In-depth Data-driven Learning: At Least Eight Reasons to Rejoice!

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The present special issue of the *Nordic Journal of English Studies* was intended to provide a forum for promoting and evaluating the use of corpora and other digital tools in the classroom. The editors wanted to focus on current methodology and research and how DDL can be exploited effectively in teaching, taking into account a range of perspectives and digital tools. My main commentary to the editors is: mission accomplished, as I found (at least) eight reasons to rejoice when reading the articles! I might be accused of being subject to confirmation biases in that I processed the information by looking for or interpreting information that is consistent with my beliefs, interests or values (which I recognize entirely) but let's instead say that it helped me realize that numerous other colleagues also shared those views. In addition, being asked to write the commentary to this issue has even provided me with more opportunities to convince additional people to join the bandwagon (I deny any additional confirmation bias here).

In the seven papers of this special issue **pedagogy is at the core** and that is the very first reason to rejoice. Each of the seven papers included contains at least one additional reason to rejoice.

Anne O'Keeffe provides a **strong theoretical rationale for the importance of patterning in language acquisition** and she discusses the implications for data-driven learning. Taking a Usage-Based perspective she stresses the processes at play in (first and second) language acquisition focussing on the importance of repeated exposure to form-meaning pairings/mappings. Anne argues that DDL offers a principled means of curating data from corpora to aid L2 learning. And the curation phase is central as it constitutes, in my view, one of the keys to ensuring pedagogical alignment. The call for more attention to teacher mediation in the **curation of DDL materials** to adapt them to various developmental

stages of the learners is certainly a call that should continue to resonate forcefully in the future.

Teacher-mediation is also the leading thread of Daniel Ihrmark's contribution. Daniel suggests a shift in focus from the oft-quoted learner-centeredness of DDL to a real teacher-mediated type of DDL, and gives us a good example of the need for and benefits of a **teaching-researching dialogic relationship**. The specific focus is on corrective feedback, language learning models and suggested routines of practice.

Rachel Allan also addresses the **research-practice gap** in the use of corpora in the classroom by discussing what we can learn from research into **DDL with younger learners**. Rachel describes a pilot project introducing DDL to a group of secondary school student teachers of English at a Swedish university, and their responses to it regarding the feasibility of including it in their future teaching practice. The integration of a range of classroom-focused DDL activities throughout the course, the need for pre-prepared resources and **novel approaches to DDL** more likely to appeal to younger learners are illustrated and discussed.

Erik Smitterberg's contribution shows us how DDL is an ideal entry point to training students' **higher order thinking skills**. His work also pays tribute to the importance of defining the **intended learning outcomes** of DDL activities (in the present case, the activities are carried out in the framework of a historical linguistics course). Erik also suggest ways in which students with little previous experience of corpus-based research can be introduced to the use of very large corpora relatively quickly with the aid of, among other things, exercises and pre-recorded lectures.

Higher order thinking skills are also present in Mats Deutschmann and Anders Steinvall's work: the development of sociolinguistic language awareness in particular. Their study describes a DDL learning scenario aimed **at raising sociolinguistic awareness of matters related to gender, language and stereotyping**. Inspired by the matched-guise technique (MGT) experimental method, differences in respondents' response patterns to two gender-manipulated versions (male-female vs female-male dyads) of the same recorded dialogue are used as a starting point for awareness-raising activities aimed at highlighting how gender stereotypes may affect perceptions of a dialogue. Their work represents a clear example of how working on the content of corpora is possible, something that has not received enough attention to date. Two notes to readers: 1. we

also find some teacher curation at play here and 2. there is scope for thousands of teaching scenarios if you start working on contents on top of form meaning-mappings!

The last two articles of the special issue go beyond a limited lexical or grammatical focus on form-meaning mappings. Tatyana Karpenko-Seccombe's contribution offers practical suggestions for using **corpus consultations to teach discourse features**, a challenging aspect of academic writing (e.g., supporting claims, framing them in the context of previous research, or introducing research gaps). **Students' needs and available time and resources** are features that are **taken into account to present flexible activities** that can be used in a top-down or bottom-up way, as 'hands-on' practice or as 'paper' tasks.

Finally, Ida Margrethe Rask Krogh and Ruben Moi demonstrate how **digital tools can be used to teach disciplinary contents**, in this case, English literature. Ida and Ruben examine how digital storytelling (DST) can be used to teach literature in upper secondary classrooms. They use Mark Haddon's 2004 complex and multimodal novel, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, as an example. Besides training higher-order thinking skills, DST also promotes some so-called soft skills, such as empathy. The rich relationships between literature, text, modality, digital tools and didactics are discussed throughout the article.

All in all, the articles included in this special issue are excellent examples of what I would label in-depth data-driven learning. They offer sound illustrations of why a practice-research dialogue matters, why pedagogy should be at the core of DDL, and why considering the needs and agency of the key stakeholders of DDL, viz. learners and teachers, are essential. Congratulations to the editors and authors of this volume!