

Corpus-based Approaches to ELT

Mari Carmen Campoy-Cubillo, Begoña Bellés-Fortuño, Maria Lluïsa Gea-Valor (eds).

London / New York: Continuum, 2010. 298 pages. ISBN: 978-1-8470-6537-7.

As may be easily inferred, the subject covered in this book reflects many linguists' / teachers' growing interest in the bond of CL (Corpus Linguistics) and English language teaching (ELT). The title brings the point to the fore: There may be different approaches on which the researchers base their analyses, but their results consistently point to the advantageous use of CL in ELT, in particular, in university settings.

Corpus-based Approaches to ELT derives from a selection of original papers presented at the *1st International Conference on Corpus-based Approaches to ELT* held in Universitat Jaume I (Castelló – Spain) in November, 2007 and expands the CL focus to describe the pedagogical possibilities of CL in EAP, ESP and EPP. After reading the book, I find that its proposal may follow from and/or complement Pérez-Llantada and Ferguson's (2006), as the latter presented EAP findings based on the MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English) alone, whereas this volume includes MICASE as one among various other resources and tools exploited for language teaching.

I think the book generally presents a well-documented linguistic theoretical framework as well as interesting methods to design, build, manage, and exploit corpus resources and techniques. As the volume editors state in the first chapter, all the authors in the book favour a social view of linguistic enquiry, where oral and written discourses cannot be analysed in isolation, but in relation to the context where they are produced. The connection of CL and ELT seems to stand more firmly on these grounds. The editors also anticipate the growing importance of multi-modality in the CL/ELT relationship.

In Part 1, chapter 2, UTE RÖMER, current director of the MICASE project, describes up-to-date work on ELT from both the indirect (material design) and direct (data-driven analysis or DDL) perspectives. Obviously enough, many technological advances have taken place since the early DDL proposals (e.g., Johns, 1991), but, as Römer admits, progress calls for broad teacher-

centred awareness and effective use of this direct method in specialised and general second language (L2) contexts. Chapter 3, by ANNELIE ÄDEL, with her research status also consolidated in the MICASE school, heads the ESP section of the book. The author explores the direct (DDL) approach with new and innovative insight, and goes on to anticipate the especially useful function of stylistics in the annotation of EAP linguistic and meta-linguistic phenomena. The five other chapters in this section describe case studies with CL applications in ESP teaching and learning. Their analyses share what I regard as a positive attitude towards the student, making him/her the centre of the CL focus. BEGOÑA BELLÉS-FORTUÑO and MARI CARMEN CAMPOY-CUBILLO (chapter 4) explore the use of “I feel” in spoken academic discourse from MICASE, checking the forms in contiguous and non-contiguous co-texts. The strength of their analysis lies in their correlated probing at the textual level, an approach that benefits systematic sampling in EAP. A similar case is WINNIE CHENG’s chapter 5, where this author’s work with “conprogramming” seems to prove reliable for DDL phraseology, to be managed at a social-professional plane for the language learner. M^a JOSÉ LUZÓN MARCO (chapter 6) provides a clear demonstration of how the bottom-down approach in CL can go hand in hand with the top-down analysis, thus putting some traditionally challenging DDL tenets into practice. The author describes a case study with a specialised language corpus, and gives very illustrative examples of genre-related linguistic items and their suitable tagging procedure in accordance with learners’ main errors. The corpus used in chapter 7 can also classify as a learner resource, since its construction aims to cater for the students’ immediate linguistic and meta-linguistic needs in specialised contexts. BELINDA CRAWFORD CAMICIOTTOLI’S Business English corpus contains only lectures, and these oral texts are analysed according to lexical frequency, so that students are directed to the chief matter in activities before, during, and after the lectures. MARIA GEORGIEVA and LILYANA ALEXandroVA GROZdanOVA (chapter 8) close the ESP section with the description of the initial stages of a project on the communicative strategies adopted by different foreign students in the EIL (English as International Language) scope.

