



How Corpus Linguistics Can be Applied to Teaching

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corpus linguistics; language teaching; language learning; technology

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ABSTRACT *Recently a great deal of research continues to investigate how computer can be helpful and can function as a facilitator in language teaching. One particular area on computer which even now is open for further investigation is corpus linguistics. It is important to find out what exactly corpus linguistic is, what corpus linguistic studies can offer language learning and teaching, how it can be adopted and used by English language teachers, how achievable such an adoption would be. The present article will address these questions.*

1. Corpus Linguistics

The advancement and progress of computer technology within the last decades has eventually introduced a new approach to linguistics (Moradi, 2014). The advent of corpus linguistic as a branch of linguistics added a new facet to the discipline of traditional linguistics; this was done with the help of new technology and implementation of computer technology that assisted linguistics to boost and engage with various tools, software programs and techniques to collect data from the actual language use from to analyze the databases based on a newer methods. As Moradi (2014) depicts:

"The new approach to linguistics and language studies has provided adequate scopes for the immediate and direct use of linguistic information and evidences in typical activities and works associated with language technology and linguistics.

Moradi (2014)

To be able to conduct a research on language which is on the basis of corpus, it is essential to access to a corpus and as well concordancing programs. A corpus composed of a databank of written texts, collected from transcription of recorded natural speech and writing. A concordance is a computer program which can analyze the corpora and list the findings. The key purposes of corpus linguistic are to explore patterns of natural language use, analyzing the authentic language usage, revealing facts about actual language behavior. As

2. Register Variation

One regularly ignored facet of language use which is formidable to account for devoid of corpus research is register. Register composed of varieties of language that are employed in various circumstances. Language consists of many various registers which can be range from the most general to the highly specific ones. A general register consists of newspapers, academic prose, casual conversations or fictions, while specific register are sub-registers within academic prose, like scientific texts, linguistic studies and literally criticism, each with its own fields specific features. Corpus analysis explores and reveals that language usually behaves in a different manner on the basis of the register, each with some particular patterns.

3. Advantages of Conduction Corpus-based Analysis

Corpus linguistic offers more objective perspective of language. John Sinclair (1998) asserts that this is due to the fact that the speakers do not have access to the imperceptible patterns that used up in a language. A corpus-based analysis can examine nearly any language patterns, structural, lexical, grammatical, morphological, phonological, and discourse, usually with particular agendas like finding male versus female usage of tag questions, acquisition of irregular verbs by children. With the use of suitable analytical programs, it can not only discover the language use patterns, but also the extent of their usages and contextual factors which affect variability. For instance, it can be researched the frequency of using past perfect in speaking versus writing or fiction versus newspapers or as an example it can also be investigated about the frequency and preference of the use of synonyms like commence/ begin/ start or large/big/great to in different contexts.

4. Applying Corpus Linguistic to Teaching

As Blow (2002) mentions, corpus linguistic can be applied to teaching mainly in three main areas namely: 1) classroom activities 2) material development 3) Syllabus design.

4.1 Classroom Activities

Classroom activities can include active learner-conducted language analyses in which the learners make use of concordancing programs and corpus to make their own findings about language use. The instructor can guide an established survey which will result in predictable outcome or can let the learners to it in their own which leads to a less predictable outcome. This clarifies data driven learning that can motivate language learners' autonomy by training them to make their own conclusion about language use.

4.2 Material development

The material development usually relies on the instinctive knowledge of developers of the students' needs. With the aid of a corpus, material developers can create exercises on the basis of real effective examples that help students to discover language use characteristics. The material developers are able to analyze or simply make use of published corpus research study as a reference guide.

4.3 Syllabus Design

The syllabus arranges the decisions of teachers in regards to the focus of class and class activities based on the needs of the learners. Register knowledge and frequency are very essential and helpful in providing and planning

the course. By making use and analysis of corpus which is related to the objective of specific class, the teachers can make decisions about what items and concepts of language can be linked and associated to the target register.

5. Teacher/Student Roles and Benefits

Teachers can act as a facilitator to teaching and research rather than merely as one who impart knowledge and skills. The advantage of such learner-centered learning is learners have access to the authentic language use that extracted from real contexts rather than from constructed pedagogical materials. In fact studying concordances can make learners more mindful of language use. According to Richard Schmidt (1990), asserts that "what language learners become mindful and conscious of, what they pay attention to, what they notice... impact and determines the result of language learning". Willis (1998) depicts that learners are able to determine:

- The potential and feasible different meanings and uses of common lexical items or words
- Useful phrases and particular collocations that they might make use of them
- The nature and structure of both spoken and written discourse
- That particular language characteristics are more typical of some specific types of texts than others

Barlow (1992) depicts that a corpus and concordancer can be utilized to:

- Analyze readers, books, and course books
- Make comparison between language use, such as written and spoken form of language
- Analyze usage of language, such as lexical usage, for instance when it is appropriate to use get rather than obtain or vice versa.
- Generate student tasks or activities and useful exercises
- Investigate word order
- Make comparison between synonym words, such as request vs. ask

6. Problematic Issues

There are some challenges and difficulties for the implementation of the use of corpus in teaching languages. The first important issue is corpus selection. However, depends on the nature of the teaching, some teaching purposes require large corpus and while some small corpus. Some

of the corpora can be accessible online for free. However, teachers should be careful to analyze the usefulness of the corpus according to the specific teaching context and check if the corpus is representative for the target register. Another issue is the corpus construction, particularly when the target register is very specific. This can be completed by making use of textbooks, course reader or various articles which the learners need to read are representative what they need to read. It should be mentioned that effectiveness of a corpus does not depend on its size and largeness; in other words a corpus does not require being necessarily large to be effective. The most substantial consideration is that it should be useful and relevance to the learners, it needs only to be selected based on the learning objectives of the class.

One important issue is that the data can mislead individuals, if they use very general corpus, it may cause frustration and despondency, and it may even make the register variations that provide significant contextual information about actual language use.

7. Exploring Corpus for Classroom Activity

Even though corpora appear to be reasonable theoretically, implementing it into the classroom and learning activities is somehow challenging and formidable because the information which it provides sometimes appears to be chaotic. That's why teachers need to be more responsible in controlling a corpus by filtering the data based on the needs of the students. According to Conrad (2000) demonstrates that the materials writers and developers should pay much more attention to register specific corpus studies.

8. Conclusion

In order to conduct a research on language and language use which is on the basis of corpus, it is essential to access to a corpus and as well concordancing programs. Corpus linguistic can be significantly useful in teaching specifically in three areas include: 1) syllabus design 2) development of material 3) classroom activities. With the help of corpus linguistics the researchers are able to analyze various language patterns, discourse, structural, lexical, grammatical, morphological, phonological aspects of language. With the help of corpus linguistics and new computer technology teachers can enhance and promote learners' language skills in various effective ways (Moradi, 2014).

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