

A Review of the Contribution of Corpora in Teaching Foreign Language Vocabulary

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ABSTRACT

Teaching vocabulary has attracted interest in applied linguistics in recent years. It cannot be ignored that vocabulary is an indispensable element of a language and of critical importance to the EFL learners (Zhang & Liu, 2014). It is mainly due to the development of new 'word-centered' approaches to L2 language teaching, as well as to the use of corpora as valuable sources of various activities for teaching L2 grammar and vocabulary. This paper aims to give the answer to this question by providing a number of examples of learning activities showing how the teaching of vocabulary items can be realized in the L2 classroom in an effective and attractive way with the use of language corpus. Therefore, it can be said that corpus-based teaching is not as an instrument of power, but as a democratic instrument of learning; learners for real world communication. In addition, it includes a discussion of the implied pedagogical implication of the review.

KEYWORDS: Corpora; Language Corpus; Vocabulary Learning

INTRODUCTION

Traditional methods of teaching and learning language were highly based on using dictionaries to find words meanings along with their examples. These methods are normally difficult and also require much time (Cobb, 2003). It seems by employing corpora to look for new words in contexts, L2 learners will consume less time and depend on more proficient learning. In this way, they are exposed to ample evidence of words in different contexts so that they expand and retain their vocabulary knowledge. The present research is to compare two different methods that most Iranian EFL students deal with in vocabulary learning in high schools and consequently presents the benefits of corpus-based approach to vocabulary learning. Teaching new vocabulary through Farsi equivalents and definitions prevents learners from understanding new words in different contexts which in reality is regarded as a severe problem that should be dealt with appropriately. Although there are few studies dealing with Corpus-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) and vocabulary learning in EFL context of Iran. In this study, corpus-based language learning was used. This methodology is another methodology for teaching vocabulary and is extremely compelling. Since this methodology gives the learners language use in connection, it is valuable for the obtaining of syntax and vocabulary since they help learners to hold lexicon linguistic utilization designs better.

This study has an essentialness for the learners on the grounds that they get to be inspired, and they accept more obligations regarding the vocabulary items, turn out to be more free authors, and more certain about vocabulary learning. The corpus-based methodology advances disclosure learning. Following in this study corpora have been used, this study gives numerous chances to the learners and teachers to advance language direction process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This paper aims to provide information on the whole idea of using corpora in teaching foreign language vocabulary. Then, it reviews the related literature concerning corpus-based teaching and vocabulary learning and tentatively discusses its pedagogical implications.

CORPORA IN LINGUISTIC RESEARCH AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Computerized corpora have been mainly used for research or “for finding out about language and texts” (Leech, 1997, p. 2). Today, nearly every sub discipline within linguistics uses corpora, to a greater or lesser extent, to inform their studies.

In spite of the fact that corpora have been utilized by etymologists for exploration purposes for more than forty years, analysts who are additionally language teachers are starting to have more prominent enthusiasm for abusing corpora for the instructing of second and outside languages. As indicated by Leech (1997), corpora can have an immediate or aberrant impact on the language classroom. In a roundabout way, corpora are affecting the language classroom in light of the fact that they are being utilized by materials engineers to make enhanced reference materials (e.g., word references, punctuations, and thesauri) and course books. Moreover, corpora are being abusing by language teachers to advise syllabus and course plan (Flowerdew, 1993), and to make tests (Coniam, 1994; Shillaw, 1994). In addition, corpora have been utilized to make both general scholastic (Coxhead, 2000, 2002), and discipline particular (Wang, Liang, &Guang-chun, 2008) wordlists. Wordlists like Coxhead's (2000) Academic World List (AWL) contain the most as often as possible happening headwords of a talk; on account of the AWL, the words are those which happen most habitually when all is said in done scholarly talk, paying little mind to teach. Coxhead's rundown depends on three standards: showing the most pertinent, valuable, and continuous lexical things to students first. The rundown has added to the prioritization of vocabulary for the EAP educational modules. In any case, while helpful for organizing vocabulary direction, wordlists should be taught utilizing a principled way to deal with showing vocabulary joined by fitting classroom methods keeping in mind the end goal to guarantee that students procure and can accurately and inventively utilize these words in their own particular discourse and composing. Corpus-based techniques and exercises can offer assistance. This conveys us to the examination of how corpora are directly affecting the language classroom.

