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Using Corpus-Linguistics Findings in the Classroom: A Rationale With Practical Applications

ESL instructors, curriculum designers, and materials writers must make decisions about which linguistic features to teach and the sequence in which to present them. Historically, ESL professionals have had to rely on intuitions about language use and frequency to guide them in making these decisions. Recently, however, corpus-linguistics studies have provided information about the language actually used by speakers and writers in natural situations, including the relative frequencies of features and words. Because more frequent grammatical structures and words will be more useful to students both receptively and in production, this information has great potential for advancing ESL instruction. This article emphasizes the importance of frequency information for the teaching of ESL and offers suggestions for change. In addition, it provides practical applications for teaching certain features and words that corpus linguistics has shown to be quite frequent; their frequency, however, is not yet commonly reflected in materials and practice.

ESL instructors, curriculum designers, and materials writers must make decisions about which linguistic features to teach and the sequence in which to present them. Historically, we have had to rely on our intuitions about language use and frequency to guide us in making these decisions. Now, however, with the development of corpus linguistics, we can use empirical research as a basis for making these decisions, replacing intuition, which is often inaccurate.

Corpus linguistics is a method to investigate how speakers and writers actually use language in natural situations. Corpus linguists assemble large, carefully chosen collections (corpora) of spoken and written texts on computers. Then, using computer-assisted techniques, they analyze the corpora to discover patterns of language use, including the relative frequencies of features and words. The frequency information from corpus studies is especially valuable for ESL teaching because more frequent grammatical structures and words will be more useful to our students, both receptively and in production. Therefore, it makes sense to present these features early in the sequence of instruction.

However, we have found that the frequency of these particular features is not usually reflected—in either the order in which they are covered or the amount of attention they receive—in ESL teaching materials. Therefore, in this article we begin each section with a recommendation for a change in current materials and practice. We then focus on research findings related to the frequency of certain structures or words. Most of these data come from the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (LGSWE) (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan, 1999), which is based on the Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus. Within this corpus are four different language categories, or registers: conversation, fiction, news, and academic prose.

Each section of this article includes information about current materials and practice (based on informal surveys of popular teaching materials, especially grammar series), followed by a rationale for the recommended change. Finally, for each feature we provide practical suggestions for carrying out our recommendations in the classroom.

I. Introduce Question Tags to ESL Learners at an Early Stage of Instruction

Question tags (e.g., She's so sweet, *isn't she?*) are one of the three main types of questions. The two other types are full independent clauses (e.g., *Do you want to come with me?* and *Where's my phone?*) and fragments (e.g., *What?*).

Frequency Findings From Corpus Research. Questions of all types are much more frequent in conversation than they are in news or academic prose—about 45 times more frequent. In fact, a large part of everyday conversation consists of questions. According to the LGSWE, in conversation there is on average at least one question per every 40 words. Only about one-half of all questions in conversation are full independent clauses; the other half consist of fragments and tags. One in every four questions is a question tag, a statistic that many find surprising (Biber et al., 1999, p. 211).

Current Materials and Practice; Rationale for Change. Despite their high frequency in everyday conversation, question tags are usually not introduced in ESL textbooks until the mid- or high-intermediate level or even later. This is probably due to the structural complexity of question tags. However, because they are so common, it is advisable for students to start on them at lower levels.

Teaching Suggestions. It is possible to introduce tags in low-level classes if we reduce the number of choices that students have to make to form them. Question tags in sentences with the verb *be* are the simplest since no auxiliary is necessary. The following activities give students the opportunity to practice basic question-tag forms without having to learn all of the details of the grammar rules. In Activity IA, the tags are all negative and students need only to choose the correct form of *be* in the simple present and the correct pronoun. Then in Activity IB, they just need to use *do you?* or *don't you?* In both activities, they are using tags to ask for confirmation of information that they are fairly certain about. (At this level, it is not necessary to discuss contrasts in intonation and meaning, that is, question tags for checking information versus those asking for confirmation.) Note that since question tags are essentially

never used in written form except in fiction, it is appropriate to introduce and practice them orally. It is unnecessary for students to master the written form.

