

Teaching English for Real-Life Communication with Movie Reviews: A Corpus Approach

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Abstract

Corpus analysis can inform and enrich language teaching on a practical level. This paper aims to show how to effectively incorporate corpora, which are large electronic collections of authentic language, into vocabulary and grammar teaching while utilizing authentic texts. By using the concordancer *Conc*, we explored the word frequencies of nouns, adjectives, and verbs used in online reviews of fantasy, romance, and action movies written between 2000 and 2010. Based on the analysis, we suggest corpus-based teaching activities that can help 20 learners to make use of mini-corpora and to understand frequently used expressions in movie reviews. Such understanding may lead to increased language proficiency in this content domain.

Introduction

2. What are the keywords that distinguish each genre and what are their collocates?
3. What teaching materials and activities can be created from the corpus findings?

Method

ata

a movie title. . . &le)J illustrates how the may ! e used to indicate movie se' uels. <enerally, in reviewing one movie in a series, reviewers will mention other movies for comparison, such as was the case for reviews of *Harry Potter*, *Five Get Ones*, *War*, and *Angsman*.

a

Figure C displays the top ten collocates of the indefinite article a

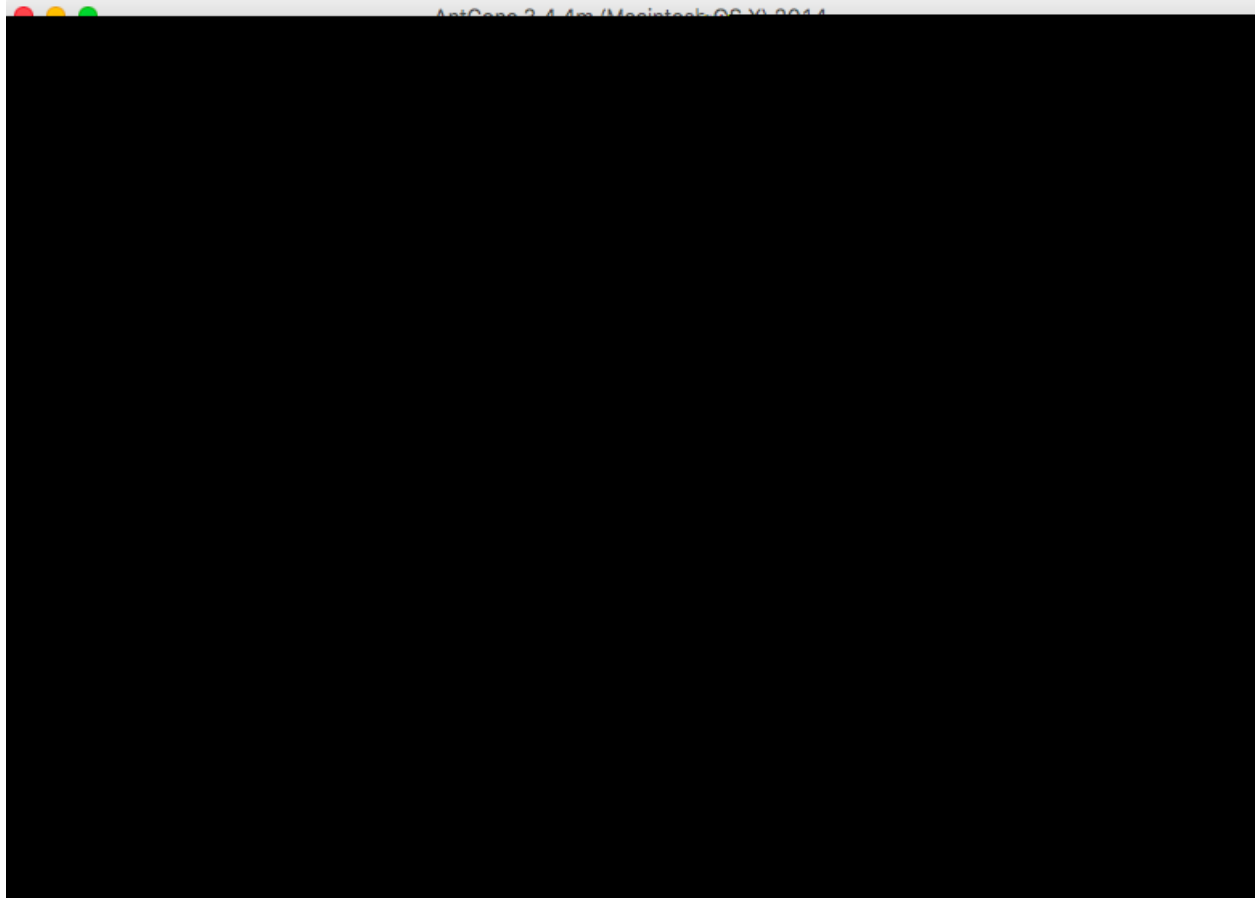


Figure C Top Ten Collocates with the Indefinite Article a

The indefinite article a is found in several common expressions which are mostly made up of expressions of 'quantity' &le /et C6. It is also often used in the corpus to comment on unspecified details of the movie being reviewed &le /et :6. Here, movie reviews typically describe a key point, a signature scene, or a character to provide the reader with a type of summary and the reviewer's opinion without giving away too much about the movie. In addition, indefinite article a

