The teaching of stancetaking devices in English for tourism from a digital data driven approach

María Elena Domínguez Morales, Francisco J. Álvarez Gil

Facultad de Filología, Campus del Obelisco
Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, España

Introduction

During the last decade, there has been a growing interest in incorporating discourse elements other than lexical in the syllabus of English for specialized courses in Spain. Students were traditionally very well prepared in aspects related to the stock of technical vocabulary of specific disciplines. This was also complemented with the teaching of textual genres (Gil-Salom & Soler-Monreal, 2014), such as the curriculum vitae and the letter, which put an emphasis on job seeking rather than the professional and the academic side of the discipline.

The situation has fortunately changed, and aspects concerning the learning and the practice of those academic and research genres (the abstract, the scientific article and the project) are now part of the university syllabi. This involves rhetorical and textual aspects as well as specific linguistic features. Among these, we are interested in perspectivizing expressions (Marín Arrese 2009). To our knowledge, the teaching of these expressions only considers modal verbs and some metadiscourse devices (Hyland 2005; Adel 2008). Within metadiscourse, hedging (Hyland 1998; Omer 2016) stands as the most favourite device to show the authors' negotiation of meaning with their readers. A related device is evidentiality (Bondi & Sezzi 2017). This refers to the expression of the authors' source or mode of information (Cornillie 2009) which is frequently associated with epistemicity to show the lack of commitment towards the propositional content.

Epistemicity and evidentiality

In this paper, we will explain that this relationship between epistemicity and evidentiality is not always present and this view is also shared with our students. This has some implications for the teaching of these two important aspects of rhetorical argumentation, and we will suggest some ways in which we may approach them in the language classroom. The way in which all this may be taught, in our view, includes a Data Driven Learning approach integrated within our teaching (Lavoué *et al.,* 2017).

Among the benefits of an approach which integrates data-driven learning methodology, an important one is that students are faced with real examples to detect possible uses of devices showing epistemic or evidential nuances, as pointed out in Talai and Fotovatnia (2012). The data the students use is taken from a corpus of tourism texts in English gathered at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, and this will be described in this conference presentation.

Conclusions

The main conclusions of this paper revolve around the usability of corpus linguistics to the teaching of English within an approach integrating data driven learning methodology by focusing on aspects related to the teaching and learning of those perspectivizing elements typically found in tourism texts. Using corpus tools for data excerption allow students to face and deal with authentic language samples, and in this learning context they seem to be able not only to correctly understand the epistemic and evidential uses of elements such as modal verbs, but also to put them into practice in a given and real communicative situation.

We have observed that students who analyse language using these tools are not only able to identify them in real settings, but they are also able to elaborate their own stock of stance formulas and incorporate them in their daily speech production.

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