

# Corpus Analysis for Language Studies at the University Level



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By

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Liudmila Mockienė  
and Nadežda Stojković

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## CONCEPTS USED IN THE MONOGRAPH

**Communicative language competence** could be defined as comprising four competence areas, namely, linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic; and each component in its own turn comprises knowledge and skills and know-how. (Council of Europe 2011)

**Corpus** is a collection of written texts, especially the entire works of a particular author or a body of writing on a particular subject. (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary)

**Corpus annotation** is defined as the practice of adding interpretative, linguistic information to an electronic corpus of spoken and/or written language data. (Leech 1997)

**Corpus linguistics** is the study of language based on the samples of corpora containing real-world texts. (Sinclair 1992)

**Comparable corpus** is one which selects similar texts in more than one language or variety. (Sinclair, 1996)

**Discourse** could be defined as written or spoken communication, or a mode of organizing knowledge, ideas or experience that is rooted in language and its concrete contexts. (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary)

**Higher education** is education beyond the secondary level, especially education provided by a college or university. Institutions of higher education include not only colleges and universities but also professional schools in such fields as law, theology, medicine, business, music and art. They also include teacher-training schools, community colleges and institutes of technology. At the end of a prescribed course of study, a degree, diploma or certificate is awarded. (Kraujutytė 2002)

**Inductive qualitative research** is often referred to as a “bottom-up” approach to knowing, in which the researcher uses observations to build an abstraction or to describe a picture of the phenomenon that is being studied. The inductive approach enables researchers to identify key themes in the area of interest by reducing the material to a set of themes or categories. (Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtler 2010)



**Parallel corpus** is a collection of texts, each of which is translated into one or more other languages than the original. (Sinclair, 1996)

**Translation competence** could be defined as including an array of knowledge, skills and abilities, so-called translation skills, which are exhibited through a translator's ability to juggle the forms of the languages in order to produce the translation requested by the contemporary language norms. (PACTE 2000)

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# INTRODUCTION

Corpora development has stimulated the ongoing progress in the advance of knowledge concerning lexis, grammar, semantics, pragmatics and textual features (Sinclair 1991; Stubbs 2004). Its increasing relevance is related to the fact that corpus linguistics focuses on sources of naturally occurring, spontaneous, uncensored, real-life data regarding language use. Since context is crucial in researching and describing language use, this aspect is also related to corpus linguistics tools and analyses presenting extensive contextual information about sociolinguistic metadata. Therefore, the approach to teaching foreign languages is now changing due to the impact of technology which allows the use of current crucial linguistic data, empirically obtained and thus trustworthy, regarding actual language use in context.

There is a need for cross-fertilization between corpus research and its application in language teaching settings (Mukherjee 2004; Römer 2009; Widdowson 1990, 2000). According to recent studies, corpus analysis has been applied to carry out research on vocabulary quite extensively as corpus analysis tools can provide great amounts of information on such aspects of lexical items as their frequency, semantic and syntactic environment (Rundell 2008). Different types of corpus software comprise a variety of tools which could be used to analyze lexis, including frequency wordlists, concordance lines, key words in context (KWIC), term extraction, collocates, colligates, taggers and lemmatizers. The extracted information could be used for all kinds of lexicographic research activities, such as compiling term banks, glossaries, dictionaries, terminology databases and translation memory databases. As Zanettin (2002) observes, there is value not only in using specialized corpora but also in their creation per se. Laurence Anthony, the developer of AntConc freeware—a well-known corpus toolkit—states that corpora and corpus tools are of great value not only for researchers of languages but also for teachers and learners (Anthony 2009). The studies by Cobb and Boulton (2015) reveal that the innovative idea of using corpora in teaching and learning appears to be effective and efficient. According to Boulton and Tyne (2014), data-driven learning (DDL) comprises a number of crucial concepts in the existing approaches of language learning, such as authenticity, autonomy, cognitive depth, consciousness-raising, constructivism, context, critical thinking,

discovery learning, heuristics, ICT, individualization, induction, learner-centeredness, learning to learn, lifelong learning, (meta-) cognition, motivation, noticing, sensitization and transferability. Therefore, the authors support DDT (data-driven teaching) as it can provide the necessary exposure to authentic language.

