

# ***LANGUAGE TEACHING THROUGH CORPORA***

Dr. L. Ramamoorthy

Center for South Asian Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA

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## ***Introduction***

Language learning / teaching is concerned with the development of communication skills. There have been many methods to teach language such as the grammar-translation method, direct method, audio lingual method, the oral approach and situational language teaching model. These methods were introduced at regular intervals according to the standard of the learners, and status, whether native, alien or as first or second language. Most of the methods aim to develop the language skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing.

There can be lot of activities on the development of these skills. For developing listening skill, the following items are to be given and the learner will be able to :

1. Recognize sounds, words, phrases, etc.
2. Get the general idea, remember salient points, predict what's coming next.
3. Understand the discourse type.
4. Get used to listening to different voices and different length of time.
5. Get the ability to screen out what is not necessary for the comprehension of the passage.
6. Deal with dialects and accents.
7. Interpret the message against the background.

For developing or for testing speaking skill the following items are to be given with them the learner will be able to

1. Make individual sound and combine them.
2. Produce correct pronunciation of the words, phrases, etc.
3. Use intonation.
4. Work with appropriate rhythm and pace.
5. Bring out ones own style of speech.
6. Interact with people appropriately, correcting the messages to be conveyed.
7. Describe, agree, argue, plead, etc.

For developing or for testing speaking skill the following items are to be given with them the learner will be able to

1. Know letters, words and phrases.
2. Recognize different formats such as headlines, styles, genres, etc.
3. Skim, scan, predict, guess and remember.
4. Relate what is read to the experience of the own.
5. Read and comprehend.
6. Read aloud.
7. Interpret what is said.

Those fundamental techniques are incorporated in the classroom through text books through teachers. Besides, there are two important innovations in the language teaching such as (1) Multimedia and (2) Corpora.

### ***Teaching through Multimedia***

Multimedia is a boon to language education. Multimedia can be defined as the computer-delivered combination of a range of communication elements-text, sound, graphics, pictures, photographs, animation and moving video. Each element has its own particular advantage in conveying particular kinds of messages and evoking particular kinds of learner responses. These multimedia components are effective in terms of helping the students to elicit, explain and communicate information because they can break down complex concepts into simple, meaningful display. Multimedia additionally provides further and more powerful dimensions to communication when the control and manipulation of this meaningful information is passed into the hands of the learner. The ability to interact with these communication elements via interactive multimedia allows language learners to explore, discover, ponder, search, question, answer and receive feedback.

### ***Values of Language Teaching***

The values of language teaching change to the tunes of the social changes. Education started as Gurukula system where Guru was everything to the students. They have to stay there and acquire education. Due to the advent of industrialization and modernization in the society the text books, print press etc., came in the scene of education. Hence the value of education became students centered and text book orientated. The teacher used to stand and teach the class where as students enjoy the class by sitting. Due to the invention of multimedia the role of teacher is sidelined. It aims to teach or learn language without teacher. However, a multimedia is not a replacement for teacher, but still it is advocated as teacher less learning facility. In the age of information and technology the education becomes edutainment with video, audio, animation etc.

### ***Role of Teacher in the Multimedia Classroom***

The role of the teacher in the multimedia classroom is entirely different from the normal classroom environment. Hence, the teacher has the important role to play in the conventional classroom atmosphere where he enters the class with some books and ready-made notes and conducts tests to assess the students. There is no self-evaluation method for the students. However, in this new mode, the teacher is only a facilitator or a coordinator and the teacher should have hands on experience on the computer, with improved instructional capabilities and a vehicle through which to apply the instructional technology skills acquired through training and professional development. The role of teachers and students apparently change.

### ***Teaching through Corpus***

Another important technique in teaching language is through Corpora. Corpus is the collection large data base on language which can be exploited for language teaching. Linguistic theory / description relied heavily on native speaker's intuition and introspection. They describe what people know about language and what they perceive language to be rather than how it is used. But using corpora, most reliable description about language can be obtained.

The corpora research can be addressed in to two perspectives :

1. How best corpora and corpus linguistic can aid language teaching and learning.
2. What language facts relevant to language teaching / learning can be derived from language corpora.

