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Using corpora in the disciplinary writing class

The use of corpora and concordances in the classroom has been considered an effective way to encourage students to investigate the language in an inductive way through text exploration (Leech, 1997; Kennedy, 1998). Investigating specialized corpora in the English for academic writing class, for example, can help students increase their motivation and become aware of the writing conventions of their academic communities.

This presentation focuses on the corpus collection and curriculum development for a corpus-based course of disciplinary writing for ESL graduate students. The course creates a learning environment which encourages students to play active roles in researching the writing of their disciplines. The course curriculum consists of three main components: students' exploration of the corpora by means of concordances and analytical reading, selected readings about writing in academic disciplines that students use as a foundation for corpora comparison, and students' own reflection on and conclusions about the writing conventions and patterns used by published authors in their fields.

The first part of the presentation will include a description of the corpora and software development, which constitute the core of the course design. In this part, the issues of corpus size and representativeness in specialized corpora collection will be explained in detail. The second part will present examples of some class activities, as well as samples of students' responses, which will reflect the advantages of using corpora in a writing class with students from very diverse disciplines.

Kennedy, G. (1998). *An introduction to corpus linguistics*. Harlow: Longman.

Leech, G. (1997). Teaching and language corpora: a convergence. In A. Wichmann, S. Fligelstone, T. McEnery, & G. Knowles (Eds.), *Teaching and language corpora* (pp.1-23). Harlow: Longman.