

Corpora in Secondary Schools Training Courses for English as a Foreign Language Teachers

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Abstract : This paper describes a proposal for a teachers' training course, focused on the introduction of corpora in the EFL didactics (English as a foreign language) of some Italian secondary schools. The training course is conceived as a part of a TEDD participant's five months internship. TEDD (Technologies for Education: diversity and devices) is an advanced course held by the Department of Engineering and Information Technology at the University of Trento, Italy. Its main aim is to train a selected, heterogeneous group of graduates to engage with the complex interdependence between education and technology in modern society. The educational approach draws on a plural coexistence of various theories as well as socio-constructivism, constructionism, project-based learning and connectivism. TEDD educational model stands as the main reference source to the design of a formative course for EFL teachers, drawing on the digitalization of didactics and creation of learning interactive materials for L2 intermediate students. The training course lasts ten hours, organized into five sessions. In the first part (first and second session) a series of guided and semi-guided activities drive participants to familiarize with corpora through the use of a digital tools kit. Then, during the second part, participants are specifically involved in the realization of a ML (Mistakes Laboratory) where they create, develop and share digital activities according to their teaching goals with the use of corpora, supported by the digital facilitator. The training course takes place into an ICT laboratory where the teachers work either individually or in pairs, with a computer connected to a wi-fi connection, while the digital facilitator shares inputs, materials and digital assistance simultaneously on a whiteboard and on a digital platform where participants interact and work together both synchronically and diachronically. The adoption of good ICT practices is a fundamental step to promote the introduction and use of Corpus Linguistics in EFL teaching and learning processes, in fact dealing with corpora not only promotes L2 learners' critical thinking and orienteering versus wild browsing when they are looking for ready-made translations or language usage samples, but it also entails becoming confident with digital tools and activities. The paper will explain reasons, limits and resources of the pedagogical approach adopted to engage EFL teachers with the use of corpora in their didactics through the promotion of digital practices.

Keywords : digital didactics, education, language learning, teacher training

Conference Title : ICLCL 2017 : International Conference on Lexicography and Corpus Linguistics

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : November 23-24, 2017