# The Compleat Lexical Tutor as a Resource for Teachers of Poetry

Gibreel Sadeq Alaghbary

#### Introduction

In the age of computers, technology is an ideal choice for teachers working with young people for two reasons. First, learners have easy access to gadgets and spend long hours with them. This interaction can be employed to advantage in the language classroom. Second, technology helps promote independent and personalized learning because learners get to work on activities that suit their proficiency level, and at their own pace.

Widdowson (2004) remarks that "the most striking development in linguistic description over the past twenty years has been the use of the computer to collect and analyse vast corpora of actually occurring language data" (p. 357). This "technology" has found its way into classrooms, with interesting applications and inspiring outcomes. In my paper, I will take up an illustration of one such technology. The Compleat Lexical Tutor (see http:// www.lextutor.ca) is a free website which offers a variety of corpus-based tools that emphasize the role of vocabulary in language learning (English, French and Spanish) and promote inductive learning. The website was created by Tom Cobb of the University of Quebec at Montreal, Canada, and is dedicated to "data driven learning on the web" (Cobb, 1997).

Data driven learning (DDL) refers to the use of linguistic corpora in language learning (Hadley, 2002). It encourages learners to explore and analyse (authentic) language data in order to discover patterns of use for themselves (Johns, 1990). Cobb contends that vocabularies are retained longer and used more appropriately when encountered in a variety of contexts and when learners are actively involved in the learning process. For Cobb, the rationale for this attention to vocabulary is that if learners know the 200 most frequently used words in a language, in addition to the 570 high-frequency academic words on the Academic Word List (AWL), they already know about 90 per cent of the words they will encounter in academic contexts (Cobb, 2004). The website, therefore, offers a wide range of tools to facilitate the selflearning of vocabulary in acontext.

There are four main advantages of this approach, as compared to more traditional approaches to language teaching. These are: it teaches vocabulary and grammar inductively because learners discover regularities and patterns for themselves; it makes use of authentic material because the corpora are drawn from instances of actual spoken and written language; it promotes learner autonomy because the activities are learner- centred and can be used independently of teachers; and it appeals to young learners' interest in technology because learners use their laptops or smartphones to process the data and learn through discovered patterns.

## The Compleat Lexical Tutor

The website offers a wide range of tools to facilitate data driven learning, most of which are interactive. Learners, for example, can

Language and Language Teaching

assess their vocabulary size, test their knowledge of vocabulary, read and listen to vocabulary in context, determine their passive vocabularies and make them active, and test their grammar using concordance lines. A sample of the website interface is given in figure 1.



Figure 1. The Compleat Lexical Tutor interface.

The tools may be picked in accordance with the local pedagogical objectives. The system developers, however, suggest the following formulae for "learning" vocabulary:

1. Use the *vocabulary tests* to determine your vocabulary size and next zone of vocabulary growth. You may want to start with the Classic (GSL+UWL) or BNC (1-14k) word recognition tests (GSL=General Service List; UWL=University Word List; BNC = British National Corpus). The test names are also hyperlinks and will take you to the tests if you click on them. A sample of the tests page is given infigure 2.

interes and a second	ALC N DECK ALC ALC
ency Based Vocabu	
Levels (acception + productive), Associates	See No. 495. Mar the Dec held. Festile a la Connerte et al faith a duite
1. Frequency based: Receptive	Contract And Contract Contract Contract Contract Provide and Internet Accord
Londs, M. Long J. Long Londs, Dest M.D. & J W.L.W. 108 (Second S	da, Uh. Cama) Halane, 2015. esteneyten a print (n. Madane, 1905) esteneyten e print (n. Mathania) (m. A. Capatane, 2016), Language (m. Mathania) (m. Mathania) (m. Mathania) (m. Mathania)
Size Test, 1	-14 K Peopler & Visition, 2007, Internetion + point, Ballyblath Formage + Disposate: W dHCD+17/cmc / Scindly from 2017
Phone Loss 5 fe March	2 educative + print) as a diretting from the endown at 2011, strategic-experiment of the endowned of the endow
2 Frequency based : Productive	
* Inst. Berny & Ander & Hall	an, 1999, 5 Investe, 3 Investe, internatione, no conversed print, BE-120000 (comp)
3. Frequency based : Receptive -	Protuctive
<sup>1</sup> CAESS Computer Adapted a productive recognition	the Tart of See & Security LAN SE STORED 31 Aug 2017 # Lander & Loverthy Avail, 2016, but of versioniny size and storage, + the continuous of productive secal, scopping, promptice scopping, and advantation of productive secal, scopping and storage.
4. Wet Associates Test Plant, 1	(00), attoractive + print)
French & other languages	
	Jahr - Penede Laweb Test Inter Nation 1990 (Madebaldaded H. Dated, Peli 2014) at annexist Not Dec (Filling) - Interactive version to follow - 1907 v ( M. 8 2014 integ 1955, pp. pp. 1)
<sup>1</sup> Paul Meana's French You Ho Check <sup>1</sup> Jan Millar's Prench Listering Viscali	int Fort (h-dx) ent alt/IV/LTX rigs including How To + Research

Figure 2. Frequency based vocabulary tests.

