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RECENT ISSUES IN CORPUS LINGUISTICS APPROACHES TO LINGUISTIC TERMINOLOGY RESEARCH

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Abstract

This article examines the role of corpus linguistics in the study of linguistic terminology, emphasizing its impact on both the development and understanding of linguistic terms. By analyzing real-life language data across various genres and communities, corpus linguistics offers a rich, empirical basis that challenges traditional linguistic theories and promotes a nuanced understanding of language complexity. The discussion includes insights from key scholars and explores how technological advancements and empirical methods have reshaped linguistic research. Challenges such as term standardization, corpus design, and the dynamic nature of language are also addressed, highlighting the continuous evolution of this field and its methodologies.

Keywords: corpus linguistics, linguistic terminology, empirical research, term standardization, corpus design, language complexity, linguistic theory.

By employing large text collections or corpora, this branch of linguistics provides a robust empirical foundation that bridges theoretical language concepts with practical, observable data. This article delves into the significant role of corpus linguistics in the study of linguistic terminology, exploring both its transformative impacts and the challenges it presents. Through the examination of real-life language usage within diverse linguistic contexts, corpus linguistics not only enhances our comprehension of language dynamics but also drives the evolution of linguistic terminology itself.



Corpus linguistics, as a dynamic branch of linguistic study, significantly enriches our understanding of language through the analysis of large text collections, or corpora. This methodological approach has revolutionized the study of linguistic terminology by providing empirical evidence from real-life language usage, thus grounding theoretical concepts in observable data. This article explores the current challenges and developments in the study of linguistic terminology within the context of corpus linguistics, drawing insights from various scholars and historical developments.

Corpus linguistics democratizes language study by using real-life language samples across different genres and communities, offering a comprehensive view of language in use. According to Gries (2009), this broad perspective is essential in observing how specific terms are employed across diverse linguistic contexts. This empirical basis challenges traditional theories, enriching our understanding of language's complexity. For example, the analysis of polysemous words, tracking terminological evolution, and identifying emerging terms are critical contributions of corpus linguistics.

The historical backdrop of linguistic terminology evolves alongside linguistic thought and methodologies. Assunção and Araújo (2019) trace this evolution, noting that early linguistic studies heavily relied on qualitative analyses, shaped by prevalent theoretical frameworks like structuralism and generative grammar. However, the mid-20th century advent of corpus linguistics introduced a paradigm shift towards more empirical, data-driven approaches due to advances in computing technology. This shift brought forth new concepts like "collocation" and "frequency distribution," central to corpus-based research, thereby expanding linguistic terminology.

Furthermore, corpus linguistics revises and refines existing linguistic concepts by highlighting language's variability across different contexts. This dynamism, showcased in corpus studies, prompts the ongoing development of nuanced linguistic terminology that reflects the fluid nature of language use. For instance, studies of



historical corpora enable linguists to understand how the meanings and applications of terms have evolved, highlighting the dynamic nature of linguistic discourse.

Despite its numerous contributions, the application of corpus linguistics to linguistic terminology faces significant challenges, particularly in defining and standardizing terms. As Renouf (1993) points out, the inherent variability and continual evolution of language complicate these efforts. Terms like "noun phrase" exhibit structural variations across text types, challenging the creation of a universally applicable, precise definition. Moreover, the diversity of corpus data, including texts from various domains with specialized vocabularies, leads to divergent interpretations of terms, complicating the standardization process.

This tension between corpus linguistics' descriptive nature and the prescriptive implications of term standardization necessitates a balance. Linguists must navigate between capturing language's richness and establishing clear frameworks for effective communication and cumulative research. This involves a continuous process of refinement, where definitions and standards are evaluated and revised based on new corpus evidence.

Additionally, the design and representativeness of corpora pose their own challenges, as Meyer (2023) discusses in "English Corpus Linguistics." Effective corpus design must balance language use across various dimensions—genre, register, time, and demographics—to ensure it represents the linguistic phenomena under study. The constant evolution of language requires that corpora remain relevant and adaptable to new linguistic trends.

The quantitative analysis inherent in corpus linguistics also presents challenges. According to Stubbs and Halbe (2012), this involves systematic statistical examinations of data to identify linguistic patterns. However, issues like data reliability, the selection of appropriate statistical methods, and the interpretation of results require careful consideration.

The potential of corpus linguistics in advancing our understanding of linguistic terminology is further illustrated by case studies. Szudarski (2017) demonstrates how



corpus-based approaches can reveal contextual variations in term usage, track changes in meaning, and identify emerging terminologies in specific fields. These studies not only highlight the applicability of corpus linguistics but also underscore the methodological considerations involved in such research.

Looking ahead, McEnery and Hardie (2011) identify emerging trends in corpus linguistics that could address these challenges. Developments in NLP tools and AI integration promise to enhance linguistic research's depth and accuracy. Moreover, the expansion of multimodal corpora to include audio, video, and interactive media will broaden the scope of corpus linguistics, allowing for a more comprehensive exploration of how terms are used across different communication modes.

In conclusion, corpus linguistics stands as a cornerstone of linguistic research, providing unprecedented insights into the use and evolution of linguistic terminology. While it offers extensive capabilities for analyzing and understanding language, it also confronts researchers with challenges such as term standardization, corpus representativeness, and the evolving nature of language. Future advancements in NLP and AI are anticipated to further refine corpus analytical techniques, promising even deeper insights into linguistic patterns. As such, corpus linguistics remains a dynamic field, continually adapting to accommodate the fluidity of language and the complexities of human communication, thereby shaping the future of linguistic studies.

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Методика преподавания иностранных языков и РКИ: традиции и инновации: сборник научных трудов VIII Международной научно-методической онлайн-конференции, посвященной Году педагога и наставника в России и Году русского языка в странах СНГ (11 апреля 2023 г.)–Курск: Изд-во КГМУ, 2023.–521 с. (р. 47).

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