Activity IA. An Activity for Question Tags With the Verb Be

First, ask the students to look around the room at their classmates. Then have them write down information that they think they know about the classmates in simple present statements with the verb *be*. Examples:

Yukiko is from Japan.	*Alex is from Ukraine.*
Maria and Jesus are from Mexico.	*Leticia is married.*
Sam is a mechanic.	*Sonia is a nurse.*

Next, put the students into pairs to talk about their classmates. Their task is to use question tags to check the information they have. Examples:

Yukiko is from Japan, isn't she?	*Alex is from Ukraine, isn't he?*
Maria and Jesus are from Mexico, aren't they?	*Leticia is married, isn't she?*
Sam is a mechanic, isn't he?	*You're a nurse, aren't you?*

Activity IB: An Activity for Question Tags About Likes and Dislikes

This activity offers practice with question tags for talking about likes/dislikes. In this activity, the only tags students will need to use are *don't you?* and *do you?* Give them these directions, pictures, and examples:

Directions: How much do you know about your partner? Look at the pictures below. Decide which foods your partner likes or doesn't like. Check with your partner to see if you are correct by using question tags.

Examples: A: *You like ice cream, don't you?*   B: *Yes, I do.*
A: *You don't like fish, do you?*   B: *No, I don't.* OR *Yes, I do (like fish).*

Once students have learned these responses, you might teach them to respond to negative questions, for example, *You don't like fish, do you?* with a response such as *Actually, I do (like fish)*, stressing the word *do*.

The same activity can be used for students to check on activities their partners like or do not like. You can use pictures if you have them or just list the activities on the board as in this example:

running	*playing tennis*	*hiking*	*swimming*	*fishing*
skiing	*sunbathing*	*playing soccer*	*playing basketball*	
sewing	*walking*	*reading*	*listening to music*	*dancing*

Then, as students learn new verbs and tenses, continue to explain and encourage practice using question tags.

II. Include Noun + Noun Sequences (Nouns as Premodifiers of Other Nouns) Beginning at Low Levels

A noun phrase is made up of a head noun, any determiner(s) it might have, and, optionally, any premodifiers and/or postmodifiers. There are four types of premodifiers of nouns: general adjectives (e.g., *little* children), *-ing* participial adjectives (e.g., *interesting* programs), *–ed* participial adjectives (e.g., *satisfied* custome*rs*), and nouns (e.g., *car* accident).

Frequency Findings From Corpus Research. Noun phrases are less complex in conversation than they are in news and academic prose. In conversation fewer than 15% of noun phrases have any modifiers; in contrast, in academic prose almost 60% of noun phrases have modifiers (Biber et al., 1999, pp. 578-579). Of the types of premodifiers of nouns across all registers, general adjectives are most frequent. However, nouns are also very commonly used as premodifiers. In fact, nouns account for almost 40% of all premodifiers in news and about 30% of all premodifiers in academic prose. Participial premodifiers (that is, *-ing* and *–ed* adjectives) are relatively uncommon (Biber et al., 1999, p. 589).

Current Materials and Practice; Rationale for Change. Even though participial adjectives are relatively uncommon, many grammar series cover their use as premodifiers at an intermediate level. However, most series do not include the topic of nouns as nominal premodifiers until a higher level, if at all, even though they are relatively quite frequent.[1] One reason for this might be that materials writers and teachers believe that noun + noun sequences are fairly simple structures that do not need much explicit instruction or explanation. But in fact these sequences can be quite complex because they have the possibility of carrying a wide variety of logical relationships, the meaning of which may not be obvious to our students. The following are a few of the many different categories.

