Corpus Stylistics and Multidimensional Analysis for English for Specific Purposes Teaching and Assessment

Authors : Svetlana Strinyuk, Viacheslav Lanin

Abstract : Academic English has become lingua franca for international scientific community which stimulates universities to introduce English for Specific Purposes (EAP) courses into curriculum. Teaching L2 EAP students might be fulfilled with corpus technologies and digital stylistics. A special software developed to reach the manifold task of teaching, assessing and researching academic writing of L2 students on basis of digital stylistics and multidimensional analysis was created. A set of annotations (style markers) – grammar, lexical and syntactic features most significant of academic writing was built. Contrastive comparison of two corpora "model corpus", subject domain limited papers published by competent writers in leading academic journals, and "students' corpus", subject domain limited papers written by last year students allows to receive data about the features of academic writing underused or overused by L2 EAP student. Both corpora are tagged with a special software created in GATE Developer. Style markers within the framework of research might be replaced depending on the relevance and validity of the result which is achieved from research corpora. Thus, selecting relevant (high frequency) style markers and excluding less relevant, i.e. less frequent annotations, high validity of the model is achieved. Software allows to compare the data received from processing model corpus to students' corpus and get reports which can be used in teaching and assessment. The less deviation from the model corpus students demonstrates in their writing the higher is academic writing skill acquisition. The research showed that several style markers (hedging devices) were underused by L2 EAP students whereas lexical linking devices were used excessively. A special software implemented into teaching of EAP courses serves as a successful visual aid, makes assessment more valid; it is indicative of the degree of writing skill acquisition, and provides data for further research.

Keywords : corpus technologies in EAP teaching, multidimensional analysis, GATE Developer, corpus stylistics
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