The current study focuses on corpora use in teaching foreign languages in university education, which comprises teaching foreign languages in both non-linguistic and linguistic departments. Corpus analysis tools can be employed in teaching English at university level for corpus compilation, data extraction, and further contrastive and linguistic (especially lexical) analysis. It can be given as an assignment in the form of a project or case study to students who study philology (linguistics) or even those who study English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as a part of their course assessment. Corpus analysis tools can also be used by students of philology (linguistics) who write their course papers or bachelor's or master's theses.

The problematic areas for advanced language learners seem to be coherence, cohesion and textual rhetorical features. Thus, cohesive devices and discourse markers get the researcher's attention as the tools for ensuring textual and discourse management. Research on proper discourse use is looking for answers as to what could be taught (and how) at more advanced levels concerning the matters of textual features. The suggestions offered by the recent research lead to the idea of direct corpus use by language learners and teachers. The studies by Cobb and Boulton (2015) show that the application of such an advanced idea of using corpora in teaching and learning appears to be really effective. Fawcett (1987) observes that corpus-based teaching and learning could be a promising means of translator preparation because the purpose of translator education is to equip trainees with skills applicable to any texts related to any subjects, and corpus-based teaching can provide trainees with such skills. The author stresses that corpus-based translation classes enable students to learn about corpora, corpus analysis tools and their applications for translation. The current research focuses on the process of teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels while applying corpus analysis and building tools for corpus annotation. It envisions looking deeper at the experience of students and teachers in the study environments enriched with corpus analysis and building tools, and at how the research participants perceive their experience of the use of corpus analysis and building tools for corpus annotation in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies. Additional research questions embrace such matters as the following: what features does the meaning of the use of

corpus analysis and building tools for corpus annotation in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies consist of; and what dimensions emerge in the perceived meaning of the use of corpus analysis and building tools for corpus annotation and use in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies by teachers and students.

**Research object.** The research object is the meaning of using corpus analysis and building tools for data extraction and annotation in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies. The research investigates the phenomenon of corpus design and annotation use in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies with the particular focus on the meaning of the “lived experience” of the research participants.

**Research aim and objectives.** This investigation belongs to the qualitative research paradigm, which contributes to the broad research field with multiple approaches to the use of corpora in university studies. The aim of the present research is to investigate the phenomenon of the use of corpus analysis and building tools for corpus annotation in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies based on its participants’ lived experience. The meaning is revealed through exploration of teachers’ and students’ personal stories of the use of corpus analysis and building tools for corpus annotation in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies. Pursuing the research aim, the following research objectives have been set:

1. To present the discourse on the use of corpus analysis and building tools for corpus annotation in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies.
2. To describe in a structural way the lived experience of the research participants—teachers and students—while using corpus analysis and building tools for corpus annotation in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies.
3. To disclose the recommendations for the use of corpus analysis and building tools for corpus annotation in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies.

The research field is comparatively new and developing, still embracing many unanswered questions. The question of the human factor seems to be important in researching the use of corpus analysis and building tools for corpus annotation in teaching and learning a foreign language at more

advanced levels in university studies as human factor in the study environments saturated with technologies of corpus analysis and building tools cannot be easily counted. In this context the research of the phenomenon of the use of corpus analysis and building tools for corpus annotation in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies is absolutely relevant and new as it is directed to look deeper into the phenomenon and find out how the use of corpus analysis and building tools for corpus annotation in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies could have some enhancing effect.

