

A Corpus-based Approach to Identify an ESP Word List for Culinary Arts Professionals and Its Applications in ESP Teaching

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Abstract

Despite the advantages of using corpora for ESP education, especially in ESP fields, none of the research has adopted using corpora in ESP teaching for culinary arts community. With an increasing number of students majored in culinary arts fields, there is a need to identify core vocabulary word list for this group of students. The present study built specialized culinary corpora by collecting texts from four professional culinary textbooks which are commonly used in professional institutions. The corpus-based linguistic analyses focus on the distribution and function of core vocabulary and investigation the lexical features of vocabulary. In addition, specialized word list is identified and studied by comparing with West's (1953) General Service List (GSL) and Coxhead's (2000) Academic Word List (AWL). Issues related to vocabulary coverage and vocabulary size for students' academic textbooks reading comprehension are also discussed.

The findings of the research are as followed: (1) the culinary corpus (CC) contains 570,355 running words. There are 385,446 running words which are in the K1 GSL words, accounting for 67.58% of the corpus; 70,210 running words are in K2 GSL words, accounting for 12.31%; 22,015 running words are from the AWL which is about 3.86%. 16.25% of running words are belonged to "off-list" group. Comparing with cooking-related textbooks, bakery-related textbooks have higher percentages of words from K2 and off-list groups, which indicate that learners need wider vocabulary knowledge while reading textbooks in bakery field. (2) While using BNC/COCA as reference copra, the 1st 1,000 words from BNC/COCA word list account for 386,929 running words and is about 67.84% of the total running words. The 2nd 1,000 words from BNC/COCA word list are 75,410 which is 13.22% of the total running words. While combining the percentages of 1st 1,000 words, 2nd 1,000 words and "Others" categories, the number is about 85.3%. It shows that if EFL students only acquire knowledge for the 1st and 2nd 1,000 words list in BNC/COCA, they probably have certain levels of difficulties in reading culinary

professional textbooks. (3) For issues related to vocabulary size, to reach 95% coverage in culinary textbooks, the vocabulary size is 4,000 families; to reach 98% coverage, the vocabulary size should be 6,000 families. However, for reading bakery textbooks with pleasure, to reach 98% coverage, the vocabulary size should be 7,000 families. This finding indicates that for learners to read bakery textbooks, they might need much larger vocabulary size. (4) While using BNC/COCA as reference corpora, a high frequent keywords list containing 477 words was developed which is for a keyword ratio of 1.91 per 1,000 words. The keyword list is a useful vocabulary pool for EFL/ESP students who need to study the English culinary textbooks at university level.

This study suggests that students from vocational universities should build up their vocabulary size especially for those high frequency words. In addition, a high frequent keyword list can assist them for the preparation in order to read content specific textbooks. ESP teaching implications by integrating corpus linguistics research results are suggested.