icelandic have been compiled. Some corpora contain historical texts (e.g. the Icelandic Parsed Historical Corpus and the Saga Corpus), while others focus on modern Icelandic texts (e.g. the Icelandic Gigaword Corpus and the Tagged Icelandic Corpus). These resources can now be accessed via the web page *Language Resources for Icelandic* (*Málföng fyrir íslensku*),[2] and the data which can be obtained from these corpora is extremely helpful for both researchers and learners of Icelandic.

Traditionally, much linguistic research has been based on researchers' (or speakers') intuition. The intuitive method is still employed in many studies and is undoubtedly an effective method for researching languages. However, it has been pointed out that human intuition is not a reliable means of identifying patterns of language use (e.g. Sinclair 1991, 4); thus, corpus studies have grown in importance in recent years.[3] One of the advantages of using corpora is that they provide access to frequency information.

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2   http://www.malfong.is.

3   Corpus studies are highly compatible with a usage-based model of language (Langacker 1987), because, according to this view, all language units arise from actual usage events that are observable and quantifiable (Janda 2013, 2; Glynn 2010, 5–6). As a corpus is fundamentally based on the actual use of language, studies in the field of cognitive linguistics have increasingly used corpora, as reflected in the increasing number of quantitative studies in the journal *Cognitive Linguistics* (Janda 2013, 2–6).

Corpora not only reveal the frequency of a particular word/phrase but also provide information about how frequently a particular word co-occurs with other words, or "collocation," which has long been studied in the field of corpus linguistics (see, for example, McEnery, Xiao and Tono 2006, 80–85; Hunston 2002, Ch. 5).[4] Indeed, when we discuss collocations, frequency information may not necessarily be essential. For example, it would not be very difficult for most English speakers to suggest the word *hair* as a significant collocate of *auburn* (Deignan 1999, 23). However, even native speakers are not in full agreement about acceptable collocational patterns (Partington 1998, 18), and corpus research on collocations is important because the statistical method enhances reliability (Hunston 2002, 68).

In fact, some collocational patterns are less intuitively obvious to native speakers, and semantic prosody is one such phenomenon expressing an attitudinal meaning of a word/phrase established through a set of semantically consistent collocates (e.g. Sinclair 1987; Louw 1993; 2000; Stubbs 2001a). In previous studies, attention has mostly been paid to English, but cross-linguistic studies have also been conducted (e.g. Ebeling 2014). Nevertheless, there has been little focus on the application of corpus data to the semantic analysis of Icelandic words/phrases, and very few quantitative studies of Icelandic collocations have been carried out. Therefore, in this study, the idea of semantic prosody as a tool for analysing a specific case of less obvious collocations in Icelandic is introduced. The adverb *gersamlega* is taken as an example and its usage discussed based on frequency data. By analysing an Icelandic word and its collocations using corpora, this study aims at showing that corpus data is extremely useful for understanding the Icelandic words/phrases and elaborating their descriptions in Icelandic dictionaries.

For analysis, the present study used the Icelandic Gigaword

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4   According to Sinclair (1991, 170), collocation is defined as "the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text." As collocation is often measured statistically, it can even indicate "the statistical tendency of words to co-occur" (Hunston 2002, 12). For Icelandic, collocation is called "orðastæður" or "kollókasjónir" (Jón Hilmar Jónsson 1998, 23). It has often been referred to in relation to descriptions in dictionaries (e.g., Jón Hilmar Jónsson 1998; Jón Hilmar Jónsson & Þórdís Úlfarsdóttir 2011), and *Íslenskt orðanet*, developed by Jón Hilmar Jónsson (2006–2020), provides collocational information on Icelandic words.

Corpus and the Tagged Icelandic Corpus.[5] Both corpora consist (primarily) of modern Icelandic sources. The RMH contains more than one billion words mainly taken from official documents and texts from news media unprotected by copyright (Steinþór Steingrímsson et al. 2018). On the other hand, the MÍM is a balanced corpus of about 25 million words containing different types of texts including newspapers, books, blogs, and spoken language from the period 2000 to 2010. Regarding text collection, the MÍM was partly modeled on the British National Corpus[6] (Sigrún Helgadóttir et al. 2012). As the RMH is much larger than the MÍM, this study primarily refers to the former. However, as the MÍM was designed as a balanced corpus containing a greater variety of texts, it is also consulted when necessary.

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 presents a brief overview of previous studies of semantic prosody. Additionally, the Icelandic verb *fremja* is examined as a well-known example. In Chapter 3, the corpus data for the adverb *gersamlega* is studied and a quantitative analysis of the word in terms of semantic prosody is performed. Here, there is also a discussion of the difference in the usage of *gersamlega* and *gjörsamlega*. Finally, Chapter 4 summarises the main findings of this study.

