LEXICAL SEMANTICS OF *CONFLICT* IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ENGLISH: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY

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Conflict is an essential notion in various spheres of knowledge, since it represents some of the most complex aspects of human existence, which makes this lexeme worthwhile for linguistic analysis. The present research aims to study the semantic aspects of conflict by means of analyzing its lexical environments in the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).

The study investigates how the surrounding lexical items contribute to the diverse meanings of this complicated concept. The research dataset includes 397 most frequent collocations with adjectives, verbs and nouns. The methods employed in the paper include contextual analysis, semantic clustering, and collostructional analysis. As a result, 23 semantic clusters for adjective + conflict, verb + conflict, conflict + noun, noun + conflict have been identified. The findings show that conflict is often discussed in legal, diplomatic, and interpersonal contexts, and is revealed in metaphors related to temperature ("heated conflict"), time ("endless conflict"), human being ("bloody conflict"), gastronomy ("bitter conflict"), theatre ("dramatic conflict"), etc., which emphasizes its destructive and strategic nature. Thus, the performed study points to the semantic complexity of conflict and its varied representations in modern language through the corpus analysis. The patterns including adjectives, verbs, and nouns, which are used with the lexeme conflict, offer the linguistic data on how conflicts are cognized, perceived, discussed, and managed in different contexts.

The paper contributes to the understanding of the role of language in shaping the perceptions of conflict and may be of interest to scholars working in the fields of semantics, corpus linguistics, linguocultural research, conflict studies, and translation. Further research may benefit from extending the obtained findings to study other semantically both related and unrelated lexemes as well as analyze cross-language and cross-cultural comparisons of conflict in other language systems.

ЛЕКСИЧНА СЕМАНТИКА *КОНФЛІКТУ* В СУЧАСНОМУ АМЕРИКАНСЬКОМУ ВАРІАНТІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ: КОРПУСНЕ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ

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Ключові слова: *лексико-семантичний аналіз, конфлікт, колострукція, семантичний кластер, корпусне дослідження.*

Конфлікт є важливим поняттям у різних сферах знань, оскільки він відображає один із найскладніших аспектів людського буття, що робить цю лексему вартою лінгвістичного аналізу. Метою дослідження слугує вивчення семантичних аспектів конфлікту шляхом аналізу його лексичних оточень у корпусі сучасного американського варіанту англійської мови (COCA).

Дослідження показує, як лексичні одиниці, що його оточують, впливають на різноманітні значення цього складного поняття. Матеріал дослідження охоплює 397 найчастотніших словосполучень з прикметниками, дієсловами та іменниками. Методи, використані в роботі, включають контекстуальний аналіз, семантичну кластеризацію та колострукційний аналіз. У процесі проведеного дослідження було визначено 23 семантичних кластери словосполучень типу «прикметник + conflict», «дієслово + conflict», «conflict + іменник», «іменник + conflict». Результати показують, що conflict часто розглядається в юридичному, дипломатичному та міжособистісному контекстах і розкривається в метафорах, пов'язаних із температурою («heated conflict»), часом («endless conflict»), людиною («bloody conflict»), гастрономією («bitter conflict»), театром («dramatic conflict») тощо, що підкреслює його руйнівну та стратегічну природу. Таким чином, проведене дослідження вказує на семантичну складність конфлікту та його різноманітні репрезентації у сучасній мові через корпусний аналіз. Моделі, які містять прикметники, дієслова та іменники, що використовуються з лексемою conflict, розкривають лінгвістичні дані про те, як конфлікти усвідомлюються, сприймаються, обговорюються та врегульовуються в різних контекстах.

Дослідження підкреслює вагомість мови у формуванні сприйняття конфліктів і зможе зацікавити дослідників семантики, корпусної лінгвістики, лінгвокультурології, конфліктології та перекладознавства. Подальші розвідки сприятимуть розширенню й поглибленню отриманих результатів у процесі вивчення інших семантично близьких та віддалених лексем, а також аналізу міжмовного та міжкультурного зіставлення конфлікту в інших мовних системах.

Problem statement. The multidimensional nature of *conflict* and its various forms and means of expression have catalyzed extensive interdisciplinary interest, particularly within linguistic studies and related fields. Contemporary sociolinguistics defines *verbal conflict* as a situation where a speaker, typically resistant to changing their native language habits, must adjust to the listener to avoid miscommunication. Pragmatics also examines *conflict*, focusing on the use of conflictogenic remarks which express indignation, rooted in the egocentric organization of an individual's worldview, where one's perspective is central and irreplaceable. In psycholinguistics, especially within the realm of social psycholinguistics, the study of *communicative conflicts* – characterized by language-based aggression – seeks to alleviate psychological tension that arises when communicative goals are thwarted. Communicative linguistics views *conflict* as a cause of communicative failures, stemming from mismatched intentions and interests between

interlocutors. However, *communicative conflicts* can sometimes lead to positive outcomes, such as a communicative compromise or success for one party. This branch of linguistics also explores conflictual dialogic discourse, where communication resembles a battle, with participants using various strategies to achieve their goals. Despite these advances, the intricate nature of *conflict* in linguistic contexts remains underexplored.