Scholars suggest (John McH. Sinclair, 2004) in studying corpora we observe as steam of creative energy that is awesome in its wider applicability, its subtlety and flexibility. When there is a demand of teaching of lexical and phrase structures a reliable information about these structures could not be retrieved by introspection. Here the need of corpora for teaching was recognized. The corpora are almost part of pedagogical landscape due to the availability of user friendly software and fast accommodating websites.

Scholars use data driven language teaching or learner as a researcher, while advocating the importance of corpora. The learner should be guided to discover facts if there own language that had previously gone unnoticed. In this paper an attempt has been made to illustrate the advantages of teaching / learning language using corpus.

When we use corpora for language teaching the values of language and teaching changes. The shift of emphasis from deductive to inductive learning routines through corpora has wide ranging effects on :

1. A teacher who becomes a coordinator.

2. The learner who learns how to learn through exercise that involves observation and interpretation patterns of use.
3. The role of pedagogical grammar whose levels of abstractions works against their effectiveness.

The corpora can be used to teach students to interpret instance of language production as a samples rather than examples : Identifying recurrence and inferring patterns which appears in someway typical of certain context. This involves developing a research attitude towards data rather than trusting unquestioningly the authority of the teacher.

There are also concepts such as learning as discovery and learner as traveler are put forth in the corpus environment, which is entirely different from the values of language teaching (Silvia Bernardini, 2004, pp 16).

Examining specific instance of language use give us insights into how language works. Corpus based studies have focused on four main types of description and analysis (Amy B.M. Tsui, 2004, pp 40).

1. Lexical collocation by examining the frequency and the content of occurrence of linguistic item.
2. Syntactic patterning based on co-occurrence of grammatical word-class tags.
3. Genre analysis based on the co-occurrence of group of linguistic items and processes.
4. Discourse structure and cohesion in spoken and written forms.

### ***Insights from Corpora***

Through corpus we can make students aware of the following facts :

- a. Some lexical items are largely synonyms but have different usages.
  1. Tall - concrete nouns High - Metaphorical and more abstract.
  2. Day-by-day - either neutral or positive
  3. Day-after-day - co-occur with lexical items which gives negative expressions.

In Tamil among the synonyms such as kuuru, sol, vilambu etc., we can identify the most frequently used linguistic item through corpora. It is identify the kuuru has high frequency of occurrence than others especially sol (Ganesan, 2008). Similarly the meaning correspondence and variations can be explained through the occurrence of the synonyms. For example akkarai, iidupaadu, kavanam have the following meanings.

- |          |   |  |
|----------|---|--|
| Akkarai  | - | Have, show, take, ask, full                  |
| Edupaadu | - | Have, show, develop, do, full                |
| Gavanam  | - | Distract, turn, divert, attract, bring, take |

- b. In Tamil teaching normally finite forms are introduced first then nonfinite forms such as relative participle, verbal participle are introduced later. But an analysis of corpus shows the frequency of occurrence are nonfinite form more than the finite forms.
- c. New type of usages such as kudi in manappalkudi, kizhi in kodukizhi etc., and their usages can be identified through corpus.
- d. In the lexical item karuppu there is always a confusion which 'r' to be used. It is identified through corpus that when karuppu refers black the trill 'r' is used and when it is used as adjective flap 'r' is used. Similar is the case with 'iyakkunar'. It is identified that flap is used 462 times and trill in 120 times (creA corpus).
- e. Similarly the meaning difference in homophonous forms and the frequency of occurrence of the forms can be identified using purpose.

### ***Uses of Corpora***

In general corpus can be used in language teaching to clarify the following points.

1. Seeking confirmation to their own intuition.
2. Checking variants suggested by reference work.
3. Checking which proposition are adjective go together with a term.
4. Checking different uses of certain term.
5. Looking for idiomatic expression.
6. Learning how to use a new expression.

### ***Learners Corpora***

Learners corpora is a systematic computerized collection of text produced by the learner. It is used to identify the difficult areas of language learning by comparing with the language produced by the native speakers. These are all the possibilities to teach / learn language through Corpora, which is still in the incipient stage in Tamil context.

### ***References***

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