2. Semantic Prosody

2.1 Previous Studies of Semantic Prosody

In corpus linguistics, semantic prosody is described as a certain (often negative) attitudinal meaning that arises from a word's co-occurrence with a set of semantically consistent collocates, and a great deal of research has been devoted to this phenomenon (e.g.

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5   In this paper, the Icelandic Gigaword Corpus (Risamálheild) and the Tagged Icelandic Corpus (Mörkuð íslensk málheild) are abbreviated RMH and MÍM, respectively. For dictionaries, we use the following abbreviations: *ÍEO* = *Íslensk-ensk orðabók* (Sverrir Hólmarsson et al. 1989); *ÍNO* = *Íslensk nútímamálsorðabók* (Halldóra Jónsdóttir and Þórdís Úlfarsdóttir 2020); *ÍSO* = *Íslensk samheitaorðabók* (Svavar Sigmundsson 2012).

6   The British National Corpus is a balanced corpus of British English that contains about 100 million words.

Sinclair 1987, 1991; Louw 1993, 2000; Stubbs 2001a; Partington 1998, 2004). According to Louw (2000, 57), it is defined as "a form of meaning which is established through the proximity of a consistent series of collocates," and its primary function is to express a particular attitudinal or evaluative meaning toward a pragmatic situation (p. 58).[7] The term semantic prosody first appears in Louw (1993), but this concept can already be seen in Sinclair (1987). One example is the phrasal verb *set in* (pp. 155–156). Sinclair found that the expression generally refers to unpleasant states of affairs for subjects such as *rot*, *decay*, and *malaise*, and interestingly, none of its subjects was desirable or attractive. As this phrase principally mentions unpleasant situations, speakers can use it to express a negative attitude without explicitly stating so. In this way, semantic prosody often carries a negative attitude (less frequently positive), but it can also be violated, for example, for the purpose of ironic effect.[8]

Although many studies of semantic prosody have focused on the English language, cross-linguistic contrastive studies have also been conducted. The verb *commit*, among others, is frequently taken as an example of a word with negative semantic prosody. For example, Stubbs (2001a) found that in his corpus, the most frequent collocate of *commit* is *suicide* (15 percent), and three collocates, *suicide*, *crime*, and *murder*, make up nearly 30 percent of all collocates of this verb. Based on the data, Stubbs claims that the verb *commit* often collocates with words relating to crime,[9] and concerning the same

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7   Although many researchers agree that semantic prosody is connotational (e.g. Partington 1998; Hunston 2002), it is still not the same as connotation, in that semantic prosody refers only to collocational associations (McEnery, Xiao and Tono 2006, 85). The term "semantic prosody" is adopted, because meanings, similarly to intonation in prosody, transcend the words in a sentence (Louw 1993, 158–159; Lindquist 2009, 58).

8   It is important to note that subtle differences can be found among researchers regarding the definition of semantic prosody. Partington (2004) regards semantic prosody as binary (positive or negative) attitudinal meanings, whereas, according to Sinclair (2004), it cannot be defined simply as good or bad. For example, Sinclair seems to attribute a semantic prosody of difficulty to the phrase *naked eye* (p. 33). In this paper, the adverb *gersamlega* is discussed mainly from the perspective of negative (or positive) attitudinal meaning, but other important features are also referred to. For further discussion of the definition of the term, see, for example, Hunston (2007).

9   As in this case, a set of frequent collocates of a word that share some semantic feature is labeled semantic preference (Stubbs 2001b, 449). Although some researchers consider semantic prosody a special case of semantic preference (e.g. Partington 2004, 149–151), they nonetheless differ in that semantic prosody is ascribed to the node word, while semantic preference is a feature of its collocates. For further discussion of semantic prosody and semantic preference, see, for example, Stubbs (2001a) and Partington (2004).

verb, Partington (1998) also notes the unpleasant nature of its collocates. In the context of North Germanic languages, Ebeling (2014, 167–171) compares English *commit* with its Norwegian counterparts using a translation corpus. According to her analysis, most of the examples of *commit* correspond to the verb *begå* 'commit' (40 out of 53 cases), followed by *utføre* 'perform', *ta* 'take', and no correspondence. Ebeling claims that the verb *begå* primarily takes negatively loaded collocates, and so the English *commit* and Norwegian *begå* betray similar usage tendencies in terms of semantic prosody. Ebeling shows that *begå* frequently co-occurs with nouns relating to a decidedly bad act such as *drap* 'manslaughter', *feil* 'error', *forbrytelse* 'crime', and *mord* 'murder', but the verb *utføre* does not manifest the consistently negative prosody found for *begå*.