Literature review. In modern linguistics, studies primarily examine communicative conflict situations and conflictual language behavior, along with aspects of *conflict* semantics. For instance, scholars have examined communicative strategies in conflicts, including cooperation, compromise, avoidance, and rivalry, emphasizing the importance of civilized conflict for societal development [Дяченко, 2019]. In addition, psychological mechanisms for exiting conflict situations have been identified, such as reframing, visual-kinaesthetic dissociation, and rational analysis [Бігунов, 2018].

The functionality of conflicts can be constructive (leading to innovation and development) or destructive (damaging relationships and causing misunderstandings). Notable classifications by scholars like Putnam categorize conflicts based on resolution methods, involvement levels, emotional intensity, and other factors [Putnam, 2006]. Although typologies provide a structured approach to understanding conflicts, they are not exhaustive and should be considered as relative frameworks. Conflict actions, whether open or hidden, encompass a range of behaviors, from disputes and competition to open warfare and spiritual battles.

Addressing the diversity of linguistic expressions of conflict actions, their similarities and differences, as well as their functioning in English is considered a significant task of contemporary linguistics, combining both theoretical and practical relevance.

The **aim** of this study is to investigate the semantic and lexical characteristics of *conflict* in contemporary American English using a corpus-based approach.

Data and methods. The selection of constructions for this study is guided by the principle of colligation, which refers to "linear co-occurrence preferences and restrictions holding between specific lexical items and the word-class of the items that precede or follow them" [Gries, Stefanowitsch 2004, p. 209]. Since *conflict* is a noun, it most frequently collocates with various notional parts of speech, particularly adjectives, verbs, and other nouns, contributing to its semantic complexity. Therefore, this research focuses on examining four types of constructions: "adjective + conflict", "verb + conflict", "conflict + noun", and "noun + conflict".

In this study, a construction is defined as a complex lexico-grammatical unit consisting of a primary component (the syntactic head) and at least one lexically unspecified variable. This makes the construction a non-elementary, compound unit of language that operates as a cohesive entity. In contrast, collocation is understood as a sequence of lexemes with unspecified syntactic connections and variable association strengths. Here, constructions that have all their slots filled with syntactically connected lexemes demonstrating statistically strong associations are referred to as collostructions (e.g., "armed conflict", "ignite conflict", "conflict resolution", "power conflict").

The research process begins by forming the queries ADJ CONFLICT, VERB CONFLICT, CONFLICT NOUN, and NOUN CONFLICT in the List section of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) [Davies, 2004] where the words in capitals represent lemmas. A lemma includes all possible grammatical variations of the lexeme within the corpus. The results from these queries are sorted by frequency.

The ADJ CONFLICT query yields 2,878 unique forms with a total frequency of 21,562 tokens. The VERB CONFLICT query returns 4,703 unique forms with 8,456 tokens. The CONFLICT NOUN query produces 695 unique forms with 3,685 tokens, while the NOUN CONFLICT query results in 681 unique forms with 2,462 tokens. This study focuses on the top 100 entries from each query.

Subsequently, the obtained data are refined through the contextual analysis. This process helps to filter out collocations where the components lack direct syntactic connections. For instance, a phrase like "ignite conflict" may appear in the VERB CONFLICT query, but contextual analysis reveals its broader context, such as "The policy is likely to ignite conflict among the parties involved", where "conflict" is metaphorical and not directly connected to "ignite" in a literal sense. Another example might be "given the conflict", where "given" functions as a preposition rather than a verb. Similarly, in the CONFLICT NOUN and NOUN CONFLICT queries, phrases such as "conflict management" or "resource conflict" are examined to ensure that the noun pairs are syntactically connected and not merely co-occurring in broader contexts.

Following this, the adjective, verb, and noun collocates of the lexeme "conflict" are grouped into semantic clusters. According to Langer & Schulder, semantic clustering is a method of categorizing collocations into groups based on shared semantic features of their collocates [Langer, Schulder, 2020, p. 131]. Close examination of these semantic clusters aims to unveil the semantic complexity of the lexeme "conflict" and to identify current usage trends. Typically, clusters contain lexemes that represent the same semantic domain and may relate to each

other as hyponyms and hyperonyms. For example, "regional conflict", "global conflict", and "local conflict" are hyponyms within the broader category of "geopolitical conflict", while "conflict resolution", "conflict prevention", and "conflict escalation" form clusters related to conflict management processes.

