Finding the Expressions EFL Learners Find Difficult: the Compilation and Use of "EasyConc_tagged.xlsm"

Why domestic corpora such as 'EasyConc.xlsm' & 'EasyConc_tagged.xlsm' are needed?

- What are the differences between the domestic corpora and usual corpora?
  - 'British National Corpus' is a huge collection of words which are expressed by fluent users of English.
  - 'EasyConc.xlsm' & 'EasyConc_tagged.xlsm' are corpora compiled with words which Japanese EFL learners wanted to say but couldn't in communication activities in English class.
  - 'EasyConc.xlsm' & 'EasyConc_tagged.xlsm' are tuned for the EFL learners of English in that the quality of English is simple and their daily lives are described in both corpora.
  - 'EasyConc.xlsm' & 'EasyConc_tagged.xlsm' are useful tools for language teachers to make worksheets for their daily English classes.

EasyConc_tagged.xlsm—Seven stages of Data Collection for Japanese-English Bilingual Corpus

- Stage 1
  - Implementing communication activities such as chats, story retelling in English Classes.
- Stage 2
  - After the activities, students are asked to write the expressions in Japanese that they wanted to use in English but couldn't during the activities.
- Stage 3
  - Each question in Japanese from Students is input into each cell on Excel spreadsheet.
- Stage 4
  - Each question in Japanese from students is translated into English by Japanese teachers and native English-speaking teachers.
- Stage 5
  - Data of Japanese questions and their English translations are incorporated into 'EasyConc_v.4.2.xlsm'.
- Stage 6
  - English translations of 'EasyConc_v.4.2.xlsm' are annotated by CLAWS7 and are incorporated into 'EasyConc_tagged_v.2.1.xlsm'.
- Stage 7
  - Some pieces of grammatical information as well as useful expressions for learners are retrieved by corpus tools in order to make worksheets for English classes.

Example of a communication activity in English class for the compilation of Japanese-English Bilingual Corpus

- Data Collection: Chat in pairs about weekends and holidays

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Stage 2 to 5
Compilation of 'EasyConc_v.4.2.xlsm': Each Japanese expression is matched with its English translation on an Excel spreadsheet then incorporated into a domestic corpus called 'EasyConc_v.4.2.xlsm'.

- Translation from Japanese expressions into English in association with a native speaker of English
- Translation from Japanese expressions into English in association with a native speaker of English

Stage 6
Compilation of 'EasyConc_tagged_v.2.1.xlsm': English sentences of 'EasyConc_v.4.2.xlsm' are tagged by CLAWS7, then Japanese expression with its tagged English translation are incorporated into a domestic software called 'EasyConc_tagged_v.2.1.xlsm'.

- English translation tagged by CLAWS7
- Last 10 examples out of 3,148 questions from junior & senior high school students

Stage 7
How to use 'EasyConc_tagged_v.2.1.xlsm': Information about UCREL CLAWS7 Tagset

- The patterns of 'to-infinitive' in UCREL CLAWS7 Tagset are as follows;
  - to_TO _VBI
  - to_TO _VDI
  - to_TO _VHI
  - to_TO _VV0
  - to_TO _VVI

- All of the patterns above are rewritten as 'to_TO _V*' using a wild card.
- It is time-consuming and laborious work to retrieve 'to-infinitive' from an untagged corpus such as EasyConc_v.4.2.xlsm.

Postmodification: difficult grammar items for Japanese learners of English to acquire

- Postmodification is one of the difficult grammar items for Japanese learners of English to acquire because of its different grammar system.
- Does your mother tongue have the grammar system like postmodification?
- In this presentation I would like to focus on 'to-infinitive' and 'relative clause' and 'contact clause' used as postmodification, which appear in the junior high school textbooks made on the basis of the teaching guideline called Course of Study directed by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

Stage 7
How to use 'EasyConc_tagged_v.2.1.xlsm': Retrieval of sentences including 'to-infinitive'

- After launching 'EasyConc_tagged_v.2.1.xlsm', double-click 'to_TO _V*' in line A, then the pattern appears in the box.

- Concordances of 'to-infinitive'
Corpus finding 1: The frequent patterns of 'something (or nothing) to-infinitive' retrieved from 'EasyConc_tagged_v.2.1.xlsm'

- **something (or nothing) +to-infinitive**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>something + to-infinitive</td>
<td>I didn't have enough money to buy a new CD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nothing + to-infinitive</td>
<td>I don't have time to finish the project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Partial extracts from the result

The input of 'something' or 'nothing' from *New Crown English Series Book 1, 2 and 3*, the authorized textbooks (henceforth, *NC1, 2 and 3*).

- Copies of *NC1, 2 and 3* are used by more than 850,000 junior high school students, 'to-infinitive' appears in *NC1 and 2*.
- Concordance of 'something' and 'nothing' from *NC1, 2, and 3*.
- Search Term is '(*something|nothing) to' in AntConc
- The pattern of 'nothing+to-infinitive' doesn't appear at all in *NC1, 2 and 3*.