Composition (N2 is made from N1): *paper cup*
Source (N2 comes from N1): *spring water*
Purpose (N2 is for the purpose of N1): *leg warmer, candle holder*
Partitive (N2 is a part of N1): *team member, rabbit ears*
Time (N2 occurs during the time of N1): *summer vacation*
Objective (N1 is the object of the process described in N2): *waste disposal,* or
    (N2 is the object of the process described in N1): *pilot project* (Biber et al., 1999, pp. 590-591)

Having a clear understanding of the various meaning relationships is important for our students, especially those who will need to read and write academic prose.

Teaching Suggestions. Corpus research has found that there are four nouns, *government, police, home,* and *world,* that are extremely productive— they combine with more than 100 different head nouns—and that are also extremely frequent in their use as noun premodifiers. There are 12 additional nouns (*business, car, city, council, family, health, labor, market, party, record, security,* and *TV*) that are very productive and relatively frequent (Biber et al.,

1999, pp. 592-594). These groups of nouns are a good starting point for introducing the topic of nouns as noun premodifiers. They can be presented early on, and instructors should focus on helping students understand the meaning relationships between them.

Activity IIA. Noun + Noun Sequences

Read the first sentence. Then use two nouns from the first sentence to complete the second sentence with a noun + noun combination.

1. Jane works in a building that is owned by the government. She works in a *government building* .
2. Jeffrey is the manager of the business. He's the _____ _____.
3. I watched an interesting program on TV last night about World War II. I watched a _____ _____ about the war.
4. Greta listens to the radio to find out about events that are happening in the world. She wants to hear about _____ _____.
5. Obesity is a serious problem that affects the health of many Americans. Obesity is a _____ _____ for many Americans.

Activity IIB. Noun + Noun Sequences

Use the nouns in the boxes to complete the sentences with noun + noun sequences. Choose the first noun from the Noun 1 box and choose the second noun from the Noun 2 box. You may use the nouns more than once.

Noun 1

family   health   home   business   police

Noun 2

food   officer   business   owner   care   card   loan   car   vacation

1. A card with information about how to contact a person at his or her workplace is a *business   card* .
2. The money that the bank lends you to buy a house is called a _____ _____.
3. A business that is owned by a family is a _____ _____.
4. Mr. and Mrs. Hernandez and their children went on a _____ _____ last summer. They went to Hawaii and relaxed on the beach.
5. Someone broke into our neighbors' house and stole their computer. When they called 9-1-1, a _____ _____ came to investigate.
6. _____ _____ is very expensive in this county. It often costs more than $100 to visit the doctor for only a few minutes.

Activity IIC. The Meaning of Noun + Noun Sequences
Work with a partner. Read the sentences. Then explain the meaning of the **boldfaced** noun + noun combinations. There may be more than one correct way to explain the meaning.

1. There are many **government buildings** in downtown Sacramento, California.
    Buildings where government employees work. OR *Buildings owned by the government.*
2. Vladimir and Natalya went to the bank to take out a **home loan** so that they would have money to buy the house.
    _____
3. Anna's mother made a delicious **chocolate cake** for dessert.
    _____
4. Andrea and Iain are **world travelers**. They have visited many countries in Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas.
    _____
5. Skiing is Herman's favorite **winter sport.**
    _____
6. Always remember to lock the **car doors** when you park in the city.
    _____

Activity IID. Meanings of Noun + Noun Sequences
Noun premodifiers can have many different meaning relationships with the nouns they modify. Here are some examples:

Purpose: The second noun is for the purpose of (is used for) the first noun.
    Example: *pencil sharpener* = a tool that sharpens pencils
Composition: The second noun is made from the first noun.
    Example: *leather shoes* = shoes made from leather
Source: The second noun is from the first noun.
    Example: *spring water* = fresh water that comes from a spring in the mountains
Content: The second noun is about the first noun.
    Example: *history books* = books about history

Look at the **boldfaced** noun + noun sequences in the sentences below. Decide what the meaning relationship is between the two nouns. Then write *purpose, composition, source,* or *content,* and describe the meaning relationship.