Corpora use is penetrating into the university studies arena. Thus, the research on the phenomenon of the use of corpus analysis and building tools for corpus annotation in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies is a scientific research input into the vast field of the research on corpora educational use. The research creates better understanding of the use of corpus analysis and building tools in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies by revealing how university study participants—teachers and students—make sense of the use of corpus analysis and building tools for corpus annotation in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies through their own lived experience. The results of the research enable us to provide recommendations for the use of corpus analysis and building tools in university studies and also envision areas for future research.

**Methodology of the research (methods and implementation).** The qualitative research paradigm was applied as it helped us to understand human experience in a specific context (Creswell 2007) and thus is suitable for researching the human experience in the study environments while applying corpora tools. Qualitative inductive content analysis by Elo and Kyngas (2007) was chosen as a core method for the current research depending on the research question, as the current research is intended to investigate how the participants make sense of teaching and learning while applying corpus analysis and building tools for analyzing textual cohesion using discourse connectives through their own lived experience. The authors analyzed the research participants' experience in a structural way by aiming to formulate certain conclusions and recommendations for using corpus analysis and building tools while teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels. Qualitative inductive content analysis by Elo and Kyngas (2007) enables structural analysis of teaching and learning experiences while applying corpus analysis and building tools for analyzing

textual cohesion through discourse connectives. The structural analysis of the meaning which research participants ascribe to shared lived experience helps us to examine the real situation (how things really are) and make certain conclusions and recommendations. In education it could theoretically be known how matters should be, but it is a sensitive area where regulations and instructions may clash with human realities, and research may reveal certain areas for improvement.

Students and teachers were included in the interview series to ensure well-rounded understanding, and semi-structured interviews (Ghiglione and Matalon 2001) were performed. The inductive qualitative content analysis was carried out applying NVivo, which is a well-established and efficient software product widely used for organizing and managing data. The authors instantaneously analyzed the interviews just after the interviews by constantly comparing the structuralized data material. The data have undergone several coding stages, starting with initial open coding and followed by axial coding and selective coding.

**Limitations.** The choice of the qualitative research paradigm involving qualitative inductive content analysis might be considered as strength of the research. Qualitative research does not imply making any assumptions before the research starts. Qualitative research methods facilitate capturing stories of participants' own experience; what is more, qualitative research has the power of sensitively registering human realities in education environments and revealing the real state of the situation. On the other hand, the application of an exclusively qualitative approach might be perceived as a limitation since the current research is only focused on the subjective perspective of corpus annotation use in teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels in university studies. The research would have been enriched if different perspectives—e.g., technology enhanced learning and teaching based on a constructivist approach and objective measurement had been added to the research; then a more comprehensive understanding of the use of corpus analysis and building tools in language studies at university level could have been obtained. However, it should also be acknowledged that research based on objective measurement would have been a separate additional study.

Having interview material as the only empirical data source could be considered another limitation as, for example, Silverman (2005) suggests using multiple sources to obtain a more extensive understanding of a phenomenon. However, Ghiglione and Matalon (2001) advocate for using a method of semi-structured interviews as the most suitable means for

obtaining empirical data. The authors argue that interviews provide a perfect opportunity to deepen the understanding of a phenomenon through the subjective perspective of the research participants, to register the subtleties which are seldom explored.

**The structure of the monograph.** The monograph is organized into three chapters. Chapter One provides a brief review of teaching foreign languages in the settings of non-linguistic departments. It presents generic attributes, the importance of communication and social skills, teaching and learning foreign languages for employability, and the relevance of translation and corpus linguistics for learning material design in the discussed settings. Chapter Two focuses on the application of corpus analysis and building tools in teaching English at university level for corpus compilation, data extraction, and further contrastive and linguistic (especially lexical) analysis. It provides a detailed case study of analyzing terminology of constitutional law in English and Lithuanian as an example to illustrate the possibility of integrating corpus analysis tools into the process of teaching and learning languages at more advanced levels. Chapter Three provides a brief theoretical background focusing on corpora application in language studies, followed by a discussion of certain issues in discourse management and organization, and closes with insights on principles of teaching and learning with technology and the role of the initial knowledge. The authors also explain the methodological approach of the research by providing the grounds for the methodological choices of the qualitative research and describing the research procedures. Finally, the results of the research are presented and the authors provide recommendations for teaching and learning a foreign language at more advanced levels while applying corpus analysis and building tools.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION SETTINGS

