The development of corpus linguistics in English and Chinese contexts

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Abstract

In this paper we will survey progress in English corpus linguistics (henceforth ECL) and contrast that with the development of Chinese corpus linguistics (henceforth CCL). In doing so we will be comparing the relative state of development of the two, highlighting areas where the development of one may present a profitable avenue of development to the other. We will also identify challenges which are unique to either, while considering also areas where generalising from one to the other may lead to problems. Such a review could become unwieldy if every area of linguistics were to be reviewed. While in passing some areas of linguistic theory will be considered, this review will focus principally upon language description and applied linguistics, areas where, arguably, corpus linguistics has made its greatest impact to date. The areas considered by this paper are as follows: lexicography, descriptive grammars and learner corpora. In each case we will review the development of these areas in ECL, outlining key debates and changes brought about by the application of corpora in the area in question. In all cases we will take a broadly historical approach, tracing the impact of corpora upon the research area by identifying key points in the development of ECL as well as key researchers who brought about that development. We will then contrast the ECL approach to that area with development to date in the area by CCL. We will then consider the contrast between the two.