

D-1. APPLICATIONS OF CORPUS ANALYSIS IN EAP: RESEARCH, LEARNING, AND TEACHING

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The use of corpora - collections of written and spoken texts stored on a computer – and software for their analysis is becoming increasingly influential in the promotion of language learning, and nowhere is this influence more apparent than in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). This paper assesses the value of corpus analysis in EAP research, learning, and teaching, focusing on its applications in classroom practice.

As perhaps the most prestigious international journal in EAP, the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* (JEAP) can provide a good indicator of the extent of the use of corpus analysis in research in the field. Over the six years from 2007 to 2012, around a quarter of research papers investigated corpora. Most of these corpora comprised published written texts from the social sciences, with relatively less attention paid to students' writing, to speech, and to disciplines from the arts and sciences.

An increasingly popular corpus-centred pedagogy in EAP is *data-driven learning* (DDL) [1] in which students are provided with a relevant corpus to interrogate in order to make discoveries about how language is used. Proponents of DDL highlight the benefits of students' exposure to target language forms in authentic contexts and the encouragement of inductive and autonomous learning. However, reports in the literature on the effectiveness of DDL are so far inconclusive, and there are some doubts about whether DDL is an efficient use of both students' time and limi-

ted resources. In an alternative approach, students can be provided with concordance lines for investigation that are generated from a corpus and selected by the teacher with particular learning aims in mind.

The EAP teacher can also use a corpus as a resource to inform their classroom practice and materials. Most obviously, corpora can provide authentic examples of language, which have more credibility than constructed examples. In addition, teachers can check their own intuitions about the use of certain language features against the evidence found in a large sample of texts. For example, we may use our intuition to speculate on the relative frequency of adjectives that appear in the structure *it is* + [adjective] + *to-infinitive* in academic writing, but only corpus analysis can provide objective evidence. (A dilemma may face teachers, of course, when intuitions and evidence conflict.) An increasing number of published language materials, both in EAP and beyond, are 'corpus-informed' with research findings either presented explicitly to students or, more frequently, implicit in exercises and activities.

References

1. Tim Johns. From printout to handout: Grammar and vocabulary teaching in the context of data-driven learning. CALL Austria, 10, 1990, 14-34.