



The TESOL Italy Val d'Adige-Etschtal Local Group

cordially invites you to the online event



“Corpora in ELT: from basics to applications”

on Saturday 13th November 2021 from 10.30-11.45 am (CET) via Zoom



‘Well ... I mean ... I don't know’: Using corpus methods to improve the representation of spoken language in ELT coursebooks

Niall Curry (Coventry University, UK) &

Geraldine Mark (Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland)

Does my teacher talk facilitate language acquisition? A corpus-informed study

Eric Nicaise (Université catholique Louvain and University College

Louvain-en-Hainaut, Belgium)

Five simple things a teacher can do with a corpus

Graham Burton (Faculty of Education, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano)

Event description: This event will provide a brief introduction to corpora, showcase two recently completed corpus-based research projects directly related ELT (one on research in spoken language and how it can inform teaching materials, the other on research on teacher talk and how it can facilitate language acquisition), and provide some simple tools teachers can use in their own planning and teaching. Participants will expand their knowledge of current research in corpus linguistics and what implications this might have on teaching and learning languages.

To register for the event please sign up using the following link no later than Tuesday 9th November 2021: [REGISTRATION LINK](#). *You will receive a Zoom link by email several days prior to the event.*

TESOL Italy - Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages in Italy
An Affiliate of TESOL International Association

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For FURTHER INFORMATION, please contact Jennifer Hill, Local Group Coordinator, at tesol.valdadige.etschtal@gmail.com.

This event is open to TESOL Italy members. For non-members, a free, one-time provisional membership is available. The conditions are explained on the sign-up form. Certificates of attendance are available upon request and after the completion of an online feedback survey.*

*TESOL Italy (con i suoi gruppi locali) è riconosciuta come ente qualificato alla formazione e all'aggiornamento per insegnanti di lingua inglese nelle scuole di ogni ordine e grado-Autorizzazione MIUR, Direttiva 90/2003.

Abstracts

'Well ... I mean ... I don't know': Using corpus methods to improve the representation of spoken language in ELT coursebooks

Niall Curry (Coventry University, UK)

Geraldine Mark (Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland)

In published classroom materials, norms relating to written language often dominate at the expense of spoken language. In the ELT community, classroom materials are often structured around a consensus-driven syllabus of grammatical structures and functions to be worked through at specific levels of proficiency. This is a mixed bag of structural items, including tense, word class, clause, and of more functionally or thematically-motivated elements. Alongside this, there is a perennial request from learners for more 'conversation'. However, the features characteristic of everyday spoken language challenge both the prescribed neat checklist of the syllabus and deeply-held opinions relating to usage and acceptability. As a result, they are often missing from mainstream materials. The challenge then is to find a way to include a focus on spoken language that (1) does not require much space on a page, (2) fits within teacher expectations and (3) helps learners improve their conversational competencies. To address this, our research has taken a corpus-based conversation analysis of 'small words' (Carter & McCarthy 2017).

Using spoken-corpus data such as that from the Spoken BNC2014, alongside a sample of coursebooks, this paper describes a project offering perspectives and practical solutions for addressing the dearth of interactionally-oriented features in both existing pedagogical materials and in the development of future publications. We present a sample of the results of corpus-based conversation analyses of spontaneous spoken language, focussing specifically on the language used (1) to open and close turns and (2) to repair breakdowns in communication. We also illustrate the presence and absence of these features in classroom resources and consider opportunities to include them. Drawing on research such as Wong and Zhang (2010), Carroll (2011) and Barraja-Rohan (2011), we consider how these items can be included in course materials, and how they can be exploited pedagogically.

Does my teacher talk facilitate language acquisition? A corpus-informed study

Eric Nicaise (Université catholique Louvain and University College Louvain-en-Hainaut, Belgium)

Teacher talk is a key aspect of EFL lessons. Setting aside the range of listening materials available, the EFL teacher is in many instances the main model of English which students are exposed to throughout their time at secondary school. According to research, 'teacher talking time' takes up an impressive 70% of classroom time in general. Nevertheless, teacher talk remains an area which many teachers and trainee teachers often have difficulty with. Drawing on a corpus analysis we will explore the type of English teachers use within the classroom. Issues like hedging, translanguaging,

simplifying speech, the dual aspect of teacher talk and the role of prosody as contributor to meaning will be considered. The talk will use classroom data from native and non-native English language teachers, with all examples drawn from CONNEcT, (an acronym for A Corpus of Native and Non-Native English Classroom Talk), the corpus which was specifically assembled for the investigation of teacher talk in secondary education. CONNEcT consists of transcripts of native and non-native English lesson audio-recordings carried out in secondary education. Recordings were made in French-speaking Belgium and in Britain. The Corpus now exceeds 200,000 words. This corpus-led study attempts to identify teacher talk as a genre and makes the case that it should be regarded as a category of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), a specialised language that teachers need to acquire within the framework of their most common teaching functions. It draws up a list of features of teacher talk which help foster the acquisition of an L2 by foreign language learners. Following the Corpus analysis, implications will be considered for both native and non-native teachers. I will also provide practical tips on how to make classroom English a strategic means of language acquisition as well as a powerful tool for professional development.

'Five simple things a teacher can do with a corpus'

Graham Burton (Faculty of Education, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano)

This brief session will outline five simple ways that teachers can use corpora in class, in lesson preparation, or both.

Graham Burton is a teacher and researcher at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano. He is currently engaged in corpus-based research on the characteristics of English spoken in South Tyrol and attitudes related to its use.