NADEŽDA STOJKOVIĆ

Teaching foreign languages (FLs) in university studies comprises teaching foreign languages in both non-linguistic and linguistic departments. The current chapter provides an overview of teaching foreign languages in the settings of non-linguistic departments. It presents generic attributes, the importance of communication and social skills, teaching and learning foreign languages for employability, and the relevance of translation and corpus linguistics for learning material design in the discussed settings.

### **1.1 Generic attributes**

Teaching foreign languages in university settings, in non-linguistic departments, is present throughout European settings and beyond. It follows instruction at previous formal educational levels, and the preconditions for course entry most often imply that complete grammar, syntax and vocabulary have been covered, all up to B2 level according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe). Language instruction at university level is the final stage before students enter the job market, which today is highly mobile and inherently international in character, and therefore requires language skills that enable successful, immediate and precise conveying of expertise. For these reasons, universities have in their curricula incorporated mission statements on institutional objectives and graduate attributes that include language skills. Those are interchangeably referred to as generic attributes of graduates, described with generic terms of the intended learning outcomes, such as: specialist knowledge, general intellectual skills and capacities, and particular personal qualities, which are developed through university education

with the aim of enhancing students' cognitive and affective attributes and abilities.

These objective statements and graduate attributes, have become vital in assessing whether the university curriculum is the direct and foreseen response to, and the accommodation for society's changing directions and aspirations (Barnett 1990). There are various societal requirements that influence the formulation of those attributes, central among which is the call for universities to educate more employable graduates, in alliance with the employable skills agenda of industry and governments, and in that way the call forms a vital intersection, a focal point of convergent forces shaping the society. Here it is obvious that the contemporary university setting, speaking in worldwide terms, is directly shaped by linking national educational policies and economic growth agendas (Woodhouse 1999), at the same time producing new quality assurance standards for HE institutions internationally. These requirements are at present increasingly more difficult to conceptualize, meet and formulate in curricula regarding the information explosion and the consequent proliferation of accessing knowledge (Barnett 2000).

"Generic graduate attributes" is the most widely accepted term denoting that the targeted educational results encompass more than personal skills and attitudes; rather, new personal characteristics reach out beyond mere disciplinary content knowledge and are applicable in a range of social contexts, including international ones. For these reasons they are also termed core, key or transferable (Bowden et al. 2000). These attributes are considered—rather than domain knowledge, which they transcend—central achievements of university studies, applicable to a range of contexts, because it is through them that a person is prepared to successfully enter the world of work, to be a global citizen and an effective member of contemporary society.

This all reflects the fact that university settings are changing under the influence of neoliberal societal attitudes that align the goals of (governmental, university) educational policies, business and scientific development (Giroux 2010; Olssen and Peters 2005) in the contemporary, international, supranational knowledge economy, yet taking care not to commodify teaching and learning (Cribb and Gewirtz 2013). This is why Barnett (2000) summarizes university studies goals as educating students to be able to independently cope with dynamic employment perspectives, and teaching them how they can provide positive contributions to the current heterogeneous communities, not only of practice but of their entire lives. In this way, it is clear graduate attributes reach significantly beyond mere employability.

They reflect university studies creating career competencies, and academic citizenship as well. These competencies, subsumed as graduate attributes, include development of personal qualities such as ethical, moral and social responsibility, intercultural awareness and personal integrity, and at the same time multiple and diverse skills, some of those being critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, problem solving, reflective judgment, leadership and team work, information literacy, digital literacy and effective communication skills.

