

Uses of 'actually' in spoken learner corpora

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Despite a growing interest in corpus linguistics research methods (Gablasova et al., 2017), the use of adverbs in spoken discourse has received very little attention in learner language and SLA research (De Haan, 1999; Osborne, 2008; Pérez-Paredes, 2010a; Philip, 2008). The reasons are multiple. SLA researchers interested in language use have preferred to examine other structures (Ortega, 2013) such as t-units, clauses, sentence length, to name but a few, and have largely neglected the potential role of phrasal constructions and, especially, adverb phrases. Although the analysis of adverbials have also attracted the interest of researchers, some corpus research (Pérez-Paredes and Sánchez-Tornel, 2014; Pérez-Paredes and Diez-Bedmar, 2012) has shown that the use of adverbs is one of the criterial features that define language development in instructed SLA.

In this talk, I will discuss the use of actually in spoken language across different tasks, student performance levels and corpora, namely, the Chinese, German and Spanish LINDSEI (Brand and Kämmerer, 2006) components (n=50 each), the extended LOCNEC corpus (n=78) (Aguado-Jiménez et al, 2012) as well as in a preview of the new Trinity Learner Corpus. The study of actually across different corpora and tasks presents different opportunities to examine the affordances of using mixed methods (QUAN + QUAL) in learner language analysis. I'll argue that the study of adverbs can be of potential interest to SLA researchers working on complexity and variation (Gablasova et al, 2016; Romero-Trillo, 2002) and, more generally, I'll extend the contributions of corpus-driven learner language studies outlined, among others, in Mukherjee (2009) and Gablasova et al. (2017). In this talk, I'll argue that triangulation of data from different corpora is a most useful practice in order increase research validity.

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