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THE ROLE OF CORPORA IN ESP MATERIALS DESIGN

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Nowadays, corpora have become both convenient and effective tool for ESP teaching and learning as well as materials design. Such questions as corpora in ESP were under research of a great number of scholars, however the role of corpora-based ESP materials design is still being discussed by the ESP researchers and practitioners. The aim of this conference paper is to provide a link between corpora and ESP materials design.

Over the past decades, ESP teachers are trying to incorporate corpora into ESP courses, and it is still remains a challenging task. Uter (2008) investigates the application of corpora in language teaching and approaches both the use of *corpus tools*, i. e. the actual text collections and software packages for corpus access, and of *corpus methods*, i. e. the analytic techniques that are used when we work with corpus data. In classifying pedagogical corpus applications, i. e. the use of corpus tools and methods in language teaching and language learning context, a useful distinction can be made between direct and indirect applications. This means that, ‘indirectly’, corpora can help with decisions about what to teach and when to teach it, but that they can also be accessed ‘directly’ by learners and teachers in the EFL classroom, and so “assist in the teaching process”, thus affecting how something is taught and learnt [1]. In addition to direct and indirect uses of corpora in LT, Leech (1997) talks about a third, in his opinion less-central component which he labels “further teaching-oriented corpus developments” (e. g. LSP corpora and learner corpora). These developments will, however, not be treated as marginal aspects here, but integrated in the discussion of direct and indirect pedagogical corpus applications [2]. Timmis (2015) outlines that a need for ESP expertise and materials clearly deserves our

attention from both research and practitioner expertise and identifies three main uses of corpora in ESP:

1. Conducting research that underpins effective language teaching and learning.
2. Corpora can be used as way for presenting language data for learning in an approach referred to as “data-driven learning” (DDL).
3. Corpora can be a resource for teachers to use in preparing classroom teaching activities in teaching activities and materials [3].

In explaining DDL, scholars suggest that learners should be confronted with as directly as possible with the data to make a learner a “linguistic researcher”. In this context students could become ESP language researchers, involving themselves in collecting their specialized texts, or even compiling their own specialized corpora, and generating the results for achieving an understanding of the content and structure of the texts. Studies demonstrate that corpora nicely complement existing reference works and they may provide information which a dictionary or a grammar book may not provide. ESP practitioners are not always conversant with the professions and disciplines of their students, and may not have much intuitive understanding of the way language is used in certain specified domains [4]. Teaching and learning corpora can empower learners to find out things by themselves, creates a learner-centered atmosphere and has a great pedagogic potential for ESP materials design.

Drawing conclusions, it should be noted that corpora play a vital role in ESP materials design. They give learners richer language-learning experiences as well as use students as a resource of ESP materials. There is plenty of room for collaboration for ESP practitioners and specialism lecturers as well as students to build a qualitative resource to make ESP materials design more beneficial.

Resources

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2. Leech, Geoffrey (1997), *Teaching and Language Corpora: A Convergence*. In: Wichmann et al. 1997, 123 p.

3. Timmis, I. (2015) *Corpus Linguistics for ELT: Research and Practice*. Oxford: Routledge, 214 p.
4. Paltridge, B., Starfield S. (2012) *The Handbook of English for Specific Purposes*: John Wiley & Sons, 592 p.