Another well-known example is the adverb *utterly*, which seems to be a somewhat less predictable case for native speakers. Louw (1993, 160–161) consults the original 18-million-word corpus at Cobuild and finds that many of the collocates to the right of *utterly* are unfavourable. Few right-collocates were characterised as good, and *utterly* had overwhelmingly bad prosody. This was also supported by Ebeling's (2014) investigation. In her corpus, 20 out of 24 instances are clearly associated with unfavourable collocates (p. 173). The word's Norwegian counterparts show a slightly more complicated pattern. Ebeling's study shows that in many instances there are no Norwegian words corresponding to *utterly* (9 instances), but three adverbs, *fullstendig* 'completely' (5), *helt* 'completely, wholly' (4), and *aldeles* 'altogether', also appear as its Norwegian counterparts. Ebeling claims that *fullstendig* seems to match *utterly* relatively well in terms of semantic environment and semantic prosody, whereas *helt* does not seem to have strong associations with any particular discourse function (2014, 173–175). Ebeling concludes that there are no stable Norwegian translations of English *utterly*, and in such cases translators may decide to omit that portion of text rather than to use a particular word/phrase of a similar meaning.

2.2 The Case of the Verb *fremja*

Although little discussion has been devoted to semantic prosody in Icelandic, one may find several relevant descriptions in Icelandic dictionaries. One typical and well-known case is the verb *fremja*, which corresponds to English *commit* and Norwegian *begå*.[10] In terms of semantic prosody, it is interesting to consider the description in the *ÍNO* and *Stóra orðabókin um íslenska málnotkun* (Jón Hilmar Jónsson 2005). Both dictionaries specify that the verb *fremja* takes nouns related to bad acts. The *ÍNO* defines the verb as "*gera e-n verknað*" ('do some deed'). Because the word *verknaður* 'act, deed' is often used in relation to a negative deed,[11] it can be deduced from its definition that the Icelandic *fremja* most often co-occurs with words denoting crime or negative deeds. This is further confirmed by the examples in the *ÍNO*.

(1) a.   Hann *framdi* morð fyrir tíu árum.
       he committed murder for ten years
       'He committed murder 10 years ago.'

   b.   Hún hefur *framið* hræðilegan glæp.
       she has committed horrible crime
       'She has committed a horrible crime.'

   c.   Þeir *frömdu* bankarán.
       They committed bank-robbery
       'They committed a bank robbery.'

In examples (1a–c), the verb *fremja* takes *morð* 'murder', *hræðilegan glæp* 'horrible crime', and *bankarán* 'bank robbery' as its objects. All of these terms denote some kinds of criminal acts.

    The corpus data taken from the RMH are compatible with the above description. The RMH was searched to determine what

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10   *ÍEO* gives *commit* and *perpetrate* as equivalents of *fremja*, and *Ensk-íslenska orðabókin* (Jón Skaptason 2006) lists *fremja* and *drýgja* as Icelandic equivalents of *commit*. For Norwegian, *ISLEX-orðabókin* (Þórdís Úlfarsdóttir 2020) gives *begå* as the equivalent of *fremja*.

11   In *ÍNO*, the noun *verknaður* is defined as "*athöfn, verk sem einhver framkvæmir (oftast neikvætt)*" ('act, work that someone carries out (most often negatively)').

words collocate with the verb *fremja* in its object position. The search was confined to nouns in the accusative case following the verb and yielded 20,808 examples, and revealed 670 nouns in total. Table 1 shows the 10 most frequent collocates of *fremja*.

No.	Word	Freq.	No.	Word	Freq.
1	*brot*	3,216	6	*morð*	1,051
2	*sjálfsmorð*	2,373	7	*afbrot*	800
3	*sjálfsvíg*	1,739	8	*rán*	769
4	*glæpur*	1,204	9	*verknaður*	758
5	*hryðjuverk*	1,204	10	*ódæði*	458

Table 1: The 10 most frequent objects of the verb *fremja* in the RMH

In Table 1, all of the 10 most frequent collocates are associated with criminal or other bad acts, and these 10 collocates make up about 65% of all the examples (13,572 out of 20,808).[12] The following examples are taken from the RMH:

(2) a. Konan var 18 ára þegar hún *framdi* brotin. (Morgunblaðið)
the-woman was 18 years when she committed the-crimes
'The woman was 18 years old when she committed the crimes.'

b. Fimmtán ára stúlka *framdi* sjálfsmorð eftir að hafa orðið fyrir hrottalegu einelti. (DV.is)
fiften years girl committed suicide after to have become for brutal bullying.
'A fifteen-year old girl committed suicide after she had suffered brutal bullying.'

c. Á þeim aldri eru karlar líklegastir til að *fremja* glæpi. (Morgunblaðið)
on that age are males most-probable to to commit crimes
'At that age, males are most likely to commit crimes.'

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12 The high frequency might be ascribed to the large quantity of newspaper articles in the corpus, but the same search in the MÍM shows *sjálfsmorð* (40 times), *glæpur* (20), *brot* (17), *morð* (15), and *hryðjuverk* (9) as the five most frequent collocates.

    d.   Hann *framdi* morð í fyrra og var dæmdur í ævilangt fangelsi
        í síðasta mánuði (Vísir.is.)
        he committed murder in former and was sentenced in
        lifelong prison in last month
        'He committed a murder last year and was sentenced to
        life imprisonment last month.'