Collostructional analysis in this paper examines the statistical strength of associations between *conflict* and its collocates in different constructions. It uses Mutual Information (MI) and Log-Likelihood (LL) scores to quantify these associations. MI is a measure commonly used to quantify the strength of association between words. A higher MI value suggests a strong link between two words, indicating that they appear together more frequently than expected under the assumption of uniform word distribution within a corpus. This statistic is sensitive to corpus size, and less frequent words may result in higher MI values. Therefore, it is advisable to pair MI with a significance measure like LL to prevent overemphasis on findings based on limited data. The MI formula involves calculating the binary logarithm of the observed co-occurrences divided by the expected co-occurrences:

$MI = \log_2\left(\frac{O_{11}}{E_{11}}\right)$ where: O is the observed number of co-occurrences of two words, E is the expected number of co-occurrences assuming a uniform distribution.

LL is a statistical measure often used to evaluate whether the data provides sufficient evidence to draw conclusions about a specific collocation pattern. A high LL value indicates that the observed pattern is unlikely to be due to chance. The formula for calculating LL involves taking twice the sum of the natural logarithms of the observed values divided by the expected values, with each logarithm being multiplied by the corresponding observed value:

$LL = 2 \sum_{ij} O_{ij} \ln\left(\frac{O_{ij}}{E_{ij}}\right)$ where: Oi represents the observed frequency for each item, Ei represents the expected frequency for each item, Ln is the natural logarithm.

Material presentation. Corpus linguistics offers valuable tools to gain a comprehensive understanding of *conflict*. Specifically, techniques such as word-frequency analysis, concordance analysis, creation of word frequency lists, collocation analysis, distributional semantics, and keyword analysis can be employed effectively [Fabian 2024, p. 200].

Word frequency analysis manifests how words are distributed across different registers. In terms of genre distribution, an analysis of the 70,862 instances in the COCA dataset shows that the noun "conflict" appears across a wide range of genres (see Figure 1). Notably, the academic genre has the highest frequency, with 25,616 occurrences.

Analysis of the frequency distribution data from COCA reveals that the occurrence of the lexeme increased from 1990 to 1994, after which it declined in the following years with the recurring rise from 2000 to 2004 (see Fig. 2).
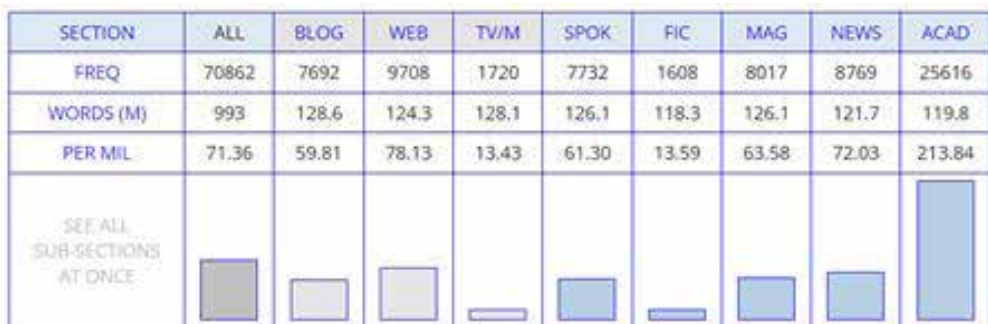
SECTION	ALL	BLOG	WEB	TV/M	SPOK	FIC	MAG	NEWS	ACAD
FREQ	70862	7692	9708	1720	7732	1608	8017	8769	25616
WORDS (M)	993	128.6	124.3	128.1	126.1	118.3	126.1	121.7	119.8
PER MIL	71.36	59.81	78.13	13.43	61.30	13.59	63.58	72.03	213.84

Fig. 1. Conflict distribution across different registers

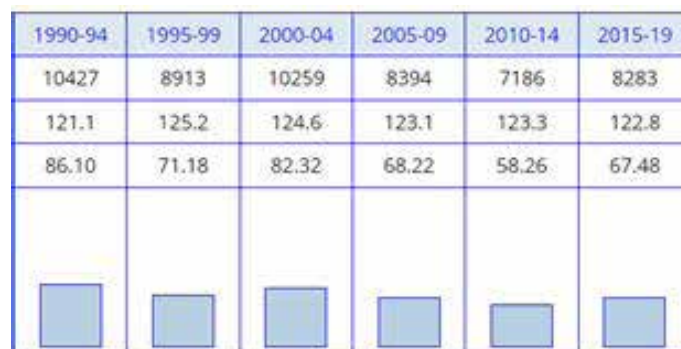| 1990-94	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-14	2015-19
10427	8913	10259	8394	7186	8283
121.1	125.2	124.6	123.1	123.3	122.8
86.10	71.18	82.32	68.22	58.26	67.48

Fig. 2. Conflict distribution for the period 1990–2019

ADJ + conflict

The sample includes 100 collocations ranked by frequency ranging from 37 to 1008. The least frequent collocations in the sample, appearing 37 times, account for approximately 0.17% of the total token count in the sample. The collocational analysis allowed the formation of the following semantic clusters, ranging from the most extensive to relatively minor categories:

