

Small Corpus Use for EFL Classroom

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(1) I. Introduction

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Corpus has been considered as a valuable tool over the last decades. Many teachers and researchers have made efforts to incorporate corpus studies into language teaching. As the computer technology develops, many corpora are freely available online such as Collins COBUILD Corpus and Brown Corpus. These kind of general corpora have been used for teaching and for researching. However, because of the amount of data and difficulties of authentic academic texts, these corpora seem to have been used only for intermediate and advanced level learners. In order for lower level learners to get benefits from corpus use, the researcher developed small pedagogic corpora using restricted texts.

(3) II. Large and Small Issues

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While large corpora, such as Collins COBUILD Corpus running hundreds of millions of words, provide representative patterns of word usage from enormous amount of authentic language data, when it comes to ELT, large corpora could confuse or even discourage learners. In order to meet the learners' needs, the small-corpora concordancing has been suggested and it has attracted many researchers and teachers since the mid-1980s (Ma, 1993). According to Ma, small-corpora concordancing can help even lower level learners to get benefits from this computer technology (1993). In order to make use of this kind of corpora for designing classroom tasks, Auston (1997) suggests that the data of the corpora should be simplified; familiar or predictable data should be selected; the quantity of data should be reduced; and the task using corpora should be simplified (pp. 61-63). Although teachers may get the impression that small corpora seem better to use than large ones, Auston's suggestion implies that even small corpora consisting of simplified authentic data can give burden to the teachers when developing classroom activities. In addition, ideas of integrating the corpus approach to variant levels are still needed (Yoon & Hirvela, 2004; Ma, 1993).

(5) III. Pedagogic corpora using restricted texts

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In order for lower level learners to get benefits from the corpus approach, the researcher developed two sample corpora using restricted texts: ELT materials and Language Learner Literature (LLL). Although they are not authentic, nor are they representative, they could be appropriate, at some points, for the aims and needs of teaching lower level learners.

Table 1.

I	like	rabbits.
He	likes	
They	like	

Table 1 is from one of the first grade middle school textbooks. It intends to teach the use of third person singular '-s.' In order to design a corpus-based activity, sample concordance outputs of 'like' and 'likes' are extracted. Figure 1 is from the textbook corpus consisted of 13 first grade middle school English textbooks and Figure 2 is from Collins COBUILD Concordance Sampler.

Figure 1. Concordance output from the first grade middle school textbooks.

see you Mr Han. Min-ho **LIKES** his new school. Thank y
like for dessert In-ho **LIKES** ice cream. Susan
same good friends. Jane **LIKES** Korean food. She can al
like Bonggu and Bonggu **LIKES** me. LESSON 3. My School
very kind and everybody **LIKES** her. LESSON 2. A FAMILY
es in Shanghai China He **LIKES** soccer very much. Akikc
glish very well too. He **LIKES** students a lot. All the
nat is your wish In-suk **LIKES** the moon and stars. She
pork and chicken. Susan **LIKES** them too How about drir
TV for one hour. And he **LIKES** to play the piano. He g
about your age He also **LIKES** to play computer games
my little sister A-ram **LIKES** to play Math Plus. My n
scientist. ____ 2. Ann **LIKES** to sing and play with c
ogether for dinner. Its **LIKE** Chuseok in Korea. A Do y
r favorite music Mike I **LIKE** classical music. Dialog
s of music. Some people **LIKE** classical music. Some pe
afternoon. Mom You dont **LIKE** cleazng rooms do you I
e rises. Many illnesses **LIKE** colds and flu can spread
nice computers. We both **LIKE** computer games. Dain Ale
er class on Sunday. You **LIKE** computer games dont you
me. How about you You **LIKE** computer games dont you
e. Many disabled people **LIKE** David Young can use a cc
SON 3. What Food Do You **LIKE** Dialog 1 Susan Whats thi

Figure 2. Concordance output from Collins COBUILD Concordance Sampler

men in this country who would **like** to be ordained priest but at
etitive options. If you would **like** to know more about how Busin
women are still often treated **like** second-class citizens in Asi
, London E1 6QN. If you would **like** to talk to someone about the
d, his face takes on a corpse-**like** pallor. Jane Rose is a littl
or the manager, but what's it **like** for the Gillingham players?
areless, losing our ancestors **like** this. We'll have a hell of a
was revealed to Lady Haig: I, **like** you, am sorry for Robertson,
eel and get ready to ask her, **like**." Jahdo got down on one knee
ere a wireless set looks mad, **like** something out of another wor
ds. `At times he was crossing **like** a winger [p] So recently a F
he body's interior. [p] It's **like** yelling into the body at a v
k it is sad when people react **like** that. It is silly but such i
ted and we need organisations **like** the All England Women's Hock

hers I also see that my kitten **likes** to play in my soft Erica to
t pumps being installed in the **likes** of the Balloch Hotel and th
n they call for tea. [p] Chris **likes** music, and has a large coll
racket that we reserve for the **likes** of `Enery Cooper and Dame l
dy Clarke is a 10-year-old who **likes** setting fire to dead rats
rst time she may wear what she **likes**, as may the groom. However,
, inexperienced very feminine, **likes** keep fit, walking, travel,
ake excellent records everyone **likes** and no-one buys) are besie
way no black man had since the **likes** of Marcus Garvey and Nat T
scene that spawned the vibrant **likes** of Fugazi, Die Kreuzen, Me
amer has excelled, working the **likes** of Ween, Galaxie 500 and K
non smoker, reasonable looks. **likes** music, some sports. Seeks :
[f] That's what nobody quite **likes**." [p] Do you mean that nob
can do to ensure that everyone **likes** us all the time. [p] When
le and drab, do you? Maybe she **likes** to escape into a novel; the
rganizer and wherever possible **likes** to plan his various activit

While the concordances from the textbook corpus contains simple and short sentences with low level vocabulary, the concordances from Collins COBUILD Concordance Sampler show various contexts with some infrequent words. Besides, sentences in Figure 2 show several different usage of 'like' and 'likes.'

(7) IV. Discussion

Developing corpora with restricted and controlled data such as ELT materials can be valuable at some points for various level of learners. These corpora will help teachers explore example sentences in various contexts depending on learners' level, which will lead teachers to design useful corpus-based activities for the classroom. During the presentation, more practical ideas about corpus design and the usage of it in the EFL classroom will be discussed.

References

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