In the above examples, *fremja* co-occurs with *brot* 'violation, crime'
(2a), *sjálfsmorð* 'suicide' (2b), *glæpur* 'crime' (2c), and *morð* 'murder'
(2d), all of which are related to criminal acts. From these examples,
it is obvious that the verb *fremja* can be used in a manner similar to
English *commit* and Norwegian *begå*. Thus, it is reasonable to con-
clude that *fremja* has negative semantic prosody.[13]

    The verb *fremja* is a clear and simple example, and the results
may not be particularly surprising. As previously mentioned, how-
ever, native speakers are often not conscious of semantic prosody. In
the next chapter, the adverb *gersamlega* will be seen as a less obvious
case.

3. Semantic Prosody and the Adverb *gersamlega*

3.1 Descriptions from Icelandic Dictionaries

For the adverb *gersamlega*, there are two variants (or synonyms),
gersamlega and *gjörsamlega*, which are handled differently in different
Icelandic dictionaries. The *ÍNO* gives an entry for *gersamlega*, but for
gjörsamlega, only the link to *gersamlega* can be found. In *ÍEO*, there
are two separate entries, both with the same definition. Contrariwise,
ÍSO offers different definitions for both entries, although the differ-

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13   While two historically unrelated words, such as *fremja* and *begå*, can be used in a similar manner,
cognates of closely related languages do not necessarily show the same tendency in terms of seman-
tic prosody. According to *Íslensk orðsifjabók* (Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989), Icelandic *fremja* is
a cognate of Swedish *främja*. They are derived from *fram* 'forward' and originally meant "föra
framåt" 'carry forward' (Hellquist 1922, 160). However, Swedish *främja* is now used quite differ-
ently from Icelandic *fremja*, typically in the meaning of 'promote'.

ence is not clear.[14] In this study, *gersamlega* is mainly examined in the corpora, but *gjörsamlega* is also mentioned in a later section.

In its definition of *gersamlega*, the *ÍEO* gives "completely, perfectly" as its English counterparts. The *ÍNO* gives "alveg, algerlega," and similarly, *Íslenskt orðanet* defines *gersamlega* under the concept of *FULLKOMNUN* 'perfection'. In all of these dictionaries, the adverb is essentially defined in the same way. The following are the examples of *gersamlega* from the *ÍNO* (3a, b):

(3) a.   Áætlun mín misheppnaðist *gersamlega*.
         plan my failed completely
         'My plan failed completely.'

   b.   Hann er *gersamlega* áhyggjulaus þrátt fyrir slæman fjárhag.
         he is completely inconcerned in-spite-of bad finances
         'He is completely unconcerned in spite of his bad finances.'

From these definitions and examples (3a, b), it is possible to gain a general understanding of the usage of *gersamlega*. However, *alveg* and *algerlega* appear in the *ÍNO*'s definition of *gersamlega*, and they are also handled as synonyms in the *ÍSO*. As there is no further explanation, it is not easy to discern whether there is any semantic difference between *gersamlega* and *alveg*/*algerlega*.

3.2 Corpus Data

To observe the differences between these adverbs more clearly, data from the RMH seem to be enormously helpful. In the RMH, adjectives were found that directly followed the adverbs *gersamlega* and *alveg*/*algerlega* (as in example (3b)). In the corpus, there are 265,090 examples for *alveg*, 34,965 for *algerlega*, and 4,731 for *gersamlega*. Table 2 shows the 15 most frequent adjectives for each word.

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14   *Íslensk orðabók* (Mörður Árnason 2007) gives no entry for the adverb *gersamlega*/*gjörsamlega*, (only for the adjective *gersamlegur*/*gjörsamlegur*), but *gersamlega* appears in the definition of *algerlega*/*algjörlega*.

No.	alveg	Freq.	algerlega	Freq.	gersamlega	Freq.
1	*ljós*	46,232	*sammála*	1,327	*útilokaður*	209
2	*réttur*	17,493	*óviðunandi*	1,245	*óviðunandi*	185
3	*viss*	7,774	*rangur*	1,138	*ómögulegur*	158
4	*nýr*	7,413	*nýr*	1,014	*óþolandi*	152
5	*frábær*	6,873	*ljós*	968	*vonlaus*	120
6	*sammála*	6,765	*andvígur*	900	*óskiljanlegur*	117
7	*sérstakur*	6,171	*óásættanlegur*	819	*ástæðulaus*	103
8	*nógur*	6,057	*ósammála*	777	*óþarfur*	99
9	*klár*	5,380	*fráleitur*	746	*óverjandi*	95
10	*ótrúlegur*	5,327	*nauðsynlegur*	718	*fráleitur*	94
11	*skýr*	4,669	*óþarfur*	472	*úreltur*	85
12	*augljós*	4,513	*háður*	457	*ófær*	85
13	*einstakur*	4,022	*frjáls*	446	*búinn*	76
14	*sannfærður*	3,648	*óháður*	428	*þýðingarlaus*	71
15	*búinn*	3,501	*ófullnægjandi*	411	*ólíkur*	68