## **1.2 Communication and social skills**

Communication in this setting implies native language skills as improved through domain subjects taught in it, and foreign language skills, which in university studies is a foreign language for specific purposes (LSP). Communication is referred to together with social skills to emphasize their mutual interdependence; this reflects citizenship characteristics necessarily intertwined with employability, as these two come to be inseparable. Communication that is to be developed in university studies refers to oral, written and effective listening skills in national, international and cross-generational environment, contributing to productive and harmonious relations in business settings. Communication and social skills are therefore the ability to communicate and collaborate independently and/or in teams across professional and social settings. This ability is seen as critical for sustained and successful employment. Perfected communication and social skills incorporate careful listening, clear, appropriate formulation, and conveying of ideas, information and responses in various formats.

In some universities' goals statements, communication and social skills are referred to as "social communication skills" or "communicative language competence", reflecting the inseparableness of the two, and including teaching students how to use language for a range of functions, like asking for or providing information, negotiating, arguing or clarifying issues; conversational skills, such as introducing a topic, maintaining it through the smooth flow of conversation, being appropriate and politely taking turns in conversation; understanding assumed knowledge and implied meanings of the listener(s); non-verbal communication, such as significance and meaning of eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, and culturally modeled physical proximity and distance.

Many of these skills are perfected indirectly through students being taught major subjects in their native language. It is the very way professors speak and act that conveys their personal mastery of these skills to students,

who are passive recipients while listening to lectures and active when they need to reproduce the knowledge. This is the induction model of transferring these necessary generic attributes, and the transfer happens without much conscious or reflective awareness of it on the part of both lecturers and students. Therefore, regarding communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal ones, those of the student's mother tongue are transferred thus through domain subject professors and associates working on them, while foreign language communication skills are dealt with in specialized foreign language courses.

### **1.3 Teaching and learning a foreign language for employability at university**

In post-secondary education, teaching a foreign language in most cases<sup>1</sup> represents the continuation of the language instruction, building upon already acquired language proficiency towards higher levels. Then, on the basis of language content covered in previous educational stages, it is assumed that students possess sound knowledge of general English (GE), possibly with some elements of the target science they are commencing to study, up to the upper intermediate level of proficiency. Very often the requirements for FL course entry at university state precisely that this has been achieved previously. Then, the focus of FL instruction shifts from GE to language needed for professional and scientific settings that students are preparing for, in line with their major. This means that the format of FL instruction at university is that of languages for specific purposes (LSP) and academic FL.

Teaching LSP is the most common form of FL instruction in academia, it being in accord with the profile of the major studies and, at the same time, with prospective job positions in that field. *Instruction in LSP provides for multiple goals: it teaches communicative, social, transferable employability skills.* In what follows, this claim will be elaborated on and supported.

The LSP syllabus is conceptualized according to the curriculum of the faculty/university where the course is taught. A long while prior to LSP course commencement, lecturers conduct various types of research regarding the profile of the institution. They inquire into the content of the curriculum and subjects related to the major individually. This is only the

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<sup>1</sup> When a second foreign language is introduced at university, then the instruction begins from the beginner level.

first instance demonstrating the particularly demanding position of LSP lecturers. Since they have not been educated in the science they are to conceptualize a language course for, it is certainly difficult for them to ponder, comprehend, analyze and segment such content; moreover, they must possess abstract linguistic characteristics that will allow for creating a syllabus that simulates communication in real scientific and professional situations. In this they resort to analyzing the curriculum, interviewing major subject lecturers and doing the research on their own. In the early days of LSP consolidated theory, two of its major and still most referred-to experts, Hutchinson and Waters (1987), said LSP practitioners are “solitary travelers into uncharted lands”, subsuming the challenges and real difficulties within this vivid and potent metaphor.

