

From academic corpus to business classroom: teaching appropriate vocabulary effectively.

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What vocabulary would you prioritise on a Business English course for undergraduate international students?

alliance capitalism
Greenfield investment
value chain

FDI
SCM
GDP

challenge
approach
factor

customer
staff
market

Outline

- Identifying key vocabulary (**From academic corpus..**)
- Introducing the vocabulary (**..to business classroom**)
- Next steps.... (**..and beyond!**)
- Questions/comments

The wider context

BE is a strong branch of the ELT tree.

Europe > more global outlook

Growth of related 'branches' > EAP

Future: new cohorts, markets, contexts



(Keith Harding , 2013 BESIG Annual Conference plenary, Prague)

The local context

- 100 students - International Business Top-Up course (level 3)
 - Coventry University
 - IELTS 6-6.5.
 - Advanced Business English
 - Similar vocabulary needs.
-
- Academic, rather than professional context

Vocabulary focus: a corpus-based approach

What is a corpus?

‘a collection of pieces of language text in electronic form.....as a source of data for linguistic research.’

(Sinclair 2004)

BAWE (British Academic Written English) corpus (Nesi and Gardner, 2012).



Aim: to identify vocabulary items that are statistically more frequent in Business assignments.

Word lists created by Durrant from BAWE (see also 2013 article).

Business Level 3

word	Frequency per million words	Percentage of texts	Percentage of subcorpora	DP
the	69956.35647	100	100	0.06786857
to	33675.91159	100	100	0.043645125
of	33070.53358	100	100	0.065876918
and	28523.15923	100	100	0.06329026
a	19386.17486	100	100	0.052972836
is	18034.63325	100	100	0.107426849
in	17767.14064	100	100	0.057562089
be	12895.95945	100	100	0.116963934
that	11600.73209	100	100	0.108072356
it	10727.86147	100	100	0.087046929

- Frequency/D.P. (*'deviation of proportions'* De Gries, 2008)
- High frequency, high D.P > more specialised i.e. more Business-y.

	A	B	C	D	E
	word	Frequency per million words	Percentage of texts	Percentage of subcorpora	DP
1					
2	customer	2069.548078	54.83870968	19.76744186	0.746868522
3	corporate	1182.598902	25.80645161	10.46511628	0.735325525
4	customers	2674.926088	61.29032258	22.09302326	0.72864051
5	manager	1365.62016	51.61290323	15.11627907	0.728501089
6	employees	2083.626637	48.38709677	17.44186047	0.723249632
7	sales	1210.756019	54.83870968	20.93023256	0.706049514
8	team	1098.127552	35.48387097	24.41860465	0.64437178
9	budget	1041.813318	32.25806452	15.11627907	0.63751197
10	staff	1210.756019	51.61290323	24.41860465	0.630232593
11	company	2069.548078	61.29032258	38.37209302	0.601884614

The top 20 'business-y' words



Using learner corpora

Business assignments

Monitor output and usage of target vocabulary:

- **Beginning** (Corpus of 120 business essays written by Pre-sessional students)
- **Interim point**
- **End of course**



Learner corpora can reveal ‘typical’ difficulties:

‘Learner corpora.....can help to reveal those difficulties and to understand the differences between learner production and the features that characterize native-like language use.’

(Cotos 2014: 2)

Project aims:

- Analyse and compare the corpus data:
 - collocations
 - grammatical patterns
 - error focus
- Raise awareness
- Expand range, improve accuracy > develop productive use

Analyse concordance data in BAWE (using Sketch engine)



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Search

user: anonymous corpus: British Academic Written English Corpus (BAWE)

Concordance
Word List
Word Sketch
Thesaurus
Find X
Sketch-Diff
Corpus Info



Save
View options
KWIC
Sentence
Sort

Query **customer, Business, 3** 158 (19.0 per million)

