New course title: Corpus Linguistics and Language Teaching

Brief description of the paper

This paper presents and describes a new option course entitled ‘Corpus Linguistics and Language Teaching’ which aims to add to the suite of courses already being offered on the MSc TESOL (Institute for Teaching, Education and Leadership). The paper provides a rationale for the new course, discusses the resource implications, presents a description of the course and outlines its aims and objectives. It also provides details on the proposed structure of the course as well as assessment.

Action requested

For approval.

Resource implications

Does the paper have resource implications? Yes

If ‘Yes’, in which section(s) of the paper are they described?

On Page 1, under ‘Resource Implications’

Risk assessment

Does the paper include a risk analysis? No

Equality and diversity

Does the paper have equality and diversity implications? No

Freedom of information

Can this paper be included in open business? Yes

Originator of the paper

[Dr Brôna Murphy, Lecturer in Language Education, October 2012-February 2013]
New Course Proposal 2013-2014

Corpus Linguistics and Language Teaching

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Information for SPGSC

Rationale

The courses ‘Text Discourse and Language Teaching’ (compulsory course in MSc Education Language) and ‘Corpus Linguistics’ (PPLS options) have always been popular with languages Masters students. These both run in Semester One and as TESOL students now take their options in Semester Two, it means they no longer have access to such courses. ‘Corpus Linguistics and Language Teaching’ will help fill the gap that now exists in the suite of courses offered to the TESOL students. The proposed new course will also build on TESOL Methodology (a semester one core course) by aiming to develop in the students the ability to use corpora as part of their methodology for teaching speaking, listening, writing, vocabulary and grammar. It aims to explore the usefulness of analysing corpora and the effectiveness of using corpus linguistics in the creation of language learning materials. The course is innovative in that it goes beyond levels of language traditionally associated with language learning and teaching and incorporates explorations at the level of discourse and beyond, through the study of pragmatics. It also explores the impact of sociolinguistics in the larger view of language and variation. It is a highly practical course with hands-on sessions throughout the course, and an assignment that requires research using corpus linguistics and a lesson plan built on the findings. As language dictionaries, coursebooks, (spoken and written) grammars, for instance, are becoming increasingly corpus-based, this course would have a direct impact on their practice as teachers and provide a very timely and useful contribution to the suite of option courses offered by TESOL. As the numbers of students interested in researching corpus linguistics and language teaching for dissertation increase every year, it means that the proposed course, which reflects the interests of many of the current MSc TESOL teaching staff, will provide a very solid background and springboard for future research.

Resource Implications

The languages Masters currently offer nine options; considering the student numbers that are aimed for across the three programmes, it would be advisable to offer more options. Decisions about capping courses are flexible year-to-year but options will most likely not run with fewer than ten students. Given that there are currently ten staff in TESOL, staffing should not present a resource problem.
We will require school funding for software and corpora. Moray House would need to buy Institutional copies of *Wordsmith Tools 6*: for 10 users, the cost is £250; for 50, it is £500. The second of these rates would seem preferable. Corpora will also have to be acquired: International Corpora of English (ICE) – GB: multiple user institutional licence costs £615.70.

Course description

This course is aimed at prospective language teachers who have not worked with corpora before. The course will introduce the students to corpus linguistics as a means of investigating language and will explore a range of corpora, spoken and written, across a variety of Englishes, from British and American English to Singaporean English. The course will focus, in particular, on how corpus-based tools and methodologies can be applied in a teaching and learning context. It will concentrate on the teaching of skills (speaking, listening, writing, in particular), systems (vocabulary and grammar) as well as sociolinguistics and pragmatics. It will draw on the use of tools such as word frequency lists, keyword lists, cluster lists, as well as concordance lines, in order to look at form and functional patterning in language. It will focus not only on how the teacher can use corpus linguistics in the classroom to create materials but also how students can be encouraged to use corpora themselves.

Aims and objectives

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- use corpus tools and methodologies to query the corpus and extract and interpret the patterns accordingly
- create and evaluate corpus-based materials based on research
- evaluate the main theoretical strands which underpin corpus-based research
- evaluate the theoretical concepts which have been applied to teaching materials in a language teaching and learning context
- apply the main theoretical concepts and principles of corpus linguistics to their research and teaching

Structure of the Sessions

1 hour lecture
2 hour Seminar (in the lab)

Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Course Content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>• Introduction I to Corpus Linguistics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Evaluating corpus-based materials</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Introduction, demonstration and practice of Wordsmith Tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Practice: Demonstration and use of corpora.</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Practice: Collocations; concordancing tool</td>
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<td>Week 3:</td>
<td>Practice: syntactic structures and patterning in spoken discourse</td>
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<td>Week 4:</td>
<td>Practice: Corpus-based pragmatics and language teaching: pragmatic markers in context</td>
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<td>Week 5:</td>
<td>Practice: Finding and analysing pragmatic markers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6:</td>
<td>Practice: Corpus-based pragmatics and language teaching: investigating politeness</td>
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<td>Week 7:</td>
<td>Practice: Examining politeness and language teaching</td>
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<td>Week 8:</td>
<td>Practice: Genres: Exploring learner language</td>
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<td>Practice: Exploring the discourse of academic assignments</td>
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<td>Practice: Creating corpus-based materials</td>
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<td>Practice: Concluding lecture</td>
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<td>Practice: materials preparation</td>
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**Assessment**

In part 1 of your assignment, you are required to present and discuss findings obtained from a corpus-based investigation you have carried out (language teaching problem). It can relate to at least one or more of the following areas: speaking, writing, grammar, vocabulary, sociolinguistics, pragmatics (2000 words)

In part 2, using your findings, or based on insights from your findings, you must prepare a lesson which is corpus-based and suitable for a particular cohort of students you have in mind. You will discuss and evaluate your corpus-based activities and provide insights into the choices you have made in their design, as well as the challenges encountered in putting the lesson together. You will be required to refer to literature to support your decisions (2000 words). As part 1 and part 2 are connected, you will be assessed on the overall assignment.

Word count: 4000 words, excluding data and appendices
Assessing Corpora on-line: tools and websites

Corpora:
British National Corpus (BNC): http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/
Simple search of BNC: http://sara.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/lookup.html
WebCorp: http://www.webcorp.org.uk/
Lancaster Corpus of Children’s Project Writing
http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/projects/lever/index.htm
Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English: http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/micase/
COCA Corpus: http://www.americancorpus.org/
SCOTS: Scottish Corpus of Texts and Speech: http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk/about/
The Oxford Text Archive holds a large number of freely available specialised corpora:
http://ota.ahds.ac.uk
HCRC Maptask Corpus: http://hcrc.ed.ac.uk/maptask/interface/

Tools:
Simple concordancing programme: http://www.textworld.com/scp/
AntConc: http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/antconc_index.html

Useful websites:
http://www.essex.ac.uk/linguistics/external/clmt/w3c/corpus_lling/content/introduction.html
Information on Corpus Building: http://www.corpus.bham.ac.uk/corpus-building.shtml
Introduction to Corpus Linguistics: http://www.engl.polyu.edu.hk/corpuslinguist/corpus.htm
David Lee’s website: http://devoted.to.corpora

Reference List


Murphy, B. Forthcoming. 2013. ‘I know I have got it in me. I just need to bring it out’: Exploring the Use of ‘I’ in a Corpus of Reflective Practice – New versus Experienced Teachers in Development. *Classroom Discourse*.