1. Nature and intensity of *conflict*:

This cluster consists of adjectives that describe the inherent characteristics and intensity of conflicts. It includes 16 unique forms represented by 2,772 tokens. These adjectives can be categorized into subclusters such as (a) Armed Conflict (e.g., 'armed conflict/s' (1228 occurrences), 'military conflict/s' (463), 'violent conflict/s' (390)), (b) Intensity (e.g., 'serious conflict/s' (146), 'bloody conflict' (102), 'intense conflict' (49), 'low-intensity conflict' (47), 'deadly conflict' (41)), and (c) Duration/State (e.g., 'ongoing conflict/s' (196), 'protracted conflict' (59), 'escalating conflict' (51)). The Armed Conflict subcluster dominates, accounting for 2,081 tokens (~75%), revealing the significant focus on conflicts that involve armed forces.

2. Geopolitical and regional *conflicts*:

This cluster is defined by adjectives that indicate the geopolitical or regional context of conflicts. It comprises 15 unique forms with 1,910 tokens. The adjectives are grouped into (a) Regional (e.g., 'Arab-Israeli conflict' (539), 'Israeli-Palestinian conflict' (489), 'Syrian conflict' (194), 'Palestinian-Israeli conflict' (89), 'local conflicts' (45), etc.) and (b) Global/International (e.g., 'international conflict/s' (260), 'global conflict' (156), 'nuclear conflict' (45), etc.). The Regional subcluster is more prominent, representing 1,409 tokens (~74%), emphasizing the localized nature of many conflicts.

3. Ethnic and cultural *conflicts*:

This semantic cluster focuses on adjectives related to ethnic and cultural dimensions of conflict, encompassing 11 unique forms and 1,120 tokens. The subclusters include (a) Ethnic/Cultural (e.g., 'ethnic conflict/s' (581), 'cultural conflict/s' (155), 'racial conflict' (93)) and (b) Religious (e.g., 'religious conflict/s' (203), 'sectarian conflict' (88)). The Ethnic/Cultural subcluster accounts for 829 tokens (~74%), pointing to the prevalence of identity-based conflicts.

4. Political and social *conflicts*:

This cluster, represented by 12 unique forms and 1,535 tokens, includes adjectives describing political and social conflicts. The adjectives are divided into (a) Political (e.g., 'political conflict/s' (399), 'civil conflict/s' (274), 'ideological conflict' (75)) and (b) Social/Interpersonal (e.g., 'social conflict/s' (315), 'work-family conflict' (116), 'interpersonal conflict' (162), 'marital conflict' (97), 'moral conflict' (59), 'generational conflict' (38)). The Social/Interpersonal subcluster is more significant, with 787 tokens (~51%), reflecting the dominance of social and personal factors in the discussion of conflicts.

5. Potential and hypothetical *conflicts*:

This cluster features adjectives that describe potential, unresolved, or future conflicts, comprising 16 unique forms and 1,894 tokens. It includes subclusters like (a) Potential/Unresolved (e.g., 'potential conflict/s' (919), 'possible conflict/s' (162), 'inherent conflict' (111), 'new conflict/s' (103)) and (b) Future/ Present /Past (e.g., 'current conflict/s' (173), 'future conflict/s' (169), 'recent conflict/s' (100), 'actual conflict' (58), 'past conflicts' (54), 'present conflict' (45)). The Potential/Unresolved subcluster is predominant, with 1,295 tokens (~68%), highlighting the importance of anticipating and addressing potential conflicts.

6. Specific attributes of *conflicts*:

This is the most diverse cluster, comprising 30 unique forms and focusing on specific attributes of conflicts. Examples include 'direct conflict' (286), 'major conflict' (218), 'real conflict' (100), 'financial conflict' (92), 'clear conflict' (55), 'final conflict' (37), etc.). The emphasis on precise and clear characteristics of conflicts is reflected in this cluster, with a strong focus on straightforward, identifiable conflict attributes.

Due to the constraints of the article, we are limited in the number of collostructions that can be presented. Therefore, the tables include a representative selection of them for each pattern rather than an exhaustive list. This selective presentation aims to illustrate the most significant examples within each pattern while adhering to the scope of the study.

The table above presents a statistical analysis of adjective-noun collostructions, by means of examining the co-occurrence of adjectives with the noun "conflict". The MI score reflects the strength of the association between an adjective and *conflict*. Higher MI scores indicate a stronger association, where the adjective is used with *conflict* more frequently than it may be expected by chance. In the given dataset, the adjectives "armed" and "potential" have the highest MI score of 5.56, which indicates a particularly strong relationship with the lexeme under study. As MI scores decrease, adjectives such as "social" (4.29), "civil" (4.06), and "religious" (3.67) show rather significant association, though the relationship is weaker compared to the top-ranking adjectives.