Upon collecting necessary material on the content of the curriculum, lecturers are then truly left on their own to design the syllabus of an LSP course. This is when yet another difficulty is encountered. As an inherent characteristic of LSP courses, and given that the justification for their existence is to linguistically “serve” the major subjects of the given, particular institutional profile, and future professional profile of the students, the availability of ready-made teaching and learning material is questionable. Big international publishing houses that offer books on LSP (though most often it is ESP), produce material that is of a specific purpose, yet far too general at the same time. Even as such, two characteristics are striking. First, such books almost never reach beyond intermediate level. This in itself contradicts the premise explained earlier in the text here, namely that LSP instruction at university is the continuation and upgrading of the foreign language proficiency already gained in the previous stages of education, and that the entrance requirement for an LSP course is having acquired intermediate-level skills. Another striking characteristic is the segmentation of texts and exercises in those books. Students “study”—in the original, Latin meaning of that word, as in thorough devotion, adherence, diligence and industriousness, which in themselves are transferable skills. Thus, batches of short exercises, common in LSP textbooks, comprising most often up to ten exemplary sentences, or very short texts for reading and analysis, are all inherently incompatible with the overall aim of university studies—to study thoroughly.

Another peculiarity tightly connected to LSP material design is the position of LSP lecturers and the contemporary fast-changing nature of sciences. First, frequently there is just one lecturer at the institution. The task of comprehending and navigating through the content of major studies would be a meaningful task for a team. On top of all that, lecturers can rarely

harvest previously designed and used material, as the very curriculum changes to include the advances in the sciences studied, and the content of foreign language courses is to follow them.

Despite these significant challenges to the post of an LSP lecturer, this approach to language study has matured over the past decades to become a professional lingua franca, with needs analysis and discourse analysis its most prominent aspects that serve students for successfully entering the work community they are preparing for in their studies. The number of ways of producing and designing teaching material have recently been on the rise, most notably due to the resourcefulness and availability of technologies that support individual, original coverage of relevant texts and practices, as well as their dissemination and so further use and upgrading.

## **1.4 Relevance of active use and practice of translation in LSP**

After the period of the communicative approach in language teaching methodology that functioned almost to the complete exclusion of translation, active fostering of this skill in students is now emphasized for the benefits it brings to their understanding of the two languages in question, but equally so for their comprehension and internalization of the content knowledge, particularly in the fields where accuracy is vital in communicating rigorous information through a reliable linguistic medium. The methodology of teaching translation relies on the use of authentic materials; it is interactive, learner-centered and promotes learner autonomy, all in particular valid for LSP teaching and learning at university as a preparation for a prospective entry into a job post. Teaching translation at university studies language instruction has become relevant for the numerous outstanding advantages it offers, most broadly listed as heightened awareness of the language(s) use, enhancement of cognitive and receptive skills, and certainly instruction in necessary pragmatic and stylistic approaches to target language use (Fernández-Guerra 2014, 155; Dagiliene 2012, 124). Translation practice forces students to actively ponder semantic meaning, not mechanically substitute words in two languages, and so to think comparatively between them. Through this process they can comprehend the non-parallel nature of languages which compensates for the absence of perfect, one-to-one correspondence, all to their own advantage when using either. In addition, students become aware of the often-characteristic positive and negative transfers, and so better understand the target language. This shift of the emphasis, the revival of interest in translation, was partly

caused by findings that the use of a native language does promote language learning, and that through translation qualities like accuracy, clarity and flexibility, that are essential to any language learning, and which are generic in nature, are further promoted (Duff 1994). Also, translation in the higher stages of language learning, as in university studies, is observed as the fifth language skill along with the four basic ones (listening, speaking, reading, writing). “Translation holds a special importance at an intermediate and advanced level: in the advanced or final stage of language teaching, translation from L1 to L2, and L2 to L1, is recognized as the fifth skill and the most important social skill since it promotes communication and understanding” (Ross 2000).

In line with inherent LSP characteristics, the best-suited approach to teaching translation within university studies is found to be functionalist, in which a text is seen as an “offer of information”, a segment of the overall communication action within a specific discipline. Students are to be instructed to conceive of themselves when translating as choosing information elements they consider necessary to achieve the purpose of the original text and transfer it by constructing a new text in the target language. For this, they need to take into account the communicative framework of the particular discipline and conform to it (Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995, 1). This implies that LSP translation fosters the interdisciplinary concept of specialized communication, transgressing far beyond only relevant linguistic approaches to include cognitive, knowledge-oriented semiotic approaches. To illustrate this, in practice it often means directing students to actually “retell” the source text in the target language, taking all the care to transfer precisely the whole information load, and not focus on linguistic correspondence.

