

Analysis of Fashion Designing Area Common Vocabulary

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Abstract: *The goal of the article is to analyze the fashion designing area common vocabulary. The hypothesis is that the specific corpus which was used contains a great number of relevant terms that can be used to draw up a task for fashion designing students. The fashion designing corpus selected is composed of 10.213 words. The corpus is from the Elle website (<http://www.elle.com>) in the news section. The news range is from October to November of 2012 and was transformed in .txt. The research has been carried out in three stages. The theoretical background used was composed by Corpus Linguistics and Terminology. The preceding results point out the relevance of the corpus for the specialized area researched. The relevance of the corpus in the specialized language researched was perceived in comparison with the common vocabulary of the general language. Therefore, the vocabulary found is very important in the teaching of English for Specific Purposes that is the goal in this research.*

Keywords: *Common vocabulary; Corpus linguistics; Fashion designing area.*

Resumo: *O objetivo deste artigo é analisar o vocabulário comum da área de design de moda. A hipótese é que o corpus específico utilizado contém um grande número de termos relevantes que podem ser usados na composição de uma tarefa para estudantes de design de moda. O corpus selecionado é composto de 10.213 palavras e foi retirado do site da revista Elle (<http://www.elle.com>) da sessão de notícias. A faixa notícias é de Outubro a Novembro de 2012. A pesquisa foi executada em três estágios. A base teórica utilizada foi composta pelo Corpus Linguistics and Terminology. Os resultados anteriores apontaram a relevância do corpus para a área específica pesquisada. A relevância do corpus na pesquisa da linguagem especializada foi distinguida em comparação com o vocabulário comum da língua geral. Portanto, o vocabulário encontrado é muito importante no ensino de Inglês para Fins Específicos que é a meta dessa pesquisa.*

Palavras-chave: *Vocabulário comum; Linguística de corpus; Área de design de moda.*

1. Introduction

Previous papers about the specialized language in the fashion designing area are not so extensive. Thinking about this gap some resources about this area will be researched. The article is based on corpus linguistics and some tools were used to do the research. These tools are COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) and the AntConc program which is a freeware concordance program available in the web. Then in the next sections literature

concerning corpus linguistics and the fashion designing area will be provided. The hypothesis is that the specific corpus used contains a great number of relevant terms to draw up a task for fashion designing students.

1.2 Definition of Corpus-based Analysis

According to Biber (1998) the essential characteristics of corpus-based analysis are the following: it is empirical; it analyzes the authentic patterns of use in natural texts; it utilizes a large and principled collection of natural texts which are known as a “corpus”; it makes extensive use of computers for analysis through both automatic and interactive techniques; it depends on both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques. These characteristics are very important for the research considering the authentic texts used which represent a source of information for fashion designers. In the research the quantitative and qualitative criteria were both used. Concerning the different visions about corpus linguistics, according to Berber Sardinha (2004), for one group corpus linguistics is seen as a methodology and it can be applied freely in many subjects. A second group defends that corpus linguistics is more than a methodology because its practitioners produce new knowledge, not obtainable with the use of other tools and other theoretical premises. Finally a third group sees corpus linguistics as an approach, a perspective, a way to see language. Concerning the research, the vision that corpus linguistics is not just a simple methodology but a different way to see the language is considered. Regarding the definition of *corpus*, Hunston (2002) affirms that a corpus is a selection of natural examples of a language. These examples are consisted of some phrases and a set of written texts or oral records which were collected to be used as a base for the linguistic research. Then these definitions are used as a theoretical background in the research.

1.3 Fashion Designing Area

The work field of this area has grown with the past years in the entire world and, consequently, the search for this program in universities has increased. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics¹, this field provides approximately 22,700 jobs per year. Therefore, regarding of these data the fashion designing language was chosen as an object of this research. Concerning the definition of this area according to Thibodeaux² (2009), fashion

¹<http://www.bls.gov/>

²Wanda Thibodeaux is a freelance writer and editor based in Eagan, Minn. She has been published in both print and Web publications and has written on everything from fly fishing to parenting. She currently works through her business website, Takingdictation.com, which functions globally and welcomes new clients.

designing is an area of study and work that focuses on clothing and accessories and involves creating and producing items for people wear. The look and function of these items depends on the sociocultural factors within a region in a given time period. Designing work is defined by this author as:

“(...) a complex process that takes up to two years, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. During this time, fashion designers study fashion trends to see if they can predict what people will want to wear in the near future. Then they make sketches of new designs, often using computer software to save time and to make their design sketches as accurate and glamorous as possible. Once the sketches are done, the designers select the colors and materials for the fashions and oversee the production of their items.”
(THIBODEAUZ, 2010)

Then it is notable the importance of this area in society. With the growth of this work field, a specific development of tasks is relevant for the student which is interested in learning it.

