Designing Vocabulary Lists and Autonomous Learning Modules for ESP Courses
TESOL 2015
Toronto, Canada

Presenters:

Tara Brandenburg	**Devon Jancin**	**Albatool Abalkheel**
tara.brandenburg@colostate.edu	devon.jancin@colostate.edu	taallaa@hotmail.com
Colorado State University	Colorado State University	Tulane University

Presentation Overview. A corpus was created using two business course textbooks. Lextutor Compleat Vocab Profile (http://www.lextutor.ca) was used to sort words by frequency. Thirty ESP business words were selected from the 3K list of this corpus. A webpage (http://businessvocabulary.weebly.com) consisting of three vocabulary modules was created which presents vocabulary in authentic context, provides definitions and pictures, as well as practice and assessment through Quizlet.

Theoretical Foundation
- Most ESL/EFL students majoring in business "have little or no training in Business English specifically" (Konstantakis, 2007).
- Specialized vocabulary lists can be created with corpora and used to inform ESP vocabulary instruction (Nation, 2001).
- Utilizing technology increases business ESP learning (Nakata, 2008).
- Vocabulary recall rates significantly increase more with computerized practice than with traditional lists (Nakata, 2008).

What is a Corpus?
- "A large, principled collection of naturally occurring texts (written or spoken) stored electronically" (Reppen, 2010, p. 2).
- Provides descriptions of actual language use and a resource for authentic language teaching texts.
- Sizes range from 1,000 words to 450 million words.
- General language inferences require large samples (e.g. COCA, BNC, etc.) whereas specialized corpora (e.g. Business text books) require smaller samples (McEnery, Xiao, & Tono, 2006).

Application of Corpora to Vocabulary Learning
- Use of concordance lines as vocabulary input allows learners to encounter vocabulary in multiple real contexts and involves learner-directed discovery learning (Nation, 2001, p.111).
- Corpus generated vocabulary lists can identify vocabulary needed to read certain texts without excessive difficulty (Reppen, 2010, p. 5).
- Corpus analysis can identify semi-technical vocabulary words used in a text that are not normally found in general English courses (Nation, 2001, p. 192).
- Corpora help generate lists of items that are useful for learners to study (Nation, 2001, p. 192).

Word Lists
- 1K- The 1,000 most frequently occurring words in the English language.
- 2K- The next 1,000 (after 1K)
- 3K- The next 1,000 (after 2K)
- Academic Word List (AWL)- The 570 most common words in academic texts excluding 1K and 2K words.

Type of Vocabulary	% coverage
1st 1000 words	71.4%
2nd 1000 words	4.7%
AWL	10.0%
Others	13.9%
Total	100%

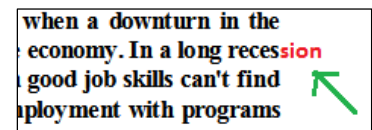(Nation, 2001, p. 13)

Materials Development

Step I. Build Your Corpus

1. **Scan a Representative Sample** Because language and structure change throughout the introduction, body, and conclusion of a text, take samples from multiple pages in multiple chapters. To conduct **systematic sampling**, we scanned pages from odd chapters in one book and even chapters in the other. We scanned 2 pages toward the front, middle, and end of each selected chapter.

Chapters

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |

Our Corpus
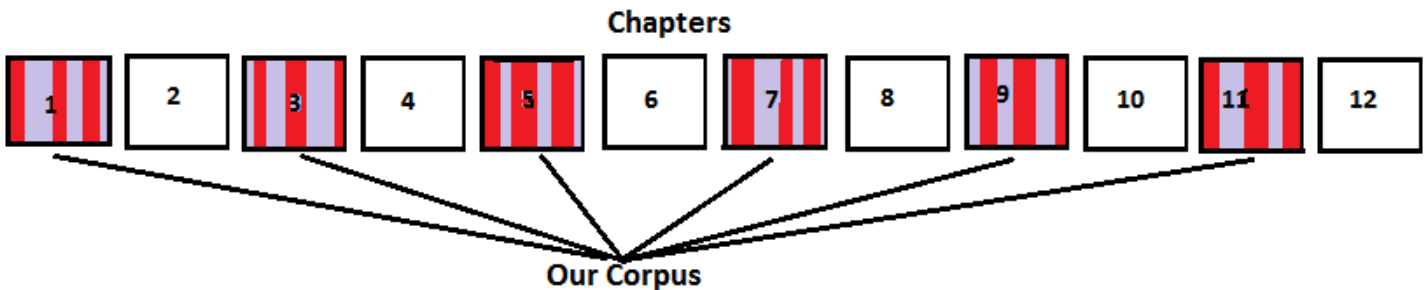
2. **How much to scan?** Choosing a corpus size depends on the purpose. Corpus sizes generally range from 1,000 words to 450 million words. Specialized corpora, such as ESP business, require smaller samples than general corpora (McEnery, Xiao, & Tono, 2006). As few as 1,000 words can be sufficient for grammatical studies (Biber, 1993). However, lexical studies require larger samples because grammatical features (e.g. past tense –ed) vary less than lexical choice. Making inferences about the English language in general requires a larger sample (e.g. COCA corpus of 450 million + words).

