

## Corpus-based Metalinguistic Discussions Designed as Writing Pre-tasks

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A metalinguistic discussion is a form of oral or written verbal exchange about language features. Such discussions can be integrated in data-driven foreign language learning scenarios. Culioli, the founder of the theory of enunciative operations, considers corpora as knowledge resources which may facilitate the observation of variety in language use (Culioli, 2002: 131). Hence, it seems relevant to combine aspects of the conceptualisation approach (Chini, 2009), inspired by Culioli's work, with concordancing activities, such as proposed by Boulton (2010) and others. This can be done within a task-based framework, taking into account pre-intermediate or intermediate learners who do not specialize in linguistics (Ellis, 2009).

This paper analyses the effects of corpus-based metalinguistic discussions executed during a film script writing project called *Filmlokal*. The project took place during regular German lessons offered in May 2011 to two classes of 15-16 and 16-17 year-old students in a French college. The levels ranged between what is called A1 (basic user) and B1 (independent user) in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*.

During the pre-task period, the learners were encouraged to think and to talk about the spatial meaning of German verb particles – e.g., "auf/stehe[n]" [get up] – which were presented as relevant elements for the film script section called "stage directions". The particles could be identified in five film scripts which together formed a corpus I stored in my personal section of the corpus management system *Sketch Engine* (Kilgarriff, Rychly and Pomikalek). The students had direct access to this automatically annotated online corpus. In addition, worksheets based on the multilingual *Opus subtitle corpus* allowed them to compare German and French concordance lines containing spatial elements. The students were invited to publish the results of their discussions on *Edmodo*, a virtual learning environment. I analysed audio recordings, screencasts, text productions and structured interviews. A certain progress in the domain of the number and the use of verb particles and in the domain of text organization can be attested for some of the students. However, the monolingual corpora proved to be challenging especially for basic users. A bilingual corpus and online discussion tools, such as *Skype* and *TitanPad*, could help to better take into account individual learning needs during concordancing sessions with a metalinguistic focus.

Some of the results of the *Weissensee* project, a study with these characteristics, complete the *Filmlokal* data. This project is based on a home-made parallel corpus containing the film script of the series *Weissensee*. It was executed with a small group of future documentalists in spring 2012. The analysis of selected metalinguistic discussions of both of

the projects supports the optimistic conclusion about the benefits of the presented corpus-based learning scenario.

### References

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