Theoretical background

—Without input, output cannot be expected

- The relation between input and output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>input</th>
<th>intake</th>
<th>1.2 knowledge</th>
<th>output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.1: A computational model of 1.2 acquisition (Ellis, 1997:35)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>It is very important to know what expressions students could not express in English.</td>
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<td>How can we utilize these expressions in English teaching?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Stage 7

Pedagogical Implication 1: Ideas for creating teaching materials for English class—the input of necessary expressions through a game of ‘Bingo’

- While working on the exercises below, students are exposed to frequently asked expressions in communicative activities.
- Sentences in the exercise below are all from *EasyConc_tagged_v.2.1.xlsm*. 

A sample word order exercise:

Put the words in the brackets in the right order.

1. I didn't (buy / have / money / enough / to) the Beatles CD.
2. I (see / made / appointment / an / to) Ken at the central ticket gate of Machida station.
3. I have (kill / to / time / some).
4. I (nothing / had / do / to) today. I was free all day.
5. I (had / do / special / to / nothing), so I did my English homework from cram school.
Stage 7

How to use ‘EasyConc_tagged_v.2.1.xlsm’: Formulating the patterns of the postmodification by ‘relative clauses’ and ‘contact clauses’ from English sentences of ‘EasyConc_tagged_v.2.1.xlsm’

- Samples of English sentences tagged by CLAWS7 having ‘relative clauses’ and ‘contact clauses’ selected with manual operation are as follows;
  - 290_MC One_MC1 of_IO accessories_NN2 I_PPIS1 bought_VVD was_VBDZ 400_MC yen_NN._.
  - 587_MC I_PPIS1 could_VM n’t_XX buy_VVI a_AT1 book_NN1 I_PPIS1 wanted_VVD in_II the_AT bookstore_NNU.
- Parts of ‘relative clauses’ and ‘contact clauses’ can be rewritten to the following patterns using wild cards.
  - accessories_NN2 I_PPIS1 bought_VVD → *_NN2 *_PPIS1 *_VVD
  - book_NN1 I_PPIS1 wanted_VVD → *_NN1 *_PPIS1 *_VVD

Stage 7

How to use ‘EasyConc_tagged_v.2.1.xlsm’: Retrieval of the postmodification by ‘relative clauses’ and ‘contact clauses’

- After launching ‘EasyConc_tagged_v.2.0.xlsm’, double-click the ‘patterns of ‘relative clause’ and ‘contact clause’ in line A, then the pattern appears in the box.

Stage 7

How to use ‘EasyConc_tagged_v.2.1.xlsm’: The result of the postmodification by ‘relative clauses’ and ‘contact clauses’

- Concordances of ‘relative clauses’ and ‘contact clauses’

Partial extracts from the result

Stage 7

Pedagogical Implication 3: Ideas for creating teaching materials for English class—the input of necessary expressions through a game of ‘Bingo’ and identifying a person

Partial extracts from the result

The input of the postmodification of relative pronoun ‘that’ from New Crown English Series, the authorized textbooks

Concordance of ‘that’ from New Crown English Series Book 3

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Three steps of vocabulary acquisition

There are three important general processes that may lead to a word being remembered. These comprise noticing (through formal instruction, negotiation, the need to comprehend or produce, awareness of inefficiencies), retrieval, and creative (generative) use. These processes can be viewed as three steps with the later steps including the earlier steps. (Nation, 2001: 63)

Pedagogical Implication 4: Ideas for creating teaching materials from the viewpoint of “creative (generative) use”

A sample exercise

Create a story with more than 50 words by using words below.

music shop / CD I wanted / cost 2,500 yen

e.g. I am a fan of the Beatles. One of my favorite songs is 'Yesterday'. Last Saturday I went to the music shop near my house. I found the CD I wanted. It cost 25,000 yen. It was a little expensive but I got it. I went straight home and listened to it. I was very happy. (56 words)

'EasyCon_tagged_v.2.1.xlsm' as a useful freeware for teaching vocabulary

The positive effects of vocabulary teaching are that it can provide help when learners feel it is most needed. This is particularly true for vocabulary teaching that occurs in the context of message-focused activities involving listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and where the teaching deals with items that learners see as being very relevant for the activity. (Nation, 2008: 97)

Conclusion

It is important for teachers to know the expressions that learners want to use in English but can't through communication activities in your English classes.

Why don't you compile bilingual corpus for your students? It will be a useful resource for your teaching.

Bilingual corpus software such as 'EasyCon_tagged_v.2.1.xlsm' is easy to get from the Internet. Without that software, it would be impossible to retrieve necessary information from bilingual corpus.

Even though your mother tongue is different from Japanese, if you collect the expressions which your students find difficult to say or write and paste your data onto 'EasyCon_tagged_v.2.1.xlsm', then you can create your own 'EasyCon_tagged.xlsm'.

References


Lythcott, D. 等. 20100. 「英語スクリットベスト50－50 Skits for Learning English－」[スクリット]


Thank you for your attention.

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