

THE MALMÖ UNIVERSITY-CHALMERS CORPUS OF ACADEMIC WRITING AS A PROCESS (MUCH): RESULTS FROM WORK IN PROGRESS

This paper introduces a recently-launched corpus project which aims to compile and monitor various text drafts involved in the student writing process in higher education. Most of the students are non-native speakers of English from undergraduate, master or PhD programmes. The corpus material consists of drafts of academic papers, such as argumentative papers, field research papers and journal paper drafts. Additionally, the corpus contains a collection of self-reflective papers or comments. Papers are collected from approximately 300 students per year over a three-year period. In addition to student texts, the corpus also contains peer and teacher comments. It is tagged for rhetorical, linguistic and information structure. Upon completion, the corpus will consist of approximately 2,500,000 words, excluding the metadata.

An important aim of the project is to narrow the gap between writing pedagogy and the use of corpora for teaching and learning purposes. In writing pedagogy, the focus has been on issues such as writing as social action (Miller 1984), feedback processes (Hyland & Hyland 2006) and the development of academic literacy (Lea & Street 1998, Lillis & Scott 2007, Street 2004), whereas corpus-driven and corpus-based pedagogy has tended to focus on linguistic aspects of language learning, such as vocabulary, grammar and phraseology (Flowerdew 2010). Notable exceptions to this somewhat sweeping description are e.g. Charles (2007) and Flowerdew (2008). However, a lot more can be done to merge these two perspectives. We believe that a corpus containing drafts tagged for rhetorical, linguistic and information structure, as well as peer and teacher feedback, is an important step in such a process.

In this paper, we will establish the rationale for the project and present results from a pilot study, including categorisations and effects of peer and teacher comments in texts.

References:

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