Table 2: The 15 most frequent adjectives following *alveg*, *algerlega*, and *gersamlega*

Of the three adverbs, *alveg* is by far the most frequent in the RMH. This may be partly because *alveg* is used in a broader sense than *algerlega* and *gersamlega*. According to the *ÍNO*, *alveg* is used for emphasis, as in (4a), as well as in a sense similar to *gersamlega* (4b,c).

(4) a.   Þú ert *alveg* frábær og besta amma sem til er í öllum heiminum. (Morgunblaðið)
       you are really excellent and the best grandmother to is in all world
       'You are really excellent and the best grandmother in the whole world.'

   b.   "Það er *alveg* ljóst að við þurfum að skoða þau mál," sagði hann (Mbl.is)

it is completely clear that we should to examine the issues
said he

'"It is absolutely clear that we should examine the issues,"
he said.'

c.   Nafni hans er ég því miður *alveg* búinn að gleyma.
(Morgunblaðið)
name his am I it worse completely done to forget
'Unfortunately I have completely forgotten his name.'

In the above list, *alveg* is a frequent collocate of adjectives such as
ljós 'clear', *réttur* 'right', *viss* 'certain', *klár* 'clear', *skýr* 'clear', and
augljós 'obvious'. Clearly, *alveg* is often used to emphasise clarity or
certainty. Such adjectives do not frequently co-occur with the other
two adverbs, and in that sense, the usage of *alveg* is different from
that of *algerlega* and *gersamlega*.

For *algerlega*, there are not many collocates related to clarity or
certainty (except *ljós*). This adverb seems to collocate with different
types of adjectives, but it is possible to note a slight tendency of
co-occurrence with words associated with acceptability and neces-
sity. Below are examples of *algerlega* (5a–d):

(5) a.   Ég er opinn fyrir því að prófa eitthvað *algerlega* nýtt. (Mbl.is)
I am open for that to try something completely new
'I am open to trying something completely new.'

b.   Ástandið er *algerlega* óviðunandi. (Mbl.is)
the-condition is absolutely unacceptable
'The condition is absolutely unacceptable.'

c.   Ég er *algerlega* sammála honum. (Fréttablaðið)
I am absolutely in-agreement him
'I absolutely agree with him.'

d.   Ég er *algerlega* ósammála þessu sjónarmiði. (Vísir.is)
I am absolutely in-disagreement that viewpoint
'I absolutely disagree with that viewpoint.'

In the above examples, *algerlega* co-occurs with the adjectives *nýr* 'new' (5a), *óviðunandi* 'unacceptable' (5b), *sammála* 'in agreement' (5c), and *ósammála* 'in disagreement' (5d). Examples (5a,b) show that the adverb can be used both positively and negatively. Antonyms *sammála* (5c) and *ósammála* (5d), as well as *háður* 'dependent' and *óháður* 'independent', also seem to indicate that *algerlega* is used in both positive and negative contexts. Based on Table 2, the adverb *algerlega* does not seem to be characterised by a particular semantic prosody.

The frequent collocates of *gersamlega* are clearly different from those of *alveg* and *algerlega*. In Table 2, many of its most frequent collocates have either the prefix *ó-* 'un-' (*óviðunandi* 'unacceptable', *ómögulegur* 'impossible', *óþolandi* 'unbearable', *óskiljanlegur* 'incomprehensible', *óþarfur* 'unnecessary', *óverjandi* 'inexcusable', *ófær* 'impassable, impossible, incapable', *ólíkur* 'unequal, different') or the suffix *-laus* '-less' (*vonlaus* 'hopeless', *ástæðulaus* 'groundless', *þýðingarlaus* 'useless, insignificant'). These affixes might not always imply a negative attitude by themselves (such as *ódýr* 'cheap' and *meinlaus* 'harmless'), but in the table, many of the collocates seem to indicate an unfavourable attitude. The adjectives *útilokaður* 'excluded, impossible', *fráleitur* 'absurd', and *úreltur* 'obsolete' are also in line with this statement. According to the above table, none of the most frequent collocates following the adverb in question conveys a favourable attitude, and for this reason, it seems fair to state that *gersamlega* has negative semantic prosody. This is not to say that *gersamlega* never co-occurs with adjectives showing a positive attitude, but rather that such co-occurrences are rare. In the RMH, only ten cases of *gersamlega frábær* 'absolutely excellent' can be found and two cases of *gersamlega magnaður* 'absolutely powerful, magnificent'.

