

LEARNER LEXICOGRAPHERS IN ESL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

Teaching vocabulary has an important role in English teaching to ensure efficiency. The present paper presents the prospects of the corpus-based approach for vocabulary enhancement. The objective of the study is to develop a corpus-based material for vocabulary teaching. The authors have designed lessons with this approach targeting enrichment of vocabulary among secondary school students. The paper also presents a few strategies developed by the investigators for a corpus-based session. The authors analysed the first three units of standard 8 text book prescribed by Kerala SCERT and identified learning outcomes related to the language element of vocabulary items. Context Resource Materials from real life were pooled independently and with the help of British National Corpus(BNC). The different phases of corpus-based approach classroom are also discussed in the study. Corpus based approach equips the learner to be an autonomous interpreter and researcher in the English language classroom.

Keywords: *corpus-based approach, vocabulary enhancement, corpus-based material, autonomous interpreter*

I. Introduction

English Language Teaching and Learning process is centred on the centrifugal forces of both in class and out of class effects. The chemistry of the foreign tongue is designed with the multiplicity of bonds among the elements of vocabulary and the binding force of grammar. Teaching vocabulary has an important role in English teaching to ensure efficiency. Teachers of English must study both the catalytic and retarding agents in the process of creating a language rich environment. They should understand the difficulties of students in the acquisition of vocabulary to evolve and apply useful strategies and techniques. Only by adopting or adapting novel and context appropriate methods, higher order word skills could be developed. Even though teachers are employing many methods and strategies to equip proficiency in vocabulary among the students, the learning outcomes have not been reached. This situation demands a proactive approach for English language teaching or facilitation. The learners need to be exposed to real-life experiences in and outside the classroom. The intermittent occurrence of words and structures in real-life contexts will benefit the learners to acquire the language easily and effectively. Today, when the processes and products of education are pivoted on the unlimited possibilities of Information and Communication Technology, researches have been undertaken integrating IT with education. Studies abroad have showed that English as Second Language classroom have been benefited by the Corpus-based approach. The authors have designed lessons with this approach targeting enrichment of vocabulary among secondary school students. The present paper presents the prospects of the

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corpus-based approach on vocabulary enhancement. The paper also presents a few strategies developed by the investigators for a corpus-based session.

The potential of using corpora in teaching foreign languages has been recognized for a long time (McEnery et. al. 2006). Crystal (1991) defines Linguistic corpora as a collection of electronic texts either in written or spoken form. It describes how language is used in authentic situations and also to prove hypotheses about how language is used. The linguist collects the language of native speakers which they use in real-life context in a computer. Real-life contexts provide more insights into the usage and structure of the targeted language. Linguistic corpora can provide students with authentic, representative examples of language use, which would be highly valuable. It helps the learner to get enough and more real-life experiences in written and spoken form. The use of language corpora would change the role of students to be more active and to resemble linguistic researchers. This role shift can enhance the learning results by making the learning process more meaningful, and it fits well with the current demands of our curriculum.

Corpora provide language learners with a way of studying particular aspects of language in an authentic context (McEnery et. al. (2006). Using corpora in language learning has a positive effect on building vocabulary, learning grammar and enhancing writing skills. Corpus data is a good resource for teachers to produce authentic material for classes, and the activities where students get to perform corpus investigations by themselves produce more meaningful learning experiences. This idea of an active learner is the essence of linguistic corpora. Corpora provide examples of natural language to be used in teaching languages. it provides exposure to multiple examples of the same vocabulary item in context and advances awareness of collocational relationships.

In English as second language classrooms, the learners of English do not get real-life or natural experiences. Artificial examples and activities are created in the classroom. Thus, the natural atmosphere of language learning is lost and hence acquisition of language becomes a more complex process. There is a need for research which seeks to discover how to best design and exploit Data Driven Learning activities in their purest, offline form.

As part of the study, the authors developed corpus-based resources. The main objective of the study was to develop corpus-based material for vocabulary teaching. It would help them to interpret, analyse and evaluate multimodal information and build their knowledge which they haven't experienced before. The material is built on the essence of DDL which emphasises that the students have an active role in language classroom.

The authors analysed the first three units of standard 8 text book prescribed by Kerala SCERT and identified learning outcomes related to the language element of vocabulary items. Context Resource Materials from real life were pooled independently and with the help of British National Corpus(BNC). All the collected materials were stored in Sketch Engine to develop the corpora. The design of the process of activities is given below:

Phase1

The teacher introduces the lesson to the students. Students read the passage and underline the unknown words. The teacher provides printed material of various real-life contexts of the unfamiliar words asked by the students. Vocabulary based concordance sheets can also be provided in the classroom. Learners can also use the computer for the same purpose. Learners become lexicographers using computer technology to build their dictionaries.

Phase2

All the exercises are done in small groups that ideally have 4-5 students each. Students infer meaning from the context. They make predictions about the content of the text. The teacher assists the learners to infer the meaning.

Phase3

The teacher provides some worksheets to perform using vocabulary. Discourse type exercises are provided in this phase.

Phase4

Peer assessment and teacher assessment have been done in this phase. After the peer assessment teacher intervenes to give more clarification if any.

The emergence of technology has affected all the spheres of human life. As a result, it has made a remarkable change in the field of education also. By using a database of corpora, language can be analysed and interpreted. Corpus based approach turns into diverse from other approaches in the sense that it equips the learner to be an autonomous interpreter and researcher in the English language classroom. More corpus-based materials need to be developed to bounce exposure to the learners of numerous linguistic elements of English language. Teachers have to experience the conceptual and practical rudiments of corpus development through transformation programmes. Simultaneous usage of online and offline corpus will be highly beneficial for the learners to augment the linguistic elements. The developed linguistic corpora is a supporting material to the online classes aired through the KITE Victors channel as part of the state government's "First Bell" online programme for school students in Kerala.

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