2. Methodology

The methodology of this research is developed in three stages. In the first stage the most frequent words in a collected specific corpus were selected. The corpus is from the Elle website (<http://www.elle.com>) in the news section. The news range is from October to November of 2012 and was transformed in .txt. A corpus composed by 10.213 words was obtained. This selected corpus was used in a specific program named AntConc. Some characteristics of the program are showed below:

“AntConc started out as a relatively simple concordance program, but has been slowly progressing to become a rather useful text analysis tool. It is written in Perl 5.8 using ActiveState's excellent Komodo development environment. The program can be launched by simply double clicking on the executable file, which can be downloaded from the Laurence Anthony Laboratory web site. The program can run under any windows environment including Win

98/Me/2000/NT and XP, and also Macintosh OSX and Linux computers.” (http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software/README_antconc3.2.1.txt, accessed in November 5, 2012)

Below there is an image of the program used with the corpus introduced. There is a section named word list in the program which gives the most frequent words of the corpus.

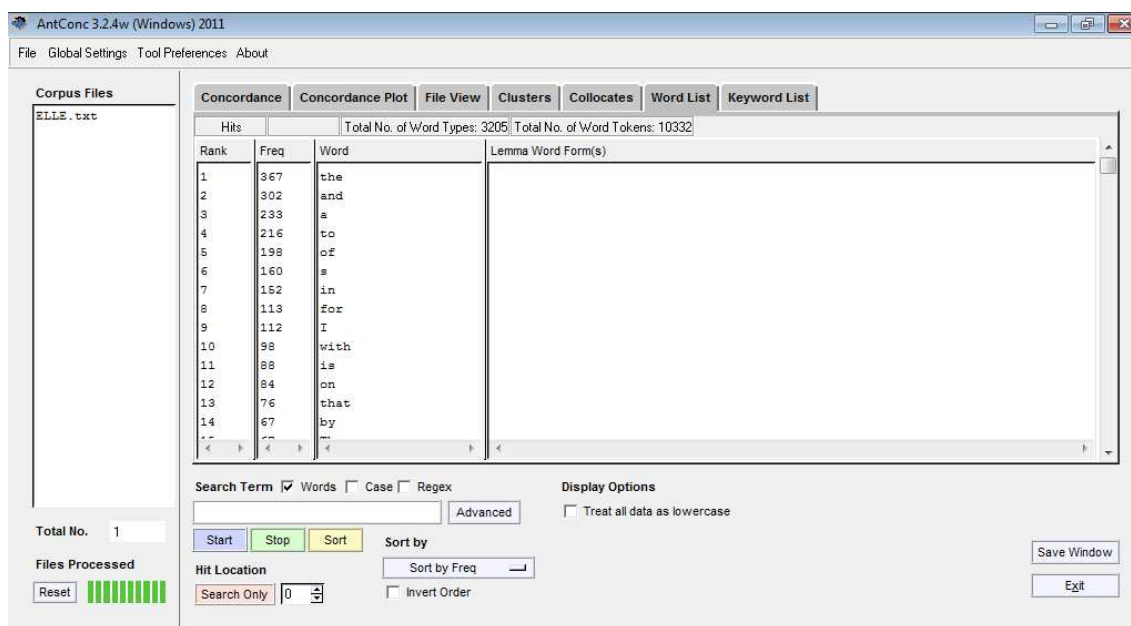


Image 1: Word List with the most frequent words of the corpus

The second stage of the methodology was to take the most frequent words found in the corpus and verify their occurrences in COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English). In order to build a task to fashion designing students. According to Mark Davies³ COCA corpus can be defined as:

“(...) a 450+ million word corpus that is the only large and balanced corpus of American English. It is used by more than 40,000 individual users each month, which makes it perhaps the most widely-used online corpus currently available. Because of its design, it is also perhaps the only large corpus of English that can be used to look at ongoing changes in the language.” (DAVIES, Mark, 2010)