The LL score measures the statistical significance of the association between an adjective and *conflict*. A higher LL score reveals a more notable co-occurrence between the adjective and the noun. For instance, the adjective "armed" manifests the highest LL score of 1,115.90, followed by the lexemes

Adjective + *Conflict* Collostructions

Adjective	Frequency	MI Score	LL Score
Armed	1,228	5.56	1,115.90
Potential	919	5.56	111.48
Ethnic	581	5.05	366.87
Military	463	4.80	508.85
Political	399	4.62	458.97
Violent	390	4.57	282.32
Regional	337	4.40	279.64
Social	315	4.29	156.45
Internal	301	4.21	294.66
Direct	286	4.12	0.03
Civil	274	4.06	18.56
International	260	3.98	216.63
Major	218	3.76	136.87
Religious	203	3.67	146.87
Ongoing	196	3.60	130.00
Inner	176	3.44	110.00
Current	173	3.41	102.00
Global	156	3.27	90.00
Serious	146	3.16	80.00
Work-family	116	2.83	50.00

"military" (508.85), "political" (458.97), and "ethnic" (366.87). The indicators show that these adjectives have a highly significant association with *conflict*. Adjectives like "direct", despite having moderate frequency, display a very low LL score of 0.03, suggesting they are less distinctive in this context.

VERB + *conflict*

This group includes 100 collocations ranked by frequency ranging from 5 to 197. The least frequent collocations in the sample, appearing 5 times, account for approximately 0.09% of the total token count in the sample. The collocational analysis allowed the formation of the following semantic clusters:

1. Resolution and management of *conflict*:

This cluster consists of verbs related to resolving, managing, or preventing conflicts. It includes 20 unique forms represented by 2,100 tokens. These verbs can be categorized into subclusters such as (a) Resolution/Settlement (e.g., 'resolve conflict' (79), 'settle conflicts' (15), 'solve conflicts' (19)), (b) Management (e.g., 'manage conflict' (38), 'handle conflict' (54), 'address conflicts' (25)), and (c) Prevention (e.g., 'prevent conflict' (30), 'avoid conflict' (197), 'forestall conflict' (16)). The Resolution/Settlement subcluster dominates, accounting for 1,000 tokens (~48%), which denotes an emphasis on resolving conflicts.

2. Creation and causation of *conflict*:

This cluster is defined by verbs that indicate the initiation or causation of conflicts. It comprises 12 unique forms with 700 tokens. The verbs are grouped into (a) Creation/Causation (e.g., 'create conflict' (57), 'cause conflict' (43), 'generate conflict' (18)) and (b) Provocation/Exacerbation (e.g., 'provoke conflict' (44), 'exacerbate conflicts' (29), 'stir up conflict' (21)). The Creation/Causation subcluster is more prominent, representing 500 tokens (~71%), emphasizing the role of initiating factors in conflicts.

3. Handling and addressing *conflict*:

This semantic cluster focuses on verbs related to the handling or addressing of conflicts, encompassing 15 unique forms and 950 tokens. The subclusters include (a) Addressing/Managing (e.g., 'address conflict' (71), 'mediate conflicts' (33), 'manage conflicts' (75)) and (b) Reduction/Minimization (e.g., 'minimize conflict' (52), 'reduce conflict' (50), 'de-escalate conflict' (12), etc.). The Addressing/Managing subcluster accounts for 600 tokens (~63%), indicating a significant focus on the methods used to deal with conflicts.

4. Perception and experience of *conflict*:

This cluster includes verbs related to the perception or personal experience of conflicts, comprising 11 unique forms and 400 tokens. The subclusters include (a) Perception/Feeling (e.g., 'feel conflicted' (80), 'experience conflict' (60), 'perceive conflict' (35)) and (b) Involvement/ Interaction (e.g., 'involve conflicts' (16), 'encounter conflict' (21), 'witness conflict' (15)). The Perception/Feeling subcluster is more significant, with 175 tokens (~44%), reflecting the emphasis on subjective experiences of conflict.

5. Communication and discussion of *conflict*:

This cluster deals with verbs related to discussing, communicating, or publicizing conflicts, comprising 12 unique forms and 290 tokens. The subclusters include (a) Communication (e.g., 'discuss conflict' (65), 'report conflict' (45), 'address conflicts in public' (20)) and (b) Dispute/Argue (e.g., 'argue conflict' (23), 'debate conflict' (32)). The Communication subcluster is more prominent, representing 160 tokens (~55%), emphasizing the importance of dialogue and discussion about conflicts.

6. Legal and formal aspects of *conflict*:

This cluster contains verbs related to the legal or formal aspects of conflicts, encompassing 10 unique forms and 490 tokens. The subclusters include (a) Legal Actions (e.g., 'sue over conflict' (30), 'litigate conflict' (25)) and (b) Formal Procedures (e.g., 'arbitrate conflict' (15), 'mediate conflict formally' (20)). The Legal Actions subcluster accounts for 290 tokens (~59%), reflecting the role of formal procedures in conflict resolution.

