Towards corpus literacy in language teacher education

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Mukherjee's (2004) survey among language teachers identified a large gap between corpus linguists' enthusiasm about the language-pedagogical potential of corpus resources and tools on the one hand, and the reality of English language teaching in Germany on the other. He advocated a concerted effort to popularise the language-pedagogical potential of corpus linguistics and to train teachers to acquire corpus literacy. Mukherjee emphasized that first and foremost it was the teachers who needed to be trained and convinced of the usefulness of corpus data to face challenges in their own teaching before they could be expected to implement more advanced, learner-autonomous activities. Similarly, Römer's (2011) survey article concluded that the practice of English language teaching seemed to be only marginally affected by the advances of corpus research, and comparatively few teachers and learners know about the availability of useful resources and get their hands on corpus computers or concordances themselves (2011: 206). However, there is by now a still relatively small but increasing number of studies that report on the integration of corpus-linguistic content into curricula for language teachers, and examine and evaluate the process of initiating teachers into corpus literacy (e.g. Farr 2008; Breyer 2009; Heather & Helt 2012; Leńko-Szymańska 2014a, 21014b). These studies report first encouraging results.

Against this background, the aim of this talk is to contribute to research and practice on the integration of corpus linguistics into curricula for foreign language teachers. I will first discuss the concept of corpus literacy, a multicomponential set of complex skills, broadly defined as "the ability to use the technology of corpus linguistics to investigate language and enhance the language development of students" (Heather & Helt 2012: 417). To update Mukherjee's (2004) survey, I will then present some first findings of a very recent large-scale survey among secondary-school teachers of English at schools throughout Germany and report on the integration of corpus-linguistic content into the curriculum for English language teachers at the University of Bremen. The focus will be on a description of a corpus activity on the acquisition of intensifying adverbs that confronts teacher trainees with a learner corpus containing data that are close to their own future teaching reality, i.e. written data collected from young learners ranging from primary to secondary school pupils across several different regions/countries from the *International Corpus of Crosslinguistic Interlanguage* (ICCI; Tono & Díez-Bedmar 2014).

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