Below there are some occurrences found with a word of the corpus:

³Professor, Corpus Linguistics, Brigham Young University.

| CORPUS OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ENGLISH | | | | | | | | | | ACCESS: 1/5 |
|---|------|------|------------|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| RETURN TO SEARCH FORM | | | | | | | | | | Help / information / contact |
| SECTION: NO LIMITS | | | | | | | | | | PAGE: << < 1 / 226 > >> |
| [Return to frequency list] | | | | | | | | | | SAMPLE: 100 200 500 1000 |
| CLICK FOR MORE CONTEXT | | | | | | | | | | [?] [SAVE LIST] CHOOSE LIST CREATE NEW LIST [?] |
| 1 | 2012 | NEWS | AssocPress | A | B | C | marketing, including teaming up with a lingerie store last month to offer an in-flight fashion show featuring Colombian and | | | |
| 2 | 2012 | NEWS | AssocPress | A | B | C | thinks most sneakerheads are in it for more than that. # It's about fashion and sports, he says. It's about friendship and ha | | | |
| 3 | 2012 | NEWS | AssocPress | A | B | C | enforcement activity forced the temporary closure of some businesses on the block, including the fashion boutique Wink, or | | | |
| 4 | 2012 | NEWS | AssocPress | A | B | C | enforcement activity forced the temporary closure of some businesses on the block, including the fashion boutique Wink, or | | | |
| 5 | 2012 | NEWS | AssocPress | A | B | C | . " And our hope is that we can resolve this issue in a peaceful fashion that respects Iran's sovereignty and its rights in the | | | |
| 6 | 2012 | NEWS | AssocPress | A | B | C | mainly all-girls Morvillo-Falcone vocational institute. # The school which prepares students for jobs in fashion and social ser | | | |
| 7 | 2012 | NEWS | AssocPress | A | B | C | . " And our hope is that we can resolve this issue in a peaceful fashion that respects Iran's sovereignty and its rights in the | | | |
| 8 | 2012 | NEWS | AssocPress | A | B | C | day in much of Italy. # The school which prepares students for jobs in fashion , tourism and social services is named in hon | | | |
| 9 | 2012 | NEWS | AssocPress | A | B | C | known to her friends in Brindisi for her sunny smile and dream of becoming a fashion designer, said Franco Scoditti, the m | | | |
| 10 | 2012 | NEWS | NYTimes | A | B | C | Patriots play in a \$325 million palatial stadium complex, their star quarterback appears on fashion billboards nationwide and | | | |
| 11 | 2012 | NEWS | NYTimes | A | B | C | for the culture at large has longstanding roots in linguistics. As Paris is to fashion , the thinking goes, so are young women t | | | |
| 12 | 2012 | NEWS | NYTimes | A | B | C | Vegas and Miami Beach. # Maloney & Porcelli got its title in similarly spontaneous fashion : Mr. Stillman decided to name the | | | |
| 13 | 2012 | NEWS | NYTimes | A | B | C | distant cousin of steak au poivre that happens to be named (in that spontaneous fashion that seems to be a signature flour | | | |
| 14 | 2012 | NEWS | NYTimes | A | B | C | traffic, he has created an active schedule of book signings, tea classes and fashion events. " You have to bring awareness ; | | | |
| 15 | 2012 | NEWS | NYTimes | A | B | C | system: daily prices, lower monthlong specials and clearance prices. Mango, the fashion retailer, has cut all prices by one-f | | | |
| 16 | 2012 | NEWS | NYTimes | A | B | C | is an uninformative homage to the state's Ute Indians, which, after the fashion of most exhibitions mounted about contemp | | | |

Image 2: Occurrences of the word “fashion”

In the last stage of the methodology the most frequent words of English in COCA were selected and the occurrences of those words in the Oxford 3000 were verified. The Oxford 3000™ is a tool developed by Oxford University and is available free of charge in the following link: <http://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/oxford3000/>. The text below is also from the link and provides an explanation of what the Oxford 3000 is:

“The keywords of the Oxford 3000™ have been carefully selected by a group of language experts and experienced teachers as the words which should receive priority in vocabulary study because of their importance and usefulness. The words which occur most frequently in English are included, based on the information in the British National Corpus and the Oxford Corpus Collection.” (A corpus is an electronically-held collection of written or spoken texts, often consisting of hundreds of millions of words – for more information, visit this page about the corpus <http://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/bnc.html>.)