1. We ate some **fruit salad** after lunch. *composition—a salad made of fruit*
2. I read a **newspaper article** about the election. _____
3. The students wrote **book reports** in their reading class. _____
4. The children have to wear a blue **school uniform** for elementary school.
    _____
5. Please put the **coffee cups** on the table. _____
6. The salad looks very pretty in that **glass bowl**. _____

III. Introduce the Most Common Lexical Verbs Early and Give Them More Attention Than Less Common Verbs

Lexical verbs are "full" or main verbs. (In addition to lexical verbs, there are two other verb classes: the primary verbs *be, have,* and *do,* which can function as auxiliaries or as main verbs, and modal verbs, e.g., *can* and *will,* which can function only as auxiliaries.)

Frequency Findings From Corpus Research. The 12 most common lexical verbs are *say, get, go, know, think, see, make, come, take, want, give,* and *mean.* (The verbs *be, have,* and *do* are also common in their role as main verbs, expressing a variety of meanings.) These lexical verbs occur much more frequently in conversation than in the other registers—in fact, these 12 verbs together account for almost 45% of all lexical verbs in conversation (Biber et al., 1999, p. 373). Clearly, these common verbs will be very useful for students who are in the early stages of learning English (Biber & Reppen, 2002).

Current Materials and Practice; Rationale for Change. Surveys of English-language teaching materials show that most of these 12 verbs are not introduced at low levels and that they are not covered as thoroughly as they should be based on their frequency. Looking at the verbs, one can see why there has been a tendency to avoid or postpone presenting them. To begin with, except for the verb *want,* they are all irregular. The verb *get* is the single most common verb in conversation, which may be attributed to the fact that it has many different meanings and uses, so it is not simple to deal with. *Say* is the most common verb overall, and it is quite common in conversation, largely because of its use by speakers to report the speech of others. Reported speech can be quite complex grammatically. The verbs *know* and *think* are usually followed by noun complement clauses, for example, *I didn't know what she meant* or *I think he wants another hamburger,* and these are also considered to be complex kinds of sentences. Despite their complexities, we need to, and can, find ways to present all of these common verbs and structures at low levels. Now that we know how frequent and useful they are, we realize that avoiding or postponing them is probably not the best way to deal with them.

Teaching Suggestions. The suggestions given in this section are for the verb s*ay.* Suggestions for *make, know,* and *think* are in Sections IV and V.

Reported speech can be introduced to students at lower levels by beginning with situations in which it is not necessary to "backshift" tenses. These situations include when the original speech is about a general truth; is about something that is still true, for example, a preference or a habit; or is about the future. Another situation is when the time of reporting is soon after the time of the original speech, for example, in the classroom, just after students have gotten information from a partner in a pair-work activity. To elicit reported speech, simply adapt the direction line and example in your textbook, as shown in Activities IIIA and IIIB. Then, as students learn new tenses, continue to explain and encourage them to use reported speech with backshifts.

IIIA. Example Activity for Reported Speech

In this activity, Part C of this simulated textbook page has been adapted.

CONVERSATION: Talking about your lives now

A. Match each question to its answer.

Questions	*Answers*
1. Why do you like English class?	a. I play soccer or tennis.
2. Do you go shopping on weekends?	b. Because I learn a lot.
3. How often do you go out to dinner?	c. My parents and my brothers.
4. Where do you go in the summer?	d. By car.
5. What time do you get up in the morning?	e. At 6:30.
6. Who do you live with?	f. After dinner.
7. How do you get to school?	g. To Mexico to visit my cousins.
8. What do you do on Saturdays?	h. Yes, I usually do.
9. When do you study?	i. Once a week.