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BAWE-3.txt resisting the project.) This increases costs and **customer** dissatisfaction, damaging CFS's competitive
BAWE-3.txt & competitive performance by improving **customer** service & the long-term efficiency
BAWE-3.txt Evaluation: Conduct many short, qualitative **customer** surveys and compare the average number
BAWE-3.txt Increase the range of products taken up by each **customer** by 25% within 15 months. Evaluation: This
BAWE-3.txt new skills to sell more products to each **customer** . Compare the average number of products
BAWE-3.txt average number of products taken up by each **customer** before and after the project. *Operational*
BAWE-3.txt . This is an opportunity to increase our **customer** base because the Internet is much more
BAWE-3.txt at giving information and/or a personal **customer** service. More seriously, poor training
BAWE-3.txt worsen reputation or set off a law suit), low **customer** satisfaction, low productivity and high
BAWE-3.txt employee support: *1.* Training: on **customer** service, teamwork, Internet and insurance
BAWE-3.txt , the insurance section training and the **customer** service training both occur over months



Some sample activities using corpora

Handout available at the end of the session

Which word fits all the gaps - 'service', 'performance' or 'strategy'?

BAWE Corpus		
employee satisfaction does not necessarily lead to high employee		
Formula-1 car engines have excellent		as they are about ten times more powerful
management are seeking for greater job		and job satisfaction
A-grade in A-levels should increase the exam		by 2.92 percentage points.
This outcome is due to the poor company		in the last few quarters.
by mainly focusing on theatre as the live		of drama.
adopting such an approach would lead to improved financial		.

Introducing key Business vocabulary

Identify the sentences from business assignments.

BAWE Corpus		
employee satisfaction does not necessarily lead to high employee	performance	
Formula-1 car engines have excellent	performance	as they are about ten times more powerful
management are seeking for greater job	performance	and job satisfaction
A-grade in A-levels should increase the exam	performance	by 2.92 percentage points.
This outcome is due to the poor company	performance	in the last few quarters.
by mainly focusing on theatre as the live	performance	of drama.
adopting such an approach would lead to improved financial	performance	.

Modifier + 'performance'

BAWE Corpus		
employee satisfaction does not necessarily lead to high employee performance		
management are seeking for greater job performance and job satisfaction		
This outcome is due to the poor company performance		in the last few quarters.
adopting such an approach would lead to improved financial performance .		

modifier
employee
job
financial
company
organisational

modifies
measure
indicator
objective

Performance

object of
improve
evaluate
monitor
assess

Other patterns

..leads to.....better/good/poor
...results in....
...causes.....

.....performance of X

Other terms

performance-related pay

Collocates: performance + noun



user: anonymous corpus: British Academic Written English Corpus (BAWE)

- Concordance
- Word List
- Word Sketch
- Thesaurus
- Find X
- Sketch-Diff
- Corpus Info
- ?

Collocation candidates

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	<u>Freq</u>	<u>T-score</u>	<u>MI</u>	<u>logDice</u>
P N job	46	6.773	9.539	10.021
P N Job	16	3.998	11.267	9.530
P N objectives	24	4.890	9.064	9.329
P N Relationship	8	2.826	10.353	8.541
P N organisational	8	2.822	8.705	8.220
P N IJV	5	2.235	10.606	7.945
P N Financial	7	2.635	7.885	7.814
P N causes	11	3.292	7.049	7.699
P N indicators	5	2.230	8.631	7.694
P N measures	9	2.979	7.185	7.667
P N objective	8	2.808	7.120	7.556

In Learner corpus:

- performance *indicators* x 2
- performance *goals* x 1
- performance *measures* 0
- performance *objectives* 0

Performance + noun

What's the missing word in each gap: **measures or objectives?**

BAWE Corpus			
to provide	performance		of whether or not work is accomplished
When comparing and contrasting IKEA's	performance		with their competitors
customer and market segments by developing	performance		that tracks Glass Product Division
the capacity dynamics that improve Toyota's	performance		to fit with market requirements

