
Functioning of the indefinite pronouns “somebody” and “someone” in the modern English language: biocognitive approach

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The article considers the functioning of the indefinite pronouns ‘somebody’ and ‘someone’ in the modern English language. It describes procedures, discussions and the results of the comparative and contrastive analyses based on the biocognitive approach. Cognitive and functional analyses are applied to learn and interpret native speakers’ choices of the pronouns in everyday communication and to reveal the aspects causing these choices. A random sampling technique and a corpus-driven approach are shown to be appropriate for obtaining and analyzing the empirical data. After carrying out a detailed and multifaceted analysis, the author formulates and demonstrates some rules, principles and cognitive reasons for choosing ‘somebody’ or ‘someone’ in different referent situations. The conclusions drawn in the article can be especially useful for the English language learners because there is no comprehensive and detailed information explaining the difference between ‘somebody’ and ‘someone’ in both English grammar books and dictionaries of English usage.

Keywords: cognitive linguistics, biocognitive approach, English language, reference, indefinite pronoun, pronouns somebody/someone.

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