B. Now work with a partner. Take turns asking and answering the questions in A. Give answers that are true for you.

C. ~~Tell the class about you and your partner.~~
Examples:
"~~Elena studies after class.~~ I usually study late at night."
"I help my sister with her children on Saturdays. ~~Elena works at a store.~~"

This is our suggestion for adaptation:

C. Tell the class about you and about what your partner said.
Examples:
"Elena said she studies after class. I usually study late at night."
"I help my sister with her children on Saturdays. Elena said she works at a store."

IIIB. Example Activity for Reported Speech
    In this activity, Part B of this simulated textbook page has been adapted.

WHAT DID YOU DO LAST WEEKEND?

A. Getting Ready: Read the list of questions about last weekend and choose
    eight of them to ask your partner. Check (✓) the questions you want to ask.
B. In Pairs: Taking turns with your partner, ask and answer the questions you
    chose.

__ Did you play any sports last weekend?   __ Did you send any e-mails?
__ Did you work out at the gym?   __ Did you clean your bedroom?
__ Did you watch any TV programs?   __ Did you spend time on the Internet?
__ Did you go to the mall?   __ Did you do any cooking?
__ Did you download any new songs?   __ Did you go to any parties?
__ Did you call any friends?   __ Did you go to the library?
__ Did you have a picnic?   __ Did you do any homework?

For example:

> Did you watch any TV programs last weekend?

Magda

> Yes. I watched "The Challenge of Champions." It was good.

Diego

~~C. As a Class: Tell the class what your partner did last weekend.~~

> ~~Diego watched "The Challenge of Champions" on TV. It was good.~~

Magda

This is our suggestion for adaptation:

C. As a Class: Report to the class what your partner said about last weekend.

> Diego said he watched "The Challenge of Champions"
> on TV. He said it was good.

Magda

IV. Emphasize Collocations at Every Level of Instruction

The term "collocation" has to do with which words go most frequently with other words. That is, collocations are patterns or common associations between words in which the words tend to occur together more frequently than they would be expected to by chance.[2] Collocations come in a variety of types. For example:

noun + verb (*a question arose*)	verb + noun (*make a mistake*)	adjective + noun (*a distinguished career*)
noun + noun (*horse race*)	verb + adverb (*quarrel bitterly*)	adjective + preposition (*good at*)
noun + preposition (*a recipe for*)	verb + preposition (*think about*)	adverb + adjective (*severely limited*)

Findings From Corpus Research. Corpus research provides us with insight into the collocational patterns that distinguish one word from another. For example, the adjectives *little* and *small* are usually considered to be synonyms. However, the set of nouns that typically follows each of these adjectives is quite different: In conversation, *little* tends to collocate with *baby, bit, devil, thing,* and *while*, yet *small* tends to collocate with *amount, part, piece, print,* and *world* (Biber et al., 1999, pp. 988-989).

Current Materials and Practice; Rationale for Change. A few types of collocation such as verb + preposition combinations, for example *hear about*, and adjective + preposition combinations, for example *good at*, seem to be fairly well represented in textbooks. However, most other types of collocations are rarely given sufficient or appropriate emphasis in ESL teaching materials. Learning which words collocate with other words is a significant part of learning a language. If our students are to achieve nativelike fluency in English, they must have extensive collocational knowledge.

Teaching Suggestions. Whenever possible, take opportunities to raise awareness and encourage noticing of collocations. Avoid activities that allow students to put words together in improbable or inventive combinations; focus instead on activities that reinforce the common patterns of natural language. When students learn new words, they should also learn their "partner" words, or words that frequently combine with them. For example, when students learn an adjective, they can also learn how to modify it with amplifiers, that is, degree adverbs such as *very, really, absolutely*, and *totally*. Amplifiers are not interchangeable—certain ones collocate more or less strongly with certain adjectives and not at all with others; for example, *very short* is probable, but *severely short* is not; likewise, *highly interesting* is probable, but *highly amazing* is not (Kennedy, 2003). Once students have been introduced to a collocation, try to give them repeated exposure to it.