Table 2 presents a statistical analysis of verb-noun collostructions. The MI score reflects the strength of the association between a verb and *conflict*. In the given dataset, verbs such as "resolve" (6.56) and "escalate" (6.26) exhibit the highest MI scores, indicating a particularly strong relationship with the noun "conflict". As the MI scores decrease, verbs like "involve" (2.33), "result" (2.62), and "exist" (2.01) still display notable associations, though the connection is weaker compared to the top-ranking verbs.

The LL score measures the statistical significance of the association between a verb and *conflict*. The verb "resolve" has the highest LL score of 18,653, followed by "avoid" (10,001), "arise" (8,507), and "escalate" (7,836). These indicators suggest that these verbs have a highly significant association with "conflict", often appearing in contexts of resolution, avoidance, or escalation of conflicts.

Conflict + NOUN

This group includes 100 collocations ranked by frequency ranging from 3 to 1191. The least frequent collocations in the sample, appearing 3 times, account for approximately 0.03% of the total token count in the sample. The analysis allowed the formation of the following semantic clusters:

1. *Conflict* resolution and management:

This cluster includes nouns related to the resolution and management of conflicts, comprising 10 unique forms represented by 2,131 tokens. The subclusters include (a) Resolution/Settlement (e.g., 'conflict resolution' (1197)) and (b) Management/Prevention (e.g., 'conflict management' (243), 'conflict prevention' (78), 'conflict avoidance' (37)). The Resolution/Settlement subcluster dominates, accounting for 1,197 tokens (~56%), emphasizing the focus on resolving and managing conflicts.

2. *Conflict* context and situations:

This cluster focuses on nouns describing specific contexts or situations of conflict, including 8 unique forms with 454 tokens. The subclusters include (a) Situations (e.g., 'conflict situation/s' (155)) and (b)

Table 2

Verb + *Conflict* **Collostructions**

Verb	Frequency	MI Score	LL Score
Resolve	1606	6.56	18,653
Avoid	829	3.91	10,001
End	605	2.40	7,305
Arise	514	5.04	8,507
Cause	457	2.31	5,421
Involve	356	2.33	4,201
Declare	345	3.75	6,703
Deal	329	2.14	3,821
Prevent	303	2.74	4,503
Occur	274	2.17	3,321
Escalate	238	6.26	7,836
Solve	236	3.11	5,111
Result	234	2.62	4,105
Exist	226	2.01	3,077
Experience	197	2.14	2,900
Engage	187	2.24	3,130
Settle	176	2.41	3,209
Emerge	153	2.38	2,702
Erupt	137	4.90	5,633
Provoke	88	3.91	3,301

Zones/Regions (e.g., 'conflict zone/s' (180), 'conflict areas/s' (60), 'conflict regions' (5)). The Zones/Regions subcluster is more prominent, representing 299 tokens (~66%), highlighting the importance of contextual settings in conflicts.

3. *Conflict* dynamics and studies:

This cluster comprises nouns related to the dynamics, studies, and theoretical aspects of conflict, encompassing 12 unique forms and 406 tokens. The subclusters include (a) Theoretical/Research (e.g., 'conflict studies' (41), 'conflict theory' (26), 'conflict research' (12)) and (b) Dynamics/Behavior (e.g., 'conflict dynamics' (5), 'conflict behavior' (42), 'conflict tactics' (42)). The Theoretical/Research subcluster accounts for 93 tokens (~23%), showing a significant interest in theoretical and research aspects.

4. *Conflict* resources and materials:

This cluster focuses on nouns related to resources or materials involved in conflicts, consisting of 7 unique forms and 240 tokens. The subclusters include (a) Resources (e.g., 'conflict diamonds' (66), 'conflict minerals' (41)) and (b) Materials (e.g., 'conflict timber' (7), 'conflict materials'). The Resources subcluster represents 107 tokens (~45%), reflecting the focus on tangible resources linked to conflicts.

5. *Conflict* management strategies and actions:

This cluster includes nouns related to strategic and action-oriented aspects of conflict management, featuring 10 unique forms with 369 tokens. The subclusters include (a) Strategies/Actions (e.g., 'conflict strategies' (15), 'conflict actions' (36)) and (b) Tactics/Plans (e.g., 'conflict tactics' (42), 'conflict plan'). The Strategies/Actions subcluster accounts for 211 tokens (~57%), highlighting the strategic and tactical approaches to managing conflicts.

6. Miscellaneous *conflict* terms:

This diverse cluster covers a wide range of additional nouns related to conflict, including 60 unique forms and 367 tokens. Examples include 'conflict case' (6), 'conflict issues' (13), 'conflict scenarios' (9), 'conflict crisis' (3), 'conflict entrepreneurs' (3), etc.). This cluster reflects the varied and often specific contexts in which the lexeme "conflict" is used.