3. **Clean-up Files** It is important to remove any words that cannot be recognized by an electronic profiler as this will skew data. Read through your files and delete as many cut-off words, proper nouns, words with apostrophes, and acronyms as possible. This is easiest in Microsoft Word.

when a downturn in the economy. In a long recession good job skills can't find ployment with programs

Words cut-off in scanning can be completed or deleted.

4. **Format Files** Convert files to text file (a file that ends in .txt):

   - For Microsoft Word Document: click SAVE AS→ Save as Type→ Plain Text→Save.

   - For Adobe (.pdf) files: Can be converted to .txt using Online OCR (http://www.onlineocr.net/default.aspx). It is free for up to fifteen pages per hour, and has reasonable rates for converting a small corpus ($8.00 for 70 pages).
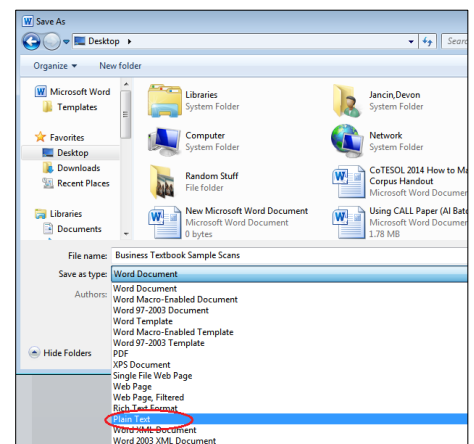
Step II. Analyze Your Corpus Data

We used Lexical Tutor's Compleat Vocab Profile (http://www.lextutor.ca/vp/comp/). It compares your corpus to the British National Corpus (BNC- more than 100 million words) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA- more than 450 million words) in order to generate a list of frequently occurring words in your textbook.

1. **Upload your text file** towards the bottom of the page, then click "Submit_File".
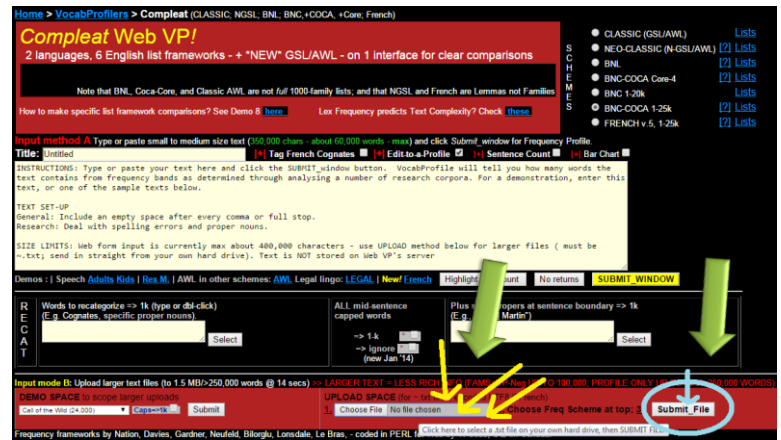
2. **First list generated**→displays the overall percentage of words at each word-list level.

3. **Second list generated**→A color-coded list of specific words at each level.

4. **Select your words** These will depend greatly on your purpose. In our program, students are expected to know the K1, K2 and Academic Word Lists already. However, in an American freshman business course students will encounter K3 words like "corporate" and "profit". To bridge this vocabulary gap, we selected 30 business-specific semi-technical words from K3.

5. **In order to** select these 30 words, we started with the most frequent word ("profit", 107 times) to less frequent words until we reached 30 words. Selected words are indicated with a box in the above display.

Now that you have your vocabulary list, you are ready to create your modules.

