

## CORPUS LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Douglas Biber is Regents' Professor of English (Applied Linguistics) at Northern Arizona University. His research efforts have focused on corpus linguistics, English grammar, and register variation (in English and cross-linguistic; synchronic and diachronic). His publications include books published with Cambridge University Press (1988, 1995, 1998), and the co-authored Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (1999) and Longman Student Grammar of Spoken and Written English (2002).

The last decade has witnessed an explosion of research studies in corpus linguistics, an approach to describing language that employs sophisticated computer tools and quantitative techniques. These studies have shown that speakers and writers are much more systematic about their language use than we had ever guessed before. The results of these studies are often surprising; prior to corpus research, linguists had sometimes failed to notice the most common linguistic patterns of use. However, those common patterns are arguably among the most important ones for learners.

Surprisingly, few quantitative findings from corpus research have been translated into classroom applications. Although ESL teaching has begun to use authentic language materials and corpus 'concordancing', few pedagogical applications have been adapted to take account of corpus research findings. This plenary talk introduces corpus-based research and presents several case studies that illustrate how corpus findings can be directly relevant to classroom teaching and materials development – exploring the nexus between corpus findings and effective language teaching.