Best Practices for Developing Academic Discourse through Contrastive Corpus Analysis
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HELLO!

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The proliferation of digital competence has made the application of Corpus Linguistics (CL) in language classrooms more accessible than ever before.

(Liu & Lei, 2017)
Academic Discourse (AD) has become a significant vein of educational research and a focal point for instruction.

(Sabet & Minaei, 2017)
SL + CL = \uparrow \text{AD}

SL is a framework to understand AD; CL is a great tool to teach AD.
1. What’s AD?
Understanding Academic Discourse
So what’s AD anyway?

Let’s use a wordle to collaboratively define & provide examples of AD.

1. Go to [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com)
2. Then enter: 19 41 17
3. Provide response(s), next question
AD according to our group:

- Let’s check out the results:

https://www.mentimeter.com/s/35c22a75508e3a72899ef734160881ec/952b3ea90016
AD: often defined in relationships.

Oral
Unplanned
Contextualized
Informal
Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)

VS

Written
Planned
Decontextualized
Formal
Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)

Hatch (1992, 2001)
Other definitions of AD:

**Learnersdictionary.com:**
1) the use of words to exchange thoughts and ideas.
2) a long talk or piece of writing about a subject.

**CCSD ELL Dept:**
AD “refers to the ways of thinking and using language (both its form and vocabulary) that are significant to a scholarly community, such as a classroom or content-specific course of study.”

**Flowerdew (2002):**
Can be classified through corpora, ethnographic studies, genre, and/or disciplines.
2. Why SL & CCL?

Novel, research-based frameworks & tools
Defining SL:

Sociolinguists are interested in explaining why people speak differently in different social contexts. And the effect of social factors such as (social distance, social status, age, gender, class) on language varieties (dialects, registers, genres, etc), and they are concerned with identifying the social functions of language and the way they are used to convey social meanings.

(Holmes, 2013)
So, why SL?

- AD is a variety of language
- AD is not “right,” just “appropriate for context.”
- SL tools to analyze varieties provide more specific examples (typifiers) of AD.
- SL values *all* varieties of language; inherently values students’ home varieties.
So, why SL?

Provides framework to understand **how** we make **different** varieties of language, or, **how to teach students to produce different varieties of language.**
So, why SL?

Discourse is on these levels.
So, why SL?

But we only *explicitly* teach these levels.

Students need *explicit* instruction in **syntax**.
So, why SL?

It is commonly assumed that **syntactic forms are learned implicitly through exposure to speech.** However, in the case of [AD], it is unlikely that exposure is sufficient.

(Fogel & Ehri, 2006; my emphasis)
So, why CCL?

- Straight-forward way to understand AD syntax.
- Objective: What characterizes AD?
- Easy to replicate.
- Efficient way to build learner autonomy.
Let’s look at 3 **FREE** tools:

- Linguee.com
- Google NGRAM Viewer
- Michigan Corpus of Upper-Level Papers
3. linguee.com
Multilingual contrastive corpus analysis
Linguee.com

- Contrasts human translations.
- Limited to AD, but not domain specific.
- Provides variety of contexts.
- Helps student understand secondary & tertiary meanings.
- Helps students understand syntactic structures.
Let’s check it out!

www.linguee.com

- furthermore
- having been
- having been established
- How could you use this in your work?
4. Google NGRAM Reader

The power of frequency counts
Google NGRAM Reader

- N-gram = A sequence of words; collocations.
  - peanut butter and jelly; controversies arose
- Replaces “right” with “frequently used.”
- Focuses mostly on AD
- Helps students understand syntactic structures.
Let’s check it out!

https://books.google.com/ngrams

- effect_NOUN, effect_VERB
- effect change
- comprises_, comprised of
- interested in, interested by
- How could you use this in your work?
5. MI Corpus of Upper-Level Student Papers

What typifies successful papers?
MICUSP

- **Michigan Corpus of Upper-Level Student Papers**
- Database of academic papers
- Distribution across domains, levels, and genres
- Native & non-native speakers
- Helps students write AD & discipline specifically
Let’s check it out!

http://eli-corpus.lsa.umich.edu/

- I vs. you vs. they
- demonstrate
- comprises_, comprised of
- first vs. firstly

How could you use this in your work?
References

- Presentation template by SlidesCarnival
THANKS!

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Any questions?

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