

Formulaic language and data-driven learning: A direct application of corpora in the EFL curriculum

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Abstract

Corpus linguistics has established that language is highly patterned, and the employment of patterned language has been linked to processing advantages with respect to listening and reading, which has implications for perceptions of fluency. The last 20 years has seen an increase in the integration of corpus-based language learning, or data-driven learning (DDL), as a supporting feature in EFL/ESL curricula. Most research has investigated student attitudes of DDL as tool to facilitate writing. Other studies, though notably fewer, have taken a quantitative perspective of the efficacy of DDL as a tool to facilitate the inductive learning of grammar rules. The purpose of this study is three-fold: 1) to present an EFL curriculum built around DDL; 2) to investigate student attitudes toward such an approach to language learning; and 3), to gauge the student efficacy in the appropriate employment of learned phrases. Student attitudes were investigated via a questionnaire and then triangulated through interviews and student logs. The findings indicate that students believe DDL to be a useful and educational tool in the classroom. However, they do note some difficulties related to DDL such as encountering unfamiliar vocabulary and cut-off concordance lines. Finally, questions are raised as to the students' ability to embed learned phrases in a pragmatically appropriate way.

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