High School Teachers’ Needs for DDL Materials: Appropriate Amount of Concordance Input*

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This is a companion paper to the previous study (Chun, 2015) on how to construct appropriate Data-driven learning (DDL) materials. As basic research for developing materials for low proficiency EFL learners, it presents the study by exploring high school teachers’ needs toward the materials, and is limited to appropriate numbers of citations when doing DDL activity in the classroom. Over the past decades, increased attention has been paid with regard to paper-based DDL materials for language learners. However, few studies suggest practical guidelines on how to develop the materials. This study particularly focused on teachers’ suggestions regarding an appropriate amount of concordance input, which is an essential factor in development of the materials. It followed 28 Korean high school teachers of English in order to analyze their needs regarding the developed materials. Data collected from the survey and follow-up interviews were used. Results reveal that teachers’ needs for numbers of citations were diverse and dependent on learning settings, e.g., for individuals or groups. They preferred more citations for group work and fewer for individual work. The study provides practical information for appropriate numbers of citations at least required for DDL activity in the secondary classroom.

Key words corpus, DDL, COCA, inductive vocabulary learning, materials development


I. INTRODUCTION

According to Xiao and McEnery (2005), corpora have strongly influenced different areas of language education including syllabus design, materials developments, language testing,

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interlanguage research, and classroom concordancing. Among those, classroom concordancing activities, which involve learners at the center of the learning by using the corpus directly, have been highlighted by language educators over the past decades. In particular, Data-driven learning (DDL), which Johns (1991, 1994) defined as a new language learning method using corpora, has been actively studied with respect to two different learning approaches: One is hands-on concordancing and the other is an indirect method using paper-based materials. Boulton’s studies (2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b, 2012) have discussed the effectiveness of the latter method for low language proficiency learners. Some previous studies have also considered difficulties that the learners face during hands-on concordancing. Chamber (2007) mentions difficulty of authentic text; Farr (2008) notes the lengthy learning process which can cause learning fatigue; and some (Bernardini, 2002; Flowerdew, 2012; Gavioli, 2001) note the necessary of learners’ comprehensive knowledge when using concordancing tools.

To promote the use of DDL for the learners, not only teaching techniques but also appropriate materials should be developed. However, few studies examine how to develop these materials and suggest guidelines regarding them. Chun’s studies (2014a, 2014b) have recently focused on the issue but other research areas such as materials composition, remain for analysis. Her previous study focuses on the contents of concordance citations such as types of texts and the composition of diverse texts. This current study, however, concerns the external conditions with regard to appropriate numbers of citations.

Concordance lines are critically associated with the amount of input based on text reading. An examination for appropriate numbers of citations for a target word can also help teachers and educators understand how much input is required for effective DDL, within the limited class time. As a pilot study prior to constructing comprehensive materials for secondary students, it first developed some sample materials based on three different numbers of citations and then initially analyzed high school teachers’ preferences and basic needs toward those materials. Accordingly, it examined the issues below.

1. What numbers of citations do the teachers prefer for school activities?
2. What do the teachers suggest as effective use of these materials for school activities?
   1) What are potential difficulties that teachers might encounter in the use of DDL materials?
   2) What are other considerations for developing better materials?