Expanding vocabulary range

BAWE Corpus			
to provide	performance	measures	of whether or not work is accomplished
When comparing and contrasting IKEA's	performance	objectives	with their competitors
customer and market segments by developing	performance	measures	that tracks Glass Product Division
the capacity dynamics that improve Toyota's	performance	objectives	to fit with market requirements

Noticing activities

Learner corpus		
consumers to ensure the safety, the security and	high performance	of the product,
Furthermore, if employees have	good performance	, manager could through the public praise
Employees will show	bad performance	for their work.
Made the first step of Nintendo's	brilliant performance	

BAWE corpus		
perceived likelihood that effort will result in	good performance	
important source of motivation and will lead to	better performance	since job satisfaction is associated with
can lead to not only	poor performance	but also customers not understanding what the organisation stands for

Which word fits all the gaps - 'employees', 'staff' or 'customers'?

Organisations are giving increasing importance to the front-line	XXXXXXX	as the management realizes that excellence in service.....
An internal	XXXXXXX	training program allows the manager to ensure the...
Particularly on busy nights, when many	XXXXXXX	members are working behind the bar,
...but other members of the firm, such as administrative	XXXXXXX	also have an indirect influence.

BAWE Corpus		
Organisations are giving increasing importance to the front-line	staff	as the management realizes that excellence in service.....
An internal	staff	training program allows the manager to ensure the....
Particularly on busy nights, when many	staff	members are working behind the bar,
....but other members of the firm, such as administrative	staff	also have an indirect influence.

- What type of jobs in a company do you think ‘**front-line staff**’ might refer to?
- What other adjectives to describe types of staff could replace ‘**administrative**’?

Accuracy: error focus

Learner corpus		
The high-quality staff system and the <i>superior</i>	<i>staffs</i>	are the good prospect of the corporation
This example shows that whatever <i>a normal</i>	staff	or a top level manager, they are all human
these factors will cause <i>a happiness</i>	staff	, then they'll work very hard.

Error Focus 2: Which 2 sentences have errors?

Learner Corpus		
Efficiency	corporate strategy	determines the direction of future development of
The following section describes two common	corporate strategy	and cases.
Overall, an effective	corporate strategy	can make it easier for companies to achieve their goals.

Collocation activity: 'word magnets' (using Triptico software)

The screenshot displays the Triptico software interface for a collocation activity. The interface features a blue background with a toolbar at the top. The toolbar includes buttons for 'MAGNET' (red square), 'BOARD' (blue square), 'HOLD', 'SAVE', a text input field, 'ADD', 'DELETE', a plus sign, a minus sign, and 'QUIT'. The main workspace contains ten word magnets arranged in two columns. The left column contains five yellow magnets with the words: 'senior', 'corporate', 'emerging', 'customer', and 'service'. The right column contains five red magnets with the words: 'margins', 'markets', 'sector', 'management', and 'governance'.

Word	Color
senior	Yellow
corporate	Yellow
emerging	Yellow
customer	Yellow
service	Yellow
margins	Red
markets	Red
sector	Red
management	Red
governance	Red

Jumbled sentence activity

Our IT **staff** sector and the increased participation of female workers in the labour market.

The expansion of the **performance** members will benefit from learning invaluable skills.

This was the most important **corporate** objective to Costcutter.

Simultaneously, the changes in **service** governance also create pressure on large German firms



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This was the most important **performance objective** to Costcutter.

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Exploiting corpora to teach vocabulary

+

Authentic data

Subject-specific focus

Appeals to motivated, independent learners

Raises awareness > develops productive usage

-

Doesn't appeal to all learners

Concordance lines do not provide full context

Materials development can be time-consuming

Subject-specific vocabulary focus using corpora ✓

Next steps

- Ongoing project - analyse interim and final output
- Control and experimental group
- Student feedback
- Produce subject-specific word sketches for these items
- Create a bank of materials for in class purposes and self-study with more DDL (Data-driven learning)?

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Any comments/questions?

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