The following are examples of frequent collocates (6a–d):

(6) a. Það var að mörgu leyti *gersamlega* ómögulegt verkefni.
    (Fréttablaðið)
    it was towards many manner completely impossible task
    'It was in many ways a completely impossible task.'

b.   Þetta er *gersamlega* óskiljanleg ákvörðun. (DV.is)
       this is completely incomprehensible decision
       'This is a completely incomprehensible decision.'

c.   Þú ert að verða *gersamlega* óþolandi! (Útgefnar bækur)
       you are to become completely unbearable
       'You are becoming completely unbearable!'

d.   Það var *gersamlega* vonlaust að tala við hana. (Morgunblaðið)
       it was completely hopeless to talk with her.
       'It was completely hopeless to talk to her.'

In (6a–d), *gersamlega* co-occurs with *ómögulegur* (6a), *óskiljanlegur* (6b), *óþolandi* (6c), and *vonlaust* (6d). In general, it seems that *gersamlega* tends to collocate with adjectives that display a feeling of unacceptability or impossibility, which is also consistent with the above examples. Notably, *gersamlega* most frequently occurs in *Alþingisræður* 'Parliamentary Speeches' in the RMH (3119 of 4731 examples, i.e., 65.9%), and the results may be attributable to the genre. In this regard, similar results are obtained from the MÍM. The same search in the MÍM reveals 59 examples, in which the most frequent adjectives following *gersamlega* are *ótækur* 'useless, impossible' (4 times), *óþolandi* (3), *haldlaus* 'baseless' (2), *ómögulegur* (2), *óhæfur* 'unfit, incompetent' (2), *laus* 'loose' (2), and *gagnslaus* 'useless' (2). Although not many examples can be found in the MÍM because of the size of the corpus, the same tendency as in the RMH can be observed. As the most frequent adjectives that follow *gersamlega* are almost exclusively negatively loaded words, it appears possible that *gersamlega* has negative semantic prosody.

In the above table, it appears that *búinn* is a somewhat neutral word, and it thus may seem to be inconsistent with the above statement. However, after a closer look at the examples, it can immediately be seen that in many cases the word is used in a negative context.

(7) a.   Ég var ekki að sofna strax, var hátt uppi og *gersamlega*
          búinn á því. (DV.is)

I was not to fall-asleep immediately was high up and
completely done on it
'I couldn't fall asleep immediately, I was tipsy and
completely exhausted.'

b. Tjaldstæðið stendur við hlið íbúðahverfis og fólkið þar er
búið að fá *gersamlega* nóg af þessu ástandi (DV.is)
the-camp-site stands by side residential-area and the-people
there are completely done to get enough of that situation
'The camp site stands next to a residential area and people
there have totally had enough of the situation.'

c. Eru menn *gersamlega* búnir að missa vitið? (Andriki.is)
are men completely done to lose reason
'Have men completely lost their mind?'

In example (7a), *búinn* is used in the idiomatic phrase (*vera*) *búinn á því*. The *ÍNO* defines this phrase as "*vera örmagna, uppgefinn*" 'to be exhausted', and it is unequivocally compatible with the above statement. In the RMH, there are as many as ten examples of this phrase as well as one example of *búinn á líkama og sál* 'physically and mentally exhausted'. Even in the case of the auxiliary construction *vera búinn að* (7b,c), it often occurs in a negative context in which a feeling of unacceptability or impossibility is displayed. This is supported by the data showing that the verbs *tapa* 'lose' (9 times), *fá* 'get' (5, mostly in the phrases *fá nóg af* 'have enough of' or *fá upp í kok af* 'have it up to here with') (7b), *vera* 'be' (5), *gleyma* 'forget' (4), *missa* 'lose' (3) (7c), and *gefa* 'give' (3, in *gefast upp* 'give up') are among the most frequent collocates. Such data show that, although the word *búinn* itself might be a neutral word, the phrases including it exclusively refer to negative situations when they co-occur with *gersamlega*.

As Partington (1998, 72) states, such information on semantic prosody is particularly important for non-native speakers. In this regard, one example in the *ÍNO* seems worth noting. The example is given below, and in this sentence, *gersamlega* co-occurs with *áhyggjulaus* 'unconcerned'.

(8)   Hann er *gersamlega* áhyggjulaus þrátt fyrir slæman fjárhag
         (=3b)
         he is utterly unconcerned in-spite-of bad finances
         'He is completely unconcerned in spite of his bad finances.'

