THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CORPUS-BASED TECHNOLOGIES IN LEARNING AND TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the importance of Corpora and corpus - based technologies in learning and teaching foreign languages. Using corpora in language teaching has changed language research into new step with its 'authentic' appeal. With the use of corpus technologies, linguistic researchers and educators can now analyze usages and the features of particular genres to enhance syllabus design and determine more productive classroom activities.

Key words: Corpora, corpus- based technologies, language learning, corpus-based activities.

Nowadays learning foreign languages, especially English has become more popular in our country. The government pays special attention to the popularization of learning foreign languages among youngsters. As the number of learners are increasing, the teachers are trying to find more effective ways, method and techniques of teaching foreign languages.

Using corpora in language teaching is a recent phenomenon that only began in the late 1980s and mostly focused on English language. However, it grew immensely and developed language research with its 'authentic' appeal. Thus, corpus-based approach to language teaching is based on actual usage, real and authentic occurrences of language as it is uttered, written and used by native speakers in various situations. Therefore, as Reppen stated, corpus linguistics, being a computer-based tool, is centered on providing "a ready resource of natural, or authentic, texts for language learning" (Reppen, 2010, p. 4).

Corpus is considered as a relatively new trend in language teaching, therefore, some restrain from including them in the process of learning and teaching. Some argue that they are technically challenging and time-consuming and some raise the issue that some types corpus software do not have free access for learners and when accessing the free online corpus, students encounter large amount of data and therefore get confused. In spite of this, the researchers argue that these complaints can be regulated and resolved by having a good guidance from well-trained teachers. Today, corpora are found in classrooms and they contribute in learning languages whether a first, second or foreign language. The corpora can be utilised in developing study materials for beginner and advanced levels in all language skills; be it reading, writing, vocabulary, listening or speaking. They help in developing the ability of the learners and improve their linguistic skills including synonyms, antonyms, polysemy, homonymy,

Corpus tools gives opportunities to linguistic researchers and teachers to actual investigate usages or the characteristics of certain genres in order to improve syllabus design and infer more effective classroom exercises. Corpora can hugely impact language teaching in various fields because of its ability to present statistically proven evidence of the language used. This resulted in many incorporations of corpora in language teaching fields (Johansson, 2009; Leńko-Szymańska, 2014)

Reppen (2010) defined the corpus as "a large and principled collection of naturally occurring texts (written or spoken) stored electronically" (p. 2). Analyzing

this definition, two major characteristics of the corpus can be inferred. First, corpus collections need to be principled, i.e. shaped and directed by the researcher's goal of designing the corpus. For example, if a researcher or a teacher wanted to design a corpus of written language, then such corpus needs to be representative of the researcher's goal (written language) and contain a variety of written language situations. Second, corpus needs to consist of naturally occurring texts as in actual use of language in real situations such as letters, students' assignments, and books. The use of corpus tools has immensely impacted linguistic research and second language (L2) learning and teaching. In the 1980s, the growth of corpora and corpus evidence have resulted in creating numerous corpus-based reference publications such as dictionaries and empirical grammar research. According to Partington (1980), language researchers and teachers started to compile mini corpora for specific purposes. Furthermore, Partington (1980) argued that these specially designed corpora are extremely relevant to language research. (p. 4). After that, many suggestions emerged about the creative use of corpora in language classrooms such as the creation of exercises that are directly extracted and driven from corpus tools. According to Römer (2011), the implementation of corpus tools and methods in L2 teaching can be classified to direct and indirect application. Indirect application of corpora means the instances in which corpora can provide information on "what to teach and how to teach it" (Römer, 2011, p. 206). Thus, affecting syllabus design and the improvement of teaching materials. On the other hand, direct application or data-driven learning (DDL) refers to introducing the learners to corpus tools where they can attempt the role of researchers by discovering and inferring meanings and grammatical rules.

In the field of learning and teaching, the corpus techniques are especially helpful for both leaners and teachers. Corpus answers students' questions and opens up wide doors for the teachers to prepare their teaching aids in an interesting and authentic manner. It offers flexible learning strategies when handled properly. Based on the reviewed studies, results revealed that corpus-based method is effective in learning and teaching languages. In DDL specifically, learners can have a direct access to the dada

(hands-on) and that results in highly effective and efficient learning outcomes. Corpora can make a difference in language learning and teaching in which learners become linguistic researchers and teachers become facilitators, guides and coordinators of the process.

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