

On Individualizing ESP Course for Non-Linguistics Post-Graduate Students by Using Concordances of Their Reading Corpora

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Despite a huge number of publications on the use of corpus linguistics approaches or DDL in the ESP classroom, the conclusive proof of the effectiveness of DDL in second language acquisition has not been obtained, as Boulton concluded having surveyed dozens of studies in the field (Boulton 2009). One point that all studies on the subject have in common is that DDL can be usefully employed for learners of different language backgrounds and in different situations. Responding to the call for continuation of empirical research, we would like to share our experience in the use of concordances in the ESP course for non-linguistics post-graduate students of St. Petersburg State Polytechnical University (SPbSPU).

The main goal of the ESP course for post-graduate student groups is to prepare students for two-stage *kandidat* exam in English. The course is elective and post-graduate students have to enroll in it. Groups of 15-20 students are usually formed, with students in each group being very different in a number of parameters. Due to the shortage of time in the classroom a great deal of work with specialist literature is done by post-graduate students on their own. They are most likely to face some or all difficulties in reading in a second language identified by researchers (e.g. Cobb 1999, 2007). The solution to these problems, as seen by Cobb, is in the use of text concordances for reading, which is to intensify students' work with unfamiliar vocabulary items.

Some years ago we decided to try this approach using the *karTatekA*, a concordance-type program. Taking into account the functionalities of the program (different types of word lists, a lemmatization tool, creating homonyms, searching for words containing a particular element or morpheme, and some others) we developed a number of activities on studying the concordance of a particular text and offered them to post-graduate students for their independent work at home. The tasks were aimed at personalizing language work, helping learners to identify unfamiliar vocabulary items and memorize them effectively, reviewing basic grammar structures as soon as they were be found in texts and allowing learners to demonstrate their research potential.

Volunteers are invited for two 90 min training sessions in the computer lab, where they are instructed how to build a concordance of the original text, usually in the pdf format, and get familiar with the program features. On average, these sessions are attended by 10 - 12 students from a group. The compulsory task for all students enrolled in the course is to prepare a glossary including specialized terms and expressions on the subject of their study accompanied by an explanation and translation. Students who used the concordances for accomplishing the task reported that they found it easier to identify lexical items for the glossary. The results of surveying their reports on effectiveness of concordance application for their *kandidat* exam reading practice will be discussed in the paper.

References

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