Activities IVA and IVB are suggestions for introducing the concept of collocation and practicing collocations. Activity IVB, a *Jeopardy*-type game for practicing expressions with *make, take*, and *have*, is an enjoyable way for students to get repeated exposure to collocations they have been introduced to; an added benefit is that they get practice in forming questions.

Activity IVA. A Way to Introduce the Concept of Collocation

Choose some words that are synonyms (e.g., *small* and *little*) or words that may be confusing to students (e.g., *brush, clean*, and *wash*). Write those

words on the board and then elicit expressions with them. Write the expressions under the words as your students come up with them, for example:

brush	**clean**	**wash**
brush your hair	*clean your room*	*wash your hands*
brush your teeth	*clean the floor*	*wash your face*
	clean the bathroom	*wash the dishes*

Add expressions and assist the students as necessary. After you have created lists of expressions, encourage students to use these expressions in class activities and/or in assignments. There are many other word pairs or groups you may want to use for this activity, including *little* and *small*; *large* and *big*; *high* and *tall*; *low, short,* and *deep*; *watch, see,* and *look at*; and *look, seem*, and *appear*.

Activity IVB. An Activity for Practicing Collocations (*Collocation Quiz Game*)

Directions: Play this game with expressions that you have already introduced. Students can play in groups of three, with one judge (or game-show host) and two competitors, or in groups of five, with one judge and two teams of two players. Beforehand, prepare piles of cards on some main topics, as shown in the example game below. (Expressions with *make, take,* and *have* are used in the example, but you can create your own game with any expressions you have taught and would like your students to practice.) In this game, only the judge sees the answers. The judge turns over the question cards one at a time so that both players or teams can see them. Players can either take turns answering or they can hit the desk or a bell (*Jeopardy*-style) to determine who will answer the question. Students can keep the cards they answer correctly and at the end the team or player with the most cards wins, or points can be assigned to each card and the judge can keep score.

Alternatives: You can make this game easier by having students play Charades with the expressions instead. You can make it more difficult by adding more topics, mixing the expressions (e.g., expressions with *take* or *make* in one topic), or playing it as a Pyramid-type game instead (that is, one in which students play in pairs, with one partner explaining the meaning without saying the expression while the other one tries to guess the correct expression).

Example Collocation Quiz Game With Three Topics: Expressions with *make*, expressions with *take*, and expressions with *have*.

Sample topic card:

> **Expressions
> with
> *make***

Sample question card:

> to earn
> a salary
> at work

Answer (on answer key): *What is "to make money"?*

Possible expressions and answers:

Information for question cards		*Expressions for answer key*
make	to earn a salary	to make money
	to pull the sheets and blanket up neatly	to make the bed
	to choose between two or more possibilities	to make a decision
	to telephone someone	to make a call
	to decide on a time and place to get together with friends or family	to make plans
	to try to do something	to make an effort
take	to stop working for a while	to take a break
	to wash oneself with water sprayed from overhead	to take a shower
	to spend a lot of hours or minutes	to take (a long) time
	to bring air into your lungs in order to relax	to take a (deep) breath
	to write down information for somebody else when a person calls her or him	to take a message
	to sleep during the day	to take a nap
have	to satisfy your thirst	to have a drink
	to eat a meal in the evening	to have dinner
	to think of a possibility	to have an idea
	to discuss something with someone	to have a talk
	to give birth to an infant	to have a baby
	to get very angry	to have a fit

V. Introduce and Practice Lexical Bundles at Low Levels

"Lexical bundles" is the term that the LGSWE uses for sequences of three, four, or five words that have a statistical tendency to occur together and that recur frequently. Lexical bundles can be thought of as extended collocations.