The benefits of practicing translation are numerous. Through translation practice, LSP students at once exhibit acquired specialized domain knowledge and in turn foster it further by interiorizing specialized knowledge systems through texts on which they work. In LSP instruction, translation is often crucial as often accurate equivalence is needed; at the same time the work on authentic texts is a necessary requirement in a syllabus to cater for the students’ needs. Further along this line, as regards certain specialized texts, at present they are primarily characterized by the highly frequent appearance of new terminology, as a result of social, cultural, scientific and economic alterations. It is therefore true that original texts are most often the most reliable and most representative sources for learning domain language in its natural, vivid, accurate form. Translation theory and practice of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries developed



strategies that are useful when students face unknown terminology or that which can be characterized as barely translatable. Those strategies have proven only to heighten the efficiency of LSP instruction. This work on such texts is valuable as it further enhances the skills of students to search for relevant information on their own, an important aspect of LSP education and acquisition of domain knowledge. The required meeting of students' needs is carried out through this work on the text of specific contexts as they make "use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline" (Fortanet-Gomez and Räisänen 2008, 61). Thus, LSP in this way, too, proves to be eclectic as combining linguistic and domain-specific methodology, making the knowledge aspect central for the success of the teaching process.

Translation practice leads students to gain valuable insights into characteristics of both languages by necessarily having to compare the given texts. When exploiting this, language learners themselves indicate language areas in which they need to improve, those findings being highly valuable for lecturers as well. This is the side of translation showing how it assists students in developing primary communicative skills. Unlike students of philology departments, when embarking on translation practice ESP students do not need translation theory instruction; their needs are different and therefore they benefit from smaller-scale directions regarding techniques of translation: "It is not essential to be an expert in translation and translation theory to use translation in class" (Witte and Harden 2009, 176). Through exposure to various disciplinary texts, students also practice intercultural communication. Commenting on the relation between translation and intercultural generic communicative skills, Pym (1996, 337) states: "I tend to see the purpose of translation as a privileged index of wider intercultural phenomena and translation theory as a source of interesting models for such relations." That translation is a practice in language teaching that has multiple benefits, including learning the foreign language, intercultural communication, domain knowledge and generic competencies throughout, is summarized by Leonardi (2009, 141) who stated: "The role of translation is thus fundamental in teaching and showing students mediation strategies and both linguistic and cultural differences through employing a contrastive approach to language. Through translation, students can learn more about problem-solving strategies, improve their analytic skills and strengthen their grammatical and lexical competence and performance."

## **1.5 Benefits of corpus linguistics for LSP teaching and learning**

With the advent of powerful and available computers, various language learning software and software tools keep appearing that now strongly influence the development—and moreover determine the further directions—of foreign language learning research and practice, particularly in university studies. The most prominent tool is the emerging field of corpus linguistics, primarily seen as direct access to actual discourse patterns in both spoken and written language in target social settings of GE or LSP. Corpus linguistics is criteria-determined analysis of principled collections of language, of particular discourse, in an electronic format, called “corpora”. This new approach to the study of language was initiated with the newly discovered ability of computers to store large amounts of data, and consequently the era of mega-corpora such as the Collins Corpus and Bank of English (each approx. 2.5 billion words), and the Oxford English Corpus and the Cambridge English Corpus (each approx. 2 billion words in size), compiled for lexicographical purposes. At the same time, corpus linguistic methodology started to be exploited for research by other linguistic frameworks, smaller in size and dedicated to a certain segment of pragmatic use of language, such as conversation analysis and spoken discourse analysis. A particular relevance of such smaller corpora that keep emerging is the fact that they facilitate a “constant interpretive dialectic between features of texts and the contexts in which they are produced” (Vaughan and Clancy 2013, 70), which makes them directly useful for actual work in Foreign Language Teaching (FLT). For these reasons, here only briefly sketched (to be elaborated on in further chapters), it is clear that the use of corpora, the authentic linguistic data—even called a “corpus revolution” (Rundell and Stock 1992)—informed a whole new output of reference and pedagogical materials in FLT, thus now having a decisive influence on second/foreign language teaching. Corpus analysis is now indispensable “in virtually all branches of linguistics or language learning” (Leech 1997, 9), as its strength is its empirical nature, making linguistic analysis more objective (McEnery and Wilson 2001, 103).