Basically, there are two approaches to straightforwardly draw in second language learners in corpus work in the classroom: 1) they can be given direct access to a corpus and concordancing project on a PC; or 2) they can be given print-outs containing the crude information, or concordance yield, from a corpus. The talk here will be confined to the recent alternative as the present study concentrated on showing scholarly vocabulary to learners who had never occupied with corpus-based work before the study, and subsequently should have been be presented to this “first stage” of corpus counsel so as to get comfortable with how to utilize and investigate concordance results (Chambers, 2007; Leech, 1997); however, students ought to eventually be given get to and taught how to utilize online corpora to empower and bolster self-ruling language adapting past the classroom.

LANGUAGE CORPUS IN VOCABULARY TEACHING

A useful tool in teaching vocabulary is analysis of corpus information. It produces some valuable information for both students and teachers about how language is used in real-life situations. “A corpus is a collection of authentic texts (written or spoken transcripts) that are stored in an electronic form” (Partridge, 2006, p. 103). Its size can range from a few sentences to millions of words. Linguistic information is typically presented in the form of concordances (Tribble& Jones, 1997). A concordance is a list of all the occurrences of a particular word or phrase in a corpus, presented within the context (usually a few words to the left and right of this word). Concordances are obtained using the software called a concordancer.

Johns was one of the first teachers who used a concordancer, and he was the author of the data-driven learning (Johns, 1991). DDL is an approach to language learning based on the assumption that the use of authentic language together with a concordance will enable the learners to observe the language as it is used in real-life situations. What is more, in DDL the learning process is based on the learner’s discovery of rules and patterns of language use.

CORPUS AS AN AID TO LANGUAGE TEACHING

This hesitance to consolidate electronic language corpora into language educating is in no way, shape or form an exclusively South African marvel, as is clear from an announcement by Romer (2010, p. 18) who is “hesitant to say that corpora and corpus tools have ... fully “arrived” on the pedagogical landscape”. Sinclair (2004, p. 271) states that from a classroom point of view, the development of corpora may not appear to be uplifting news, since the utilization of a corpus constantly neglects to affirm the agreement perspective of language that has been viewed as

satisfactory for most classrooms for a long time. The imperviousness to the utilization of corpora must be overcome if instructors (and grammarians) are very much educated about the conceivable part a corpus can play in the educating of language. The accessibility of a corpus can contribute on different levels to the viable instructing of language, whether it is first or extra language educating (Biber & Conrad, 2006; Conrad, 2005; Gabrielatos, 2005).

When questioned with the suitable programming, a corpus can give important data on recurrence of utilization of both lexical components and linguistic structures. The degree to which it can be questioned for syntactic structures and bigger language examples relies on upon the level of refinement with which the corpus has been labeled. A corpus gives data on the frequently watched error in the middle of instinct and bore witness to utilize, and consequently impacts the substance and configuration of syllabi.

Native speaker corpora give a wellspring of bore witness to samples, which can be utilized for the arrangement of corpus-based learning materials (and programming). This is interestingly with the present practice, particularly for the South African Bantu languages, where illustrative samples are for the most part manufactured ones, in view of the instinct of the language instructor.

CONCLUSION

First of all, the present study provided evidence that corpus-based sources can also be used in vocabulary teaching of students at pre university level. This study proves the way for changing the existing beliefs, which appear to be that corpus-based sources are most appropriate and useful for advanced and sophisticated learners of English with significant training (Boulton, 2009).

For vocabulary learning in the present study, corpus-based activities were prepared by the researcher. Thus, if language teachers who want to make use of corpus-based sources to teach English grammar to lower level EFL students are informed about these designs and principles, they can create their own corpus-based vocabulary activities to teach vocabulary to EFL students. It can also be suggested that language teachers can also make use of these corpus-based sources in language classes in order to break up the routine in the classroom and make language learning more interesting for language learners. According to Biber and Reppen (2002), materials developers can also use the information based on corpora in order to increase the meaningful input provided for language learners. The present study suggests that curriculum designers might want to consider incorporating such materials and activities for EFL learners in language programs.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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