Our Business ESP Online Modules Website:
- Contains three modules of ten words each
- Presents vocabulary in authentic context
- Provides pictures and definitions
- Provides practice activities and assessments at the end of each module with **Quizlet**

Step III: Create Vocabulary Activities for the Modules on Quizlet

Quizlet.com is an autonomous learning website that allows users to create, share and access vocabulary flashcards with any smartphone or PC. It also provides pronunciation, spelling and word recall games, as well as assessments. This facilitates frequent utilization of flashcards which improves vocabulary

learning (Basoglu & Akdemir, 2010, p. 1) and reading comprehension (Runhaar, van der Zande & Ursella, 2012). Assessment results can be printed by users or viewed online by teachers.

How do I use Quizlet?
1. **Get Started** Create an account on http://quizlet.com/
2. **Use an existing vocabulary set or create a set:**
   - You could include assignment instructions in "Description."
   - Enter words and definitions. (Quizlet provides the option to automatically generate definitions, but we prefer using http://www.ldoceonline.com/ or http://www.learnersdictionary.com/ for ESL appropriate definitions.)
   - Optionally upload pictures or automatically generate translations.
3. **Use Quizlet** Use flashcards, learn new words, play learning games (speller, scatter, space race), and test knowledge of words.
4. **Edit Quizlet** Use computer generated pronunciation or record your own pronunciation to include in activities; star words to put on a review study list; add/remove/edit cards.
5. **Share with Students** Create a "class" and add students' quizlet accounts, add to a folder of related sets, print, share via email or URL. Combine with another set of cards, copy, export to another document type, or embed on another website (this is what we did).

Step IV: Create your Module Website

Weebly.com is a free platform for creating websites. It is ad free, user friendly, and allows users to create multiple websites. Creation of a computer website also automatically generates a smartphone compatible website that can also be edited. The platform guides users through the creation of websites.

How do I use Weebly?
1. **Signup** Create a free account at http://www.weebly.com/. Select "create a site."
2. **Choose a theme** Options include pre-designed themes as well as choices of colors, fonts, layouts, and graphics.
3. **Choose a website domain (URL)** Use a free domain, buy a *.com*, or use an existing site.
4. **Edit your site** Use the grey menu on the left. (The scroll bar only shows when you hover over it.) Icons are fairly self-explanatory. Options provided by the icons include text, images, videos, slide shows, scroll texts, comment pages, embedded links, HTML code, etc. Click and hold the desired icon; drag it onto your page. Edit the information within the selected feature in accordance with the prompts.

5. **Embed Activities** For Quizlet vocabulary activities to appear on your website:
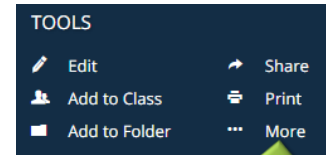   - Drag the "embed code" icon from the left hand column to the desired place on your page.
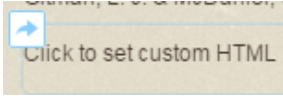
- Click "click to custom set HTML" and select

   Edit Custom HTML
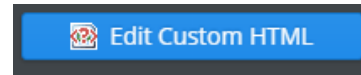
- Go back to the Quizlet set that you want to embed on your website.
- On Quizlet, hover over "more" from the "TOOLS" dashboard.
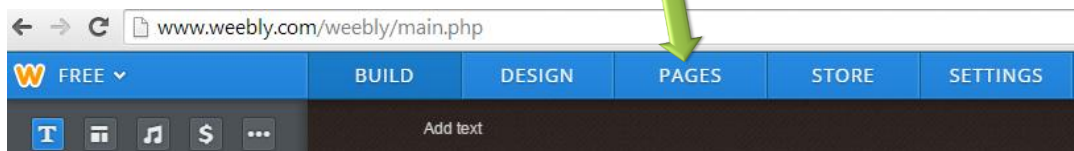- Select "< > embed."
- Copy the html code provided:

   Flashcards

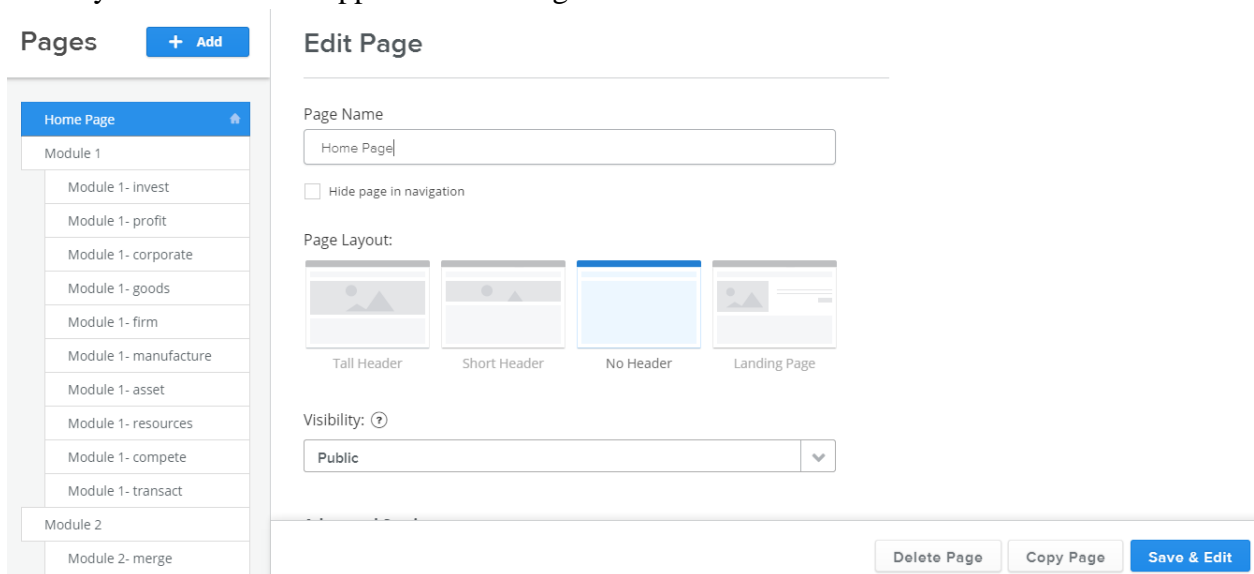   `<iframe src="https://quizlet.com/32952311/flashcards/embedv2" height="4`

   TOOLS
   - Edit   → Share
   - Add to Class   Print
   - Add to Folder ... More

- Go back to the Weebly page. Click **Click to set custom HTML** and then paste the code in the "< > embed" box.
- Your activities will now appear on your webpage.

6. **Add Pages** To have a homepage and separate modules:
   - click "PAGES"

     www.weebly.com/weebly/main.php

     W FREE ∨   **BUILD**   **DESIGN**   **PAGES**   **STORE**   **SETTINGS**

     T ⊞ ♫ $ ···   Add text

   - Enter your page name. Select a layout. Drag the elements into the desired order and hierarchy in which you want them to appear in the navigation bar.

     Pages   + Add   **Edit Page**

     Home Page
     Module 1
     Module 1- invest
     Module 1- profit
     Module 1- corporate
     Module 1- goods
     Module 1- firm
     Module 1- manufacture
     Module 1- asset
     Module 1- resources
     Module 1- compete
     Module 1- transact
     Module 2
     Module 2- merge

     Page Name
     Home Page

     ☐ Hide page in navigation

     Page Layout:

     Tall Header   Short Header   No Header   Landing Page

     Visibility: ⓘ
     Public

     Delete Page   Copy Page   Save & Edit

7. **Publish** Review the appearance of your website in the PC and smart phone formats. Finally, publish your page.

Step V: Using your Website in Class

- **Modeling** Show students how to use the module by demonstrating in class.

- **Independent Study** Could be used in class during independent work time or outside of class autonomously.
- **Accountability** Students can print/email quiz results or teacher could use Quizlet tracking options to view progress.
- **Smart Phone App** Students reported using the Quizlet smart phone app frequently, for example while waiting at the bus stop.
- **Create Modules** Students could generate more modules themselves as a class project.

Discussion Notes:

References

Basoglu, E. B., & Akdemir, O. (2010). A comparison of undergraduate students' English vocabulary learning: Using mobile phones and flash cards. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology-TOJET*, *9*(3), 1-7.

Biber, D. (1993). Representativeness in corpus design. *Literary and Linguistic Computing, 8*(4), 243-257.

Konstantakis, N. (2007). Creating a business word list for teaching business English. *ELIA*, *7*, 79-102.

McEnery, T., Xiao, R. & Tono, Y. (2006). *Corpus-based language studies: An advanced resource book.* London: Routledge.

Nakata, T. (2008). English vocabulary learning with word lists, word cards and computers: Implications from cognitive psychology research for optimal spaced learning. *ReCALL*, *20*(1), 3.

Nation, P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Reppen, R. (2010). *Using corpora in the language classroom.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Runhaar, G. J., van der Zande, S. M., & Ursella, E. G. E. (2012). *Online vocabulary learning for bilingual secondary school pupils: An intervention study with first-year learners at the Hermann Wesselink College*. Retrieved from http://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/250577