There are three examples of *gersamlega áhyggjulaus* in the RMH. Although its frequency in the corpus is not high, it can still be seen that *gersamlega áhyggjulaus* is a possible collocation. However, this sentence may be somewhat problematic if *alveg* is considered to be a synonym of *gersamlega*. If *alveg* is substituted for *gersamlega* in (8), it could imply that the speaker/writer assumes that *hann* 'he' is able to find a way to get through the bad situation. In this context, the adjective *áhyggjulaus* can be interpreted as quite positive. On the other hand, it is unlikely that example (8) will be interpreted similarly. The collocation *gersamlega áhyggjulaus* will not usually be taken as positively as in *alveg áhyggjulaus*, and it seems reasonable to imagine that in (8), the speaker/writer implicitly refers to his obliviousness.[15] However, because learners cannot see whether *gersamlega* is used in a positive or negative context, it might be difficult for them to discern its negative semantic prosody. In this case, examples such as (6a–d) likely facilitate learners' proper understanding of the adverb's usage. In this way, information on semantic prosody is extremely useful for learners of Icelandic as well.

3.3 *gersamlega* and *gjörsamlega*

In the last section, it was observed that *gersamlega* frequently co-occurs with adjectives that have negative connotations. Generally,

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15   This can also be seen in the following example extracted from the RMH: "Elías þykist vita hvað þau eru að tala um. Það getur ekki annað verið en þau séu að tala um rauðhærða fyrirbrigðið sem situr í sætinu hans. Það hlýtur að eiga að vera í öðrum bekk. Þetta hlýtur að vera einhver misskilningur. ... En það er langt frá því að fyrirbrigðið sé að hugsa um að það verði flutt yfir í annan bekk. Það virðist vera *gersamlega áhyggjulaust*." (Originally from Andrés Indriðason 1982. *Viltu byrja með mér*) 'Elías pretends to know what they are talking about. There is no doubt that they are talking about the guy with red hair who is sitting in his seat. He should be in another class. That must be some misunderstanding. ... But the guy is not thinking that he would move to another class. He seems to be completely unconcerned.' (Translated by the author) In this example, the phrase *gersamlega áhyggjulaus* seems to refer implicitly to the obliviousness of this person who does not think about moving to another class.

a similar result was obtained for *gjörsamlega*. In the RMH, the top 10 most frequent adjectives that follow *gjörsamlega* are as follows:

No.	Word	Freq.	No.	Word	Freq.
1	*búinn*	455	6	*óásættanlegur*	162
2	*óþolandi*	367	7	*ómögulegur*	160
3	*frábær*	234	8	*vonlaus*	140
4	*óviðunandi*	220	9	*útilokaður*	123
5	*óskiljanlegur*	210	10	*óverjandi*	113

Table 3: The 10 most frequent adjectives following *gjörsamlega*

As Table 3 shows, the results are very similar between *gersamlega* and *gjörsamlega*. Most of the adjectives in Table 3 are among the most frequent adjectives occurring with *gersamlega* (Table 2). However, there was a remarkable difference. While there are essentially no positively loaded adjectives to be found among the most frequent collocates of *gersamlega*, the adjective *frábær* 'excellent' is the third most frequent collocate of *gjörsamlega*. Moreover, *geggjaður* 'deranged, crazy' (93 times) and *magnaður* 'powerful, intense, amazing' (81) also frequently co-occur with *gjörsamelga*.

(9) a. Hann er *gjörsamlega* frábær á æfingum og er að sanna sig á öllum sviðum. (Fótbolti.net)
he is completely excellent on practices and is to prove him self on all fields
'He is absolutely excellent in practices and is coming into his own in all fields.'

  b. Hann skoraði *gjörsamlega* geggjað mark (DV.is)
he scored completely crazy goal
'He scored a totally amazing goal.'

In (9a), *gjörsamlega* co-occurs with *frábær*, and it is clear that the adverb appears in a positive context. Example (9b) contains a collocation of *gjörsamlega* and *geggjaður*. The adjective *geggjaður* may not be a positive word by itself, although it has come to have a positive meaning in Icelandic slang, as in this sentence. Interestingly, these

collocations are often found in the context of football, as in the above examples. The data extracted from the RMH show that 61 out of 234 examples (26.0%) of the collocation *gjörsamlega frábær* were from *Fótbolti.net*, and 58 were from *Vísir.is* (24.8%). On the other hand, *gersamlega* does not frequently co-occur with these adjectives. The RMH includes only ten cases of *gersamlega frábær* and only two cases of *gersamlega geggjaður* and *gersamlega magnaður*.[16]

Concerning the usage of these two adverbs, a similar tendency can be observed in the RMH, and it seems that both have negative semantic prosody. However, the usage of these adverbs may be slightly different, particularly in certain contexts.

4. Conclusion

The current study investigated semantic prosody with regard to collocations in Icelandic. Frequent collocational patterns cannot always be detected by human intuition, and corpora afford us the opportunity to obtain information about the frequency of a particular collocation as well as a particular word or phrase. Several different corpora are available for Icelandic, such as the Icelandic Gigaword Corpus and the Tagged Icelandic Corpus, but little attention has been paid to corpus analysis of collocations in Icelandic.