Table 3 presents a statistical analysis of noun collostructions with *conflict*. We should note that the highest MI score is attributed to "resolution" (8.81), indicating a particularly strong relationship, as it suggests that "conflict resolution" frequently occurs in discourse related to conflict management. Other notable noun collocates include "situation" (4.05) and "prevention" (5.50), which also demonstrate significant associations with "conflict", although they are comparatively weaker than "resolution".

The LL score measures the statistical significance of the association between the nouns and the key lexeme "conflict". "Resolution" again leads with the highest LL score of 15,354, indicating a highly significant relationship. This is followed by "prevention" (8,740) and "situation" (7,890), which also show strong associations with "conflict". These figures suggest that these nouns frequently appear in contexts where conflicts are discussed, resolved, or prevented. Conversely, nouns like "behavior" (4,298) and "management" (4,550) reflect more moderate associations, indicating their relevance in discussions of conflict but to a lesser extent compared to the top-ranking collocates.

NOUN + *conflict*

The sample group includes 97 collocations ranked by frequency ranging from 3 to 238, since 'brewing conflict', 'resolve conflict', and 'handle conflict'

Table 3

Conflict + **Noun Collostructions**

Noun Collocate	Frequency	MI Score	LL Score
Resolution	1,197	8.81	15,354
Zone	180	3.09	5,210
Management	243	2.99	4,550
Situation	155	4.05	7,890
Prevention	78	5.50	8,740
Research	41	5.23	6,512
Transformation	55	4.80	7,034
Areas	43	3.45	4,843
Behavior	42	3.62	4,298
Tactics	42	3.18	4,419
Studies	41	3.11	3,965
Avoidance	37	2.89	3,278
Actions	36	2.70	2,900
Theory	26	2.55	2,331
Mediation	22	2.45	2,004

have been taken out of the analysis as the units do not follow the pattern "noun + conflict". The least frequent collocations in the sample, appearing 3 times, account for approximately 0.03% of the total token count in the sample. The carried-out analysis allowed the formation of the following semantic clusters, ranging from the most extensive to relatively minor categories:

1. Role and personal *conflicts*:

This cluster encompasses conflicts related to roles, personal relationships, and individual experiences, with 9 unique forms and 550 tokens. The subclusters include (a) Role-Based (e.g., 'role conflict' (238), 'interrole conflict' (60)) and (b) Personal/Relationship (e.g., 'family conflict' (146), 'personality conflict' (43), 'relationship conflict' (41), 'peer conflict' (18)). The Role-Based subcluster dominates with 298 tokens (~54%), reflecting significant focus on role-related conflicts.

2. *Conflict* situations and contexts:

This cluster includes nouns describing specific situations or contexts of conflict, comprising 10 unique forms and 461 tokens. The subclusters include (a) Situational/Contextual (e.g., 'schedule conflict' (88), 'border conflict' (40), 'water conflict' (39), 'world conflict' (33), 'task conflict' (45)) and (b) Special Contexts (e.g., 'culture conflict' (25), 'labor conflict' (20)). The Situational/Contextual subcluster accounts for 332 tokens (~72%), emphasizing the diverse contexts in which conflicts occur.

3. Geopolitical and international *conflicts*:

This cluster focuses on geopolitical, regional, and international conflicts, consisting of 10 unique forms and 334 tokens. The subclusters include (a) Geopolitical/Regional (e.g., 'gulf conflict' (52), 'Darfur conflict' (21), 'Arab-Israeli conflict' (5), 'Israeli-Hamas conflict' (5)) and (b) International/

Global (e.g., 'world conflict' (33), 'superpower conflict' (14)). The Geopolitical/Regional subcluster represents 73 tokens (~22%), showing the emphasis on region-specific conflicts.

4. *Conflict* dimensions and types:

This cluster includes nouns related to the dimensions and types of conflict, featuring 8 unique forms and 178 tokens. The subclusters include (a) Dimensions/Types (e.g., 'intensity conflict' (24), 'core conflict' (13), 'values conflict' (13)) and (b) Various Forms (e.g., 'identity conflict' (12), 'power conflict' (12)). The Dimensions/Types subcluster accounts for 108 tokens (~61%), highlighting the focus on different aspects and types of conflicts.

5. Miscellaneous and specialized *conflicts*:

This cluster includes a diverse range of specific and less frequent conflicts, covering 50 unique forms and 160 tokens. Examples include (a) Specific Conflicts (e.g., 'cyber conflict' (8), 'Arab-Israeli conflict' (5), 'brewing conflict' (5)) and (b) Less Frequent (e.g., 'energy conflict' (3), 'experience conflict' (3)). This cluster reflects the varied and often specific nature of some conflict types.

Table 4 offers a comprehensive analysis of noun collostructions related to "conflict". The noun "role" emerges with the highest MI score of 6.63, demonstrating a strong association that indicates "role conflict" is frequently referenced in contexts involving interpersonal and societal issues. Other notable collocates include "family" (6.29) and "culture" (5.55), which also show significant links to "conflict", albeit with slightly diminished strength compared to "role".

