

Corpus writing assignment

<http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~gawron/fundamentals>

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1 Readings

Outline

1 Readings

2 How to read

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- 1 Readings
- 2 How to read
- 3 What to write

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What to read

- 1 Bresnan et al. (2005)

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Reading goals I

- 1 Read the reading, focusing on the question of **the advantages of corpus study over armchair linguistics**.
- 2 Identify the main variables studied that affect the choice of syntactic pattern in the dative alternation
- 3 The Bresnan et al. paper has a particular position about the value of corpus work. Make sure you understand what that position is and how it ties in to the fundamental claim made in the paper.

Reading goals II

- At the end, the paper develops a particular mathematical model for “predicting the dative alternation” and uses several linguistic variables to do the predicting. You are not responsible for understanding the details of mathematical model, but you are responsible for understanding what is being used to predict what. What linguistic feature is being predicted? What linguistic features (variables) are being used to do the predicting? (If you read the reading and aren't clear on these points, ask for help.) Finally, what work do you need to do to build such a model and what resources do you need to build such a model? [Note: The answer ISN'T: “I need to understand a lot of math I don't understand.” You actually don't need to understand the math.] How does a corpus fit in?

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Paper outline: 4 sections I

- 1 In the first section, explain the position of Bresnan et al. on using corpora. What arguments do they make for their position, and what do they say about armchair linguistics (even if they don't call it that)?
- 2 In the second section, describe in detail what their study of the dative alternation finds. What is the dative alternation? What are the alternatives in the alternation? What factors affect the choice between the alternatives? Give a complete list of the factors they study and explain what each factor means by example.

Paper outline: 4 sections II

- 3 In the third section, present a discussion of how well their study supports their view on corpora. They build a model. What resources does that model require? What work did they need to do in order to build the model? How does that support their view on corpora?
- 4 Finally, you should also write a section in which you draw some conclusions based on your evaluation of their study. You should discuss the following question: How feasible is it to apply the method they present to other problems? If you think it is feasible, you should give an example. If you think it is not feasible, you should state clearly why.

Bresnan, Joan, Anna Cueni, Tatiana Nikitina, and R. Harald Baayen.
2005.

Predicting the dative alternation.

Unpublished ms., Paper presented at KNAW Academy Colloquium.

<http://www-lfg.stanford.edu/bresnan/qs-submit.pdf>.