The Neo-Firthian Paradigm: – Critical Reflections

The neo-Firthian approach to corpus data has been influential in corpus linguistics in particular, and to a lesser extent in linguistics in general, for some time. Yet the basic tenets of this approach to corpus linguistics are rarely questioned. What exactly does Trust the Text mean? To what extent is the concept of a collocate stable across studies which use the term? To what extent can we take a radical ‘text only’ approach to the study of language? These questions and others will be explored in which I will seek to critically re-evaluate the contribution of the neo-Firthians while developing a critical framework within which their work can be reassessed and refined.