The LL score functions as a measure of the statistical significance of these nouns in relation to "conflict". In this context, "role" takes the lead with an LL score of 2,484.80, reflecting a highly significant

Table 4

Noun + *Conflict* **Collostructions**

Noun	Frequency	MI Score	LL Score
Role	238	4.17	2,484
Class	163	4.85	1,213
Family	146	6.29	2,101
Schedule	88	5.95	1,735
Interrole	60	5.10	1,501
Gulf	62	4.95	1,392
Task	45	3.78	912
Personality	43	3.65	825
Relationship	41	3.92	871
Border	40	5.72	1,634
World	33	5.55	612
Trade	27	3.22	707
Culture	25	3.10	1,309
Group	24	3.15	521
Intensity	24	3.50	548

connection. Close behind are "family" (2,101) and "border" (1,634), which emphasizes the regularity of these nouns in discussions concerning conflict. On the other hand, lexemes like "task" (912) and "group" (521) reveal more modest associations, suggesting that while they are relevant to conflict discourse, their presence is less pronounced than that of the primary collocates.

Conclusions. Our research results show how *conflict* acquires tangible characteristics through its linguistic representations, disclosing its complex nature. Adjectives used in constructions with *conflict*, such as "intense", "serious", and "violent", frame it as a potent force with significant and often destructive impacts. These words reflect the tendency to conceptualize *conflict* as a powerful entity with physical and emotional intensity, often emphasizing their disruptive and overwhelming nature.

This depiction is further enhanced by verbs that describe the dynamic aspects of *conflict*. Actions such as "ignite", "escalate", and "resolve" illustrate *conflict* as a process that can be initiated, intensified, or mitigated. These verbs do not only activate the metaphor of *conflict* as a dynamic force but also point to its potential to grow uncontrollably or be brought to an end, reflecting the fluid and evolving nature of conflict situations.

The regional and geopolitical lexemes used in close proximity with *conflict* reveal the importance of context in human comprehension of conflicts. Descriptors like "Arab-Israeli", "Syrian", etc. illustrate that *conflicts* are often situated within specific geographical and political frameworks. It emphasizes their localized and international dimensions. This contextualization reflects how *conflicts* are perceived and managed differently depending on their scope and the political environments in which they occur.

Furthermore, the focus on ethnic and cultural lexemes in the constructions such as "ethnic" and "cultural" reveals the role of identity factors. These units denote the significance of cultural, religious, and ethnic identities in driving conflicts, and highlight the personal and communal aspects of *conflict* that influence both its causes and resolutions.

The present study also reveals a significant emphasis on political and social aspects of *conflict*, with terms like "political" and "social" reflecting the impact of *conflicts* on governance and interpersonal relationships. This focus suggests that *conflicts* are often viewed through the lens of political power and social dynamics, affecting both societal structures and individual interactions.

Additionally, the frequent use of lexemes related to potential and hypothetical *conflicts*, such as "potential" and "possible", reflects an anticipatory perspective of people on conflict. This forward-looking approach expresses the importance of addressing unresolved

issues and preparing for future *conflicts*. This finding highlights the language reflection of the need for proactive strategies in *conflict* management and prevention.

The observed diversity of lexemes related to specific attributes of *conflict*, such as "major", "financial", "human", etc., indicates a language mapping of *conflicts* based on their scale and impact. This variety in language units reveals human efforts to cognize the specific nature of *conflicts* and their implications, whether defined by their severity, resources involved, or other characteristics.

Our findings demonstrate that *conflict* frequently appears in legal, diplomatic, and interpersonal contexts. This notion is vividly illustrated through various metaphors that convey its different aspects. For instance, metaphors related to temperature, such as "heated conflict", "frozen conflict", evoke the intensity and volatility of the situation. Temporal metaphors like "endless conflict", "conflict cycle" express the prolonged and seemingly intractable nature of some disputes. The use of anthroponymic metaphors, exemplified by "bloody conflict" and "conflict behavior", reveals the physical and often violent aspects of conflict. Similarly, gastronomic metaphors, such as "bitter conflict" and "brewing conflict" reflect the unpleasant and acrimonious experiences associated with this notion. Theatrical metaphors, such as "dramatic conflict", highlight the significant, often public nature of such disputes, while mechanical metaphors like "frictional conflict" emphasize the operational or functional clashes that may arise. These various metaphorical expressions help to map the destructive and strategic aspects of *conflict*.

The present research reveals the semantic complexity of *conflict* and its varied representations in language. Having examined the patterns of adjectives, verbs, and nouns used with *conflict* by collostructional analysis, we obtain the linguistic data on how *conflicts* are perceived, discussed, and addressed by language bearers. The metaphorical and evaluative dimensions of *conflict*, as reflected in the language use, describe its versatile nature and the numerous factors influencing its resolution.

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