In recent years, the phenomenon of semantic prosody, a certain attitudinal meaning that arises from a word's co-occurrence with a set of semantically consistent collocates (Louw 1993, 2000; Stubbs 2001a), has received a great deal of attention. For English, semantic prosody has been identified in many different words/phrases, such as *set in*, *commit*, and *utterly* (Sinclair 1987; Louw 1993; Partington 1998; Stubbs 2001a), and several cross-linguistic contrastive studies have also been conducted (e.g., Ebeling 2014). However, thus far, there has been little attention to the Icelandic language.

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16 In the MÍM, there are 56 examples of *gersamlega* and 124 of *gjörsamlega* (followed by adjectives). Of the examples, *gersamlega* occurs only one time in *Talmál* 'Spoken language' (1.7%), but *gjörsamlega* occurs nine times (7.3%). This seems to show that *gjörsamlega* appears in spoken language more frequently than *gersamlega*, and this may explain the difference between the two.

Therefore, this study analysed the adverb *gersamlega* as a case study of semantic prosody. For the analysis, the RMH was mainly used, but there are also references to the MÍM. The present analysis shows that when an adjective follows the adverb *gersamlega*, it almost exclusively co-occurs with negatively loaded words such as *ómögulegur* and *óþolandi*. In particular, *gersamlega* co-occurs with adjectives that display a feeling of unacceptability or impossibility; thus, it is plausible to state that *gersamlega* has negative semantic prosody. For *gjörsamlega*, a similar result was obtained. However, in certain contexts, *gjörsamlega* co-occurred with positive adjectives, including *frábær* and *geggjaður*.

Through this study, it has been shown that corpus data are extremely useful in analysing the Icelandic language and that semantic prosody is useful as a tool for analysing and describing Icelandic collocations.

ÚTDRÁTTUR

Merkingarlegt hljóðfall í íslensku:
Atviksorðið *gersamlega* í fókus

Í þessari grein verður fjallað um orðastæður í íslensku. Mismunandi málheildir fyrir nútímaíslensku hafa komið út á undanförnum árum (t.d. *Risamálheild* og *Mörkuð íslensk málheild*). Þökk sé slíkum málheildum hefur orðið einfaldara að magngreina íslensk orð og frasa þar sem þær innihalda upplýsingar um tíðni orðasambanda. Þó að slíkar upplýsingar um tíðni muni vera mjög gagnlegar fyrir málfræðinga og nemendur hefur lítil athygli beinst að íslenskum orðastæðum.

Þess vegna verður sjónum beint að málfræðilegu fyrirbæri sem kallað er *merkingarlegt hljóðfall* (e. *semantic prosody*). *Merkingarlegt hljóðfall* er viðhorfsbundinn merkingarblær sem kemur fram í notkun orðasambanda með svipaðri merkingu (Louw 1993, 2000; Stubbs 2001a). Í rannsókninni er notast við *Risamálheild* og atviksorðið *gersamlega* er tekið sem dæmi. Af málheildarlýsingunni að dæma er ljóst að *gersamlega* tekur oftast með sér lýsingarorð sem sýnir neikvætt viðhorf (t.d. *ómögulegur* og *óþolandi*) og því má segja að orðið hafi neikvætt merkingarlegt hljóðfall. Einnig sýna niðurstöðurnar að *gersamlega* og *gjörsamlega* eru notuð á svipaðan hátt en í tilteknu samhengi kemur *gjörsamlega* líka fram með jákvæðum lýsingarorðum.

Lykilorð: málheildir, orðastæður, merkingarlegt hljóðfall, atviksorð, íslenska

ABSTRACT

Semantic Prosody in Icelandic:
Focusing on the adverb *gersamlega*

This study investigates collocations in Icelandic. In recent years, different corpora of modern Icelandic have appeared (e.g. the Icelandic Gigaword Corpus and the Tagged Icelandic Corpus), and these corpora have made it much easier to examine the usage of Icelandic words/phrases quantitatively. Although such frequency information seems extremely useful to both researchers and learners, little attention has yet been paid to collocations in Icelandic.

Therefore, the present study focuses on the phenomenon referred to as semantic prosody, a certain attitudinal meaning that arises from a word's co-occurrence with a set of semantically consistent collocates (Louw 1993, 2000; Stubbs 2001a). In the analysis, we primarily refer to the Icelandic Gigaword Corpus, and the adverb *gersamlega* is taken as an example. From the corpus data, it is apparent that *gersamlega* most often takes an adjective that has a negative attitude (e.g., *ómögulegur* and *óþolandi*); thus, it can be concluded that *gersamlega* has negative semantic prosody. Moreover, we show that *gersamlega* and *gjörsamlega* are used in a similar manner, but in certain contexts *gjörsamlega* also collocates with positive adjectives.

Keywords: corpora, collocations, semantic prosody, adverbs, Icelandic

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