In Part 3, all eight chapters but one use learner corpora to try to answer linguistic enquiries on the nature of learners’ errors. In my view, the findings are interesting and generally suggest significant advances for the understanding of how CL lines of work can operate to address pedagogical issues. Chapter 9, by SYLVIE DE COCK, offers a detailed account of the state

of oral learner corpora (perhaps until 2008) and their use in pedagogy with the inclusion of multi-modal formats (video, audio, etc). JULIA LAVID, JORGE ARÚS HITA and JUAN RAFAEL ZAMORANO-MANSILLA (chapter 10) describe the learning context of English Philology and Contrastive Linguistics students during their management of a database that allows for direct access to corpora with different written genres and text types. RAFAEL ALEJO GONZÁLEZ explains a case study done with the Spanish and Swedish components of the ICLE (International Corpus of Learner English). In particular, he analyses the use of the particle “out” to measure the degrees of phrasal verb use effectiveness. His findings lead to interesting observations on the nature of nationality differences, first language transfer, and lexical use frequency. M^a ANGELES ANDREU ANDRÉS, AURORA ASTOR GUARDIOLA, MARÍA BOQUERA MATARREDONA, PENNY MACDONALD, BEGOÑA MONTERO FLETA and CARMEN PÉREZ-SABATER. (chapter 12) describe what they consider to be a methodological pillar for learner error analysis in the tagging of multilingual corpora and according to a variety of disciplines involved. AMAYA MENDIKOETXEA, SUSANA MURCIA BIELSA and PAUL ROLLINSON (chapter 13) provide a full report on the glossing of learner errors from a corpus of Philology students’ argumentative essays. In the database designed to explore the results, the authors observe that L1 interference is a constant factor to account for. SYLVIE DE COCK and MAGALI PAQUOT’s chapter 14 also offers some solutions for L2 errors, treated in monolingual learner dictionaries (MLD), as derived from the ICLE. The authors focus on misuse, but also overuse and underuse in the academic register, a project developed in conjunction with Macmillan. TOM RANKIN (chapter 15) challenges adverb placement activities from L2 textbooks by considering actual adverb use in learner writing. Rankin distinguishes the position of learner errors, to be dealt with differently from learner mistakes. Finally, chapter 16 by IZASKUN ELORZA and BLANCA GARCÍA-RIAZA has to do with ELT and CL, but does not provide any information about actual realization in the classroom or academic settings. Instead, the analysis touches on a possible text authenticity measurement done according to the comparison of short text wordlists with BNC (British National Corpus) frequency ranks.

Part 4 includes three more chapters in the collection. This section was particularly interesting to read because of its direct relevance to form and mode diversity in ELT. All the applications described to explore multimodality events (i.e., lectures, interviews, social encounters) seem to

succeed in their adaptation to the ELT context in Spain and abroad. JOSÉ M^a ALCARAZ CALERO, PASCUAL PÉREZ PAREDES and ENCARNACIÓN TORNERO VALERO (chapter 17) explain the profitable uses to be made of the SACODEYL annotator tool for pedagogy, linking multimodality features to various DDL possibilities. JOSEP RODERIC GUZMÁN PITARCH and EVA ALCÓN SOLER (18) describe the AlfraCOVALT database, which includes English/Catalan parallel corpora for teacher-guided translation exploitation (e.g., to raise awareness of socio-pragmatic factors in the use of requests). The last chapter (chapter 19), by INMACULADA FORTANET-GÓMEZ and MERCEDES QUEROL-JULLÁN, instructs on how to properly prepare, design, build, and analyse a videocorpus for multimodal ELT, in particular to teach Spanish faculty both verbal and non-verbal parameters from recorded English-spoken lectures.

In conclusion, I believe this collection contributes significantly to formulating and testing hypotheses for the use of CL in ELT. It is good news that the level of project development in Spain can demonstrate worldwide cooperation and significant research. This book is a good example, as its intended audience among young researchers may find in its reading interesting proposals and inspiration for future work.

[Review received May 2010]

[Revised review accepted January 2011]

Reviewed by **Alejandro Curado Fuentes**

Universidad de Extremadura (Spain)

acurado@unex.es

REFERENCES

- Pérez-Llantada, C. & G.R. Ferguson (eds.) (2006) *English as a Glocalization Phenomenon. Observations from a Linguistic Microcosm*. Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València.