Its growing relevance is due to the fact that corpus linguistics offers sources of naturally occurring, spontaneous, uncensored, real-life data on language use. As context is crucial in describing language use, this aspect is also included in corpus linguistics tools and analyses, providing extensive contextual information in the form of sociolinguistic metadata. Therefore, the impact of technology allowed for current crucial linguistic data,

empirically obtained and thus trustworthy regarding actual language use in context, that is now changing the approach to and execution of GE and LSP teaching. Corpus linguistics allows for compiling frequency lists, particular necessary specifications of textual features, text types and genres, grammatical patterns, collocations and much more, all leading to creation of data-driven learning activities. Those are crucial for FL development in learners, as they incite development of pragmatic competence as “the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context” (Thomas 1983, 92).

Such characteristics of corpus linguistics make its findings particularly relevant for teaching LSP in university settings, where mastering genres and specialized registers is essential and the empirical material which is provided in a corpus-informed approach becomes indispensable. Corpus analysis is a foundation for an empirically based understanding of discourse and language for specific purposes. This outstanding relevance of corpus linguistics calls for its larger inclusion in actual teaching practice; there is a need for a cross-fertilization between corpus research and its application in language teaching settings (Mukherjee 2004; Römer 2009; Widdowson 1990, 2000). In LSP, corpora and corpus-driven learning are particularly useful for the lexico-grammar of its contextualized, domain language varieties. Those varieties that need to be taught in LSP instruction, while obviously conformant with the overall syntax and semantics of the language in question, are characterized by the selective occurrence of certain structures and the prevalence of domain-specific, conventionalized phraseologies and patterns (e.g., collocations, lexical bundles), as well as the present-day extremely fast evolution of new scientific and professional terminology. For these, corpora become crucial, as traditional reference books and dictionaries now cannot compete with web-based corpora with regard to lexical and terminological evolution record.

As there are opinions that corpora use is not exploited in classroom teaching to its fullest extent, this monograph is also dedicated to exemplifying how this situation can be changed for the benefit of both students and lecturers, offering to the former the real-life language examples, and to the latter an invaluable resource to assist them in material design. Corpora help lecturers indirectly, in deciding what to teach, but also in their direct use, regarding how to teach. The reason some theorists argue that the majority of the existing, publicly available corpora are not widely used in teaching practice can be summarized as the fact that they have been developed “as tools for linguistic research and not with pedagogical goals in mind” (Braun 2007). This calls for development of pedagogically

motivated corpora that need to be “complementary to school curricula, to facilitate both the contextualisation process and the practical problems of integration” (Braun 2007, 310). The potential of corpora is such that Conrad (2000) spoke of them as a means that will thoroughly change the teaching of foreign languages and the overall language education, to include both what is taught and how it is taught. Moreover, well developed corpora, as Gavioli and Aston (2001) claim, are also viewed as resources for students’ autonomous study, which is one of crucial goals of LSP teaching methodology. An independent, self-study capable LSP learner profile can be more successfully attained through learner-centered, individualized methods of learning, harvesting the benefits of corpora use (Johns 1990).

In the following chapters there will be further both theoretical, more detailed and in depth elaboration of the theoretical stances here summarized, as well as the empirical research on the use of corpora in the practice of language studies at university level that proves its direct benefit for the teaching/learning outcomes of foreign languages university courses.

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