Findings From Corpus Research. In conversation, a large number of lexical bundles follow this structural pattern:

> pronoun subject + verb phrase + the start of a complement clause
> (*I don't know why …, I thought it was…, I want to [do/get/go/see/be/know] …*)

The following are typical sentences with these types of bundles:

> *I don't know why* she's mad at Lisa.   *I don't know why* Colin came.
> *I thought it was* really interesting.   *I thought it was* a Monday.
> *I want to go* home.   *I want to see* what happens
>   (Biber et al., 1999, Chapter 13)

You can see that the verbs in conversational bundles are among those most common lexical verbs listed in Section III. In the bundles, the verbs mark personal stance, that is, they report things such as personal feelings, beliefs, opinions, or desires (Biber et al., 1999, p. 1003). They are very useful chunks of

language that we use in a formulaic way in conversation to express our thoughts or to ask others about their thoughts.

Current Materials and Practice; Rationale for Change. These types of sentences are almost never introduced at low levels because they are considered to be relatively complex. Because they are so frequent and useful, especially in conversation and academic discussions, these complementation patterns need to be introduced early and then receive continued attention through subsequent stages of instruction.

Teaching Suggestions. Lexical bundles with pronoun subject + verb phrase + start of a complement clause are very common in conversation. Teachers can introduce them early by presenting them as a "chunk" + a simple statement, for example, *I don't know why* + *he's angry* and *I don't think* + *she's at home.*

Activity VA. Lexical Bundles With Think and Know

Begin by showing ambiguous pictures to the students. Ask them *wh-* or *yes/no* questions with *do you think.* Encourage students to speculate and discuss using *I think …/I don't think …/I don't know …*, for example, Student A: *I think it's a bird.* Student B: *I don't think it's a bird.* (OR *I don't think so.*) *I think it's a butterfly.* Student C: *I don't know what it is!*
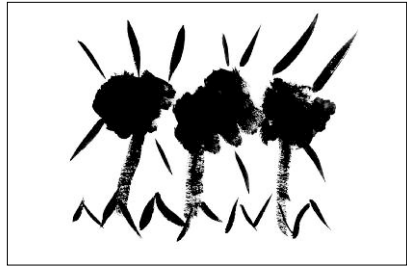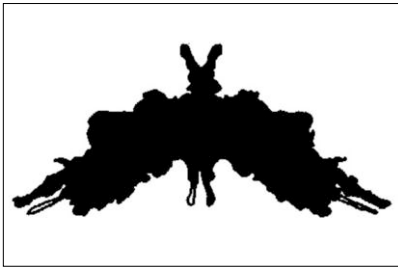
Activity VB. Lexical Bundles With Think and Know

Have students look at photos of ordinary (that is, not famous) people and speculate about things such as their ages, jobs, feelings, personalities, where they live, and so forth, using *I think …/I don't think …/I don't know …*, for example, *I don't think she's a teacher. I think she's a nurse.*

Conclusion

In spite of the usefulness to students of learning frequent language forms and features, it has proven to be a challenge to bring these structures into the ESL classroom because there is a disconnect between their actual frequency and their treatment in English-language learning materials. In some cases, for example, noun + noun combinations and collocation, the features are not given sufficient attention because their frequency and importance are not recognized. In other cases, for example, question tags and lexical bundles with verb + noun clause, the language forms continue to be taught very late in the language-learning cycle because they are considered to be too complex for beginning or intermediate students. However, as our suggestions show, there are ways to bring the benefits of corpus research to students, even at beginning levels. Teachers can use our suggested activities as they are or, better still, use them as a framework or inspiration for developing their own activities—ones uniquely suited to the needs and interests of their students.

Authors

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Endnotes

[1] An exception is the grammar series by Betty Schrampfer Azar, published by Pearson Education, in which nouns as premodifiers are included in *Basic English Grammar*, a book for beginning students.

[2] The LGSWE distinguishes collocations from idioms. Idioms are "relatively invariable expressions with meanings that cannot be predicted from the meanings of the parts." One type of idiom is certain fixed expressions such as *kick the bucket*. This type of idiomatic phrase is not common (Biber et al., pp. 988, 1024-1026).

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Appendix
Sources for More Information or Activities

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