Designing and Implementing Data-Driven Learning in a Korean Secondary School EFL Classroom

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Abstract

Since Tim Johns' (1991a, 1991b) pioneering articles, the number of data-driven learning (DDL) studies of the use of corpora in the English language teaching (ELT) classroom has been increasing. While most of them have involved students at the university level, there has been very little research involving secondary school students. This study reports the findings of a computer-aided error analysis (CEA) of a Korean secondary school students' corpus and an investigation into students' and teachers' attitudes towards concordance-based materials and a DDL approach to teaching writing and grammar in the Korean ELT classroom.

The CEA was conducted on a small corpus (19,610 words) of writing in English produced by Korean secondary school students and identified the most common errors they produced using the error-tagging software tool, UCLEE (Dagneaux, et al., 1996). The findings revealed the ten most frequent error types, namely GA (Grammar, Articles: 15%) followed by FS (Form, Spelling: 12 %), QM (Punctuation, Missing: 8%), GVT (Grammar Verb Tense: 7 %), LS (Lexical Single: 6%), Z (Infelicities: 5%), QC (Punctuation, Confusion: 5%), GNN (Grammar Noun Number: 5%), SI (Style Incomplete: 4%), and XVCO (Lexico-Grammar, Verbs, Complementation: 4%).

Armed with these results, concordance-based and DDL materials were designed to remedy the students' most frequent error types, adopting activities similar to those which featured in the studies of Gaskell and Cobb (2004), Granger and Tribble (1998), Sripicharn (2002), Tribble and Jones (1990), etc., and tried out on Korean secondary school English classes. Questionnaires and in-depth interviews were employed to investigate the students' and teachers' attitudes to DDL. The results show both the students and teachers displayed relatively positive responses to the approach. The paper ends by discussing the pedagogical implications of the findings, especially with reference to the practical use of corpus-based materials and redefinition of teachers' and learners' roles in the ELT classroom.

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