3. Results and Analysis

A small corpus of the fashion designing area was gathered to extract the most common words used in this field. The source of the material is on the online news cast of official Elle magazine website. The following are the results of this research:

| Most Frequent words of ELLE News Cast Corpus | | |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Words | Number of occurrences | Tokens/1000 |
| ELLE | 58 | 5,8 |
| Collection | 34 | 3,4 |
| Look | 28 | 2,8 |
| Brand | 21 | 2,1 |
| Percent | 20 | 2 |
| Style | 20 | 2 |
| Fashion | 19 | 1,9 |
| Designer | 18 | 1,9 |
| Love | 16 | 1,6 |
| New | 16 | 1,6 |
| American | 15 | 1,5 |
| Color | 13 | 1,3 |
| Gold | 13 | 1,3 |
| Photo | 13 | 1,3 |
| Sales | 13 | 1,3 |

Table 1: Results of the research

Then the Corpus of Contemporary American English was accessed for two reasons: first, to have an overall idea of the comparison of all the terms; and second, to verify the most frequent English words and to compare the frequency in which the most frequent words of ELLE magazine appear in the COCA corpus. The results are as follows:

| Most Frequent Words of English (COCA) | | |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Words | Number of occurrences | Tokens/1000 |
| You | 3085642 | 6,856982 |
| They | 1865844 | 4,14632 |
| Go | 1151045 | 2,557877 |
| Her | 969591 | 2,154646 |
| Think | 772787 | 1,717304 |
| Take | 670745 | 1,490544 |
| Come | 628254 | 1,39612 |
| Then | 543977 | 1,208837 |
| Way | 470401 | 1,045335 |
| More | 420170 | 0,933711 |
| Give | 384503 | 0,854451 |
| Very | 391821 | 0,870713 |
| Through | 340921 | 0,757602 |
| May | 324569 | 0,721264 |
| Still | 296953 | 0,659895 |

Table 2: Most frequent words

| Frequency of ELLE Corpus on COCA | | |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Words | Number of occurrences | tokens/1000 |
| ELLE | 1684 | 0,003742 |
| Collection | 37645 | 0,083655 |
| Look | 289258 | 0,642795 |
| Brand | 13439 | 0,029864 |
| Percent | 227029 | 0,504508 |
| Style | 37489 | 0,083308 |
| Fashion | 22597 | 0,050215 |
| Designer | 10714 | 0,023808 |
| Love | 153466 | 0,341035 |
| New | 712204 | 1,582675 |
| American | 248454 | 0,55212 |
| Color | 85682 | 0,190404 |
| Gold | 37470 | 0,083266 |
| Photo | 83973 | 0,186606 |
| Sales | 39238 | 0,087195 |

Table 3: Frequency of ELLE Corpus on COCA

The only words of the corpus which are not in the Oxford 3000™ are ‘American’ and ‘Elle’. ‘Elle’ is the name of the magazine from which the corpus was extracted and because of that it is not relevant for the research. However, words were identified as not so frequent but seem, nonetheless, semantically relevant in the genre. These are some of those words that are present in the corpus and that are not in the Oxford 3000™: Bracelets, Necklace, Accessory, Vintage, Indie, outdated, Handbag, One-of-a-kind, Sunglasses, Lenses, Boutique, Showcase, Décor, Strap, Metallic, Stylish, Inspired, Footwear, eyewear, Wardrobe, Moisturizer, Lingerie, Bra, Personalize, Cosmetic, haircut, lush, fabric, whimsical, blouse, customizable, astonishing, authentic, etc.

4. Final Considerations

This research is in initial stage. The results show the relevance of the corpus because the majority of the words are useful in common language. Then this selection of corpus would help the development of a task. This preview vocabulary is very important in the teaching of English for Specific Purposes that is the goal in this research. In the future, we intend to continue the research by designing a task for students of English for fashion designing purposes. In addition to that, the first step of relevant corpus selecting was considered as indispensable for the development of a task. Then, the previous results point out the relevance of the corpus for the specialized area which was researched. The corpus has a great relevance in the specialized language researched in comparison with the common vocabulary in general language.

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