. &le /et C

- C.+ : ,it o a predicta! ility with the overall story I will admit and even felt li#e a typical
Fisney Tic# in some cases, ! ut this still stands out pretty well on it#s own much li#e
previous flms ! y Fisney %nimation. 52antasy6
- C.) He#s a! ley surrounded with an impressive and colourful collection of support as well#
Ion \$ernthal, Ion Hamm and lamie 2o&& trying to outdo each other in the menacing
sta#es is a lot o fun in itself and it#s great to see them spearheaded ! y the relia! le
and in fnitely watcha! le Nevin /pacey. 5%ction6
- C.C Hell! oy II# he <olden %rmy still has overwhelming action and pretty wea#
character development, ! ut it is ultimately an improvement over the original with a
much more entertaining plot with a good fantasy angle to it and a lot o great set
pieces, interesting creatures and great visuals. 52antasy6

. &le /et :

+: .: %ll in all, ulip 2everS is Pa0 disappointment. 5?omance6

. &le /et +J

- +J.+ \$ut it is Harry Potter who may ! e called upon to ma#e the ultimate sacrifice as he draws closer to the climactic showdown with Oord ; oldemort.52antasy6
- +J.) 2or the villains, the standout is \$oyd Hol! roo# as F onald Pierce, the leader of the militant ?eavers group who is sent to retrieve Oaura. 5%ction6
- +J.C his is a flm a! out time, love, loss, and legacy 5there6s a deep and honest monologue midway discussing legacy, which is ! rilliantly delivered ! y Dill 3ldham6. 5?omance6

% second relevant point a! out a! le) is that the ver! ha é is one of the most fre' uent ver! s across the movie genres represented in the corpus. he reason why it is fre' uent is that the ver! ha é performs various grammatical functions, such as e&pressing aspect 5. &le /et +9% or o! ligation 5. &le /et +-6, and various semantic functions, such as e&pressing causality 5. &le /et +A6 and possession 5. &le /et +=6.

%u&iliary ver! s mar#ing aspect are one of the most fre' uent in our data. In particular, use of present perfect often allows reviewers to draw on their past moviegoing e&periences or opinions formed through such e&periences when writing a new review 5. &les +9.+ and +9.)6.

. &le /et +9

- +9.+ 2or years, we ha é seen Dolverine use his claws in various flms ! ut never to the level as seen in SOoganS. his violence stresses the ! ruality this man has e&perienced and has carried with him for the hundreds of years that he has ! een alive. 5%ction6
- +9.) Rot to single out this particular premise, ! ut flms revolving around gay couples ha é ! een terrifc over the last decade or so. 5?omance6
- +9.C In the epic fnale, the ! attle ! etween the good and evil forces of the wi" arding world escalates into an all,out war. he sta#es ha é never ! een higher and no one is safe. 52antasy6

4a é is included

t11@ttthe

ha é eto W vertmodall1@te&pression t*dtthe

5. &le +-6.

. &le /et +-

- +-.+ 2ans definitely receive all of the a! ove and more throughout he 2ate of the 2urious, ! ut to ! e perfectly honest, you ha é to watch these flms as if you are sitting in the theatre watching a 4arvel flm. 5%ction6
- +-.) here are very long se' uences of silence, ma#ing you rela& and ta#e in either a romantic moment or the scenery around them, which I also found poetic at the same time, so I actualy have trou! le coming up with issues, ! ut I ha é to admit that I did fnd the movie slow at times. 5?omance6

has is also frequently used as main verb with a causative meaning to express the effects of the review on the readers or the movie itself on the viewers. Example 1.

Example 1

1. I'm certain that I will have people upset with me because I didn't like the movie or the book and don't consider it worthy of being a big budget motion picture.

2. In the end, I will have you thinking, have you discussing a lot of life and death.

Example 2

Table C
 Nouns in Reference to Each Genre

Action	Romance	Fantasy
he, his	she, he, him, her	Jane, Potter
Logan, Jackson	Anastasia, Christian	fantasy
action	love	effects
war	relationships, war	CGI, war
military	romance	adventure
CGI	marriage	prince
guns	air	trilogy
sequence	se.	superhero
war	couple	monster
terrorists	war, war	war

In the action movie reviews, the nouns with high frequency are frequently associated with words whose meanings are related to conflict, such as war, guns, and war. The pronouns with high frequency in the action reviews were the words he and his, and the proper nouns with high frequency are Logan, and Jackson, both of which are associated with men and masculinity.

evaluative and to have a positive connotation.

It appears that ad(ective choices are not related to the movie ratings in the reviews. In the corpus, the action movie reviews had an average rating of 9.AJ out of +*8 the romance movie

- : . %s# the students to watch the selected movie on their own time.
- J. %s# students to read and ! ring to class at least J reviews of the movie they (ust watched.