Language and Language TeachingVolume 7 Number 1 Issue 13 January 201831

2. Go to List\_Learn and identify the level you need to improve on, figure 3.

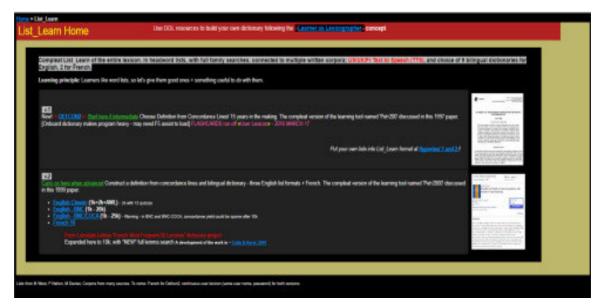


Figure 3. List\_Learn.

3. Work your way through the list with the aid of a dictionary and concordance. Develop an approach that suits you: make notes, cut and paste examples and definitions to the Group Lex Database provided, or a spreadsheet on your computer, figure 4.

	-99	100000 P	DAMPA	intes 💌	DEPONITION:	-	ATECONT S	ANTERNA P
	0	territy	the quilet an your'll territy the integrities.rs	week	Frighten, make altale	Arts	monto.A	20127-005-201
- 554	с (1),	determine .	The date of the electron has yet to be determined.	Amore	to service, reserves, or decide (a degree $\alpha$ , etc.)	A-14	Turns in cases	2017-04-42 47-47
	10.	tares .	a trangular <b>farm</b>	New	the outside appearance of a chearty defined area	A111	southernand	1017-05-08 871-06
15.6	• E	distant as loss	The data of the algorithm has yet to be determined.	1997	the matrixet, remaining , ary absolute ( ), always for , where )	Law	vocalcitie?	2017-05-02 07-03
	6.00	anterna la	The date of the electron has yet to be default initial.	wards .	to settle, resultys, or decide	A438	Yanasi, Anna	2017.09.61
		exite locates	ing whitehing happing to becaute	-	is make a high, other sound by furning the breath through screening lips or through the testh.	A-14	1991, an annual	2019/10/00/00 10/00/00
	e 11	-	Our olds like to play with a server.	Mage	Our cels the to play with white	Acta	-	2017-04-22
	e a	maginal	This take of humans against a head of magical creatures heads up rather quickly.	Aspective	mysteriously enchanting	A/16	-	2017-00-00 20122
	• (C.)		a mastering unique to all the world.	Alpenter	molecting an the only one of its find on types, or as the only many the control of the second	-	Xinot	2017.01.29 (1/37
	0.01	nate:	If she relate Note, but her to out one.	Adapt	adt: - assessmenterice :	A-11	Reads.	20027-00.200 111-00
	0.00		the three the political into the wider.	hinar	a preak rack reported by the action of replay.	A.110	11100	2006.12.01 09.10
6	0.0	perchas	Could I have some water? I'm parched	New	dry or Diredy, especially because of heat.	A/16	24488	2008.12.24 590.07
	10	content.	The badry toolic content in her arts.	New	satisfaction, contactment.	Arts -	A	2006-18-01 19-06
	00	test.	the least of a fisch	hear	a brid's mouth	800C	11100	2006.12.31 09.08
	. 6	Annual and Par	Underly Respirately is great.	Security	the Mendle receptor, and treatment of guests or streatments.	-	Undersy	1005.18.15

Figure 4. Group\_Lex.

4. If you do not like learning from lists, or want to learn more about new words by meeting them in other contexts, then you can paste complete authentic texts into VP Cloze, which will give you exercises for words from the frequency band you are working on, figure 5.

P Cloze Builder (v.s. ISUAL (What facts look like Pyour	(now-x-many-words')		Research 1+2k, or 1+2+AWL) OR NEW VP.	BNC/Coca (1-25k or 1-25c)
(1) Find a text that has the k-le	vel items you want your lea	mers to work :	at or beyond (use VP).	
2 Choose band - (a) CLASSIC Note that "post" categories gene				
33) Enter 1-wd title yww_tite	(SS) Type/paste text	below (3c) Cho	ose info corpus (non-thit) when	
Enter your text here.				
This program will make a close pass For a demonstration, just click SU		equency band.		Count
TERT SET-UP General: Include an empty space af Correct any spalling or word use en Format: Use the keyboard to make n	mors.	The program will	transform these Leto HTML codes.	Highlight Renet
DEMOS: Elephant Man 1 (graded)   Elepha	ert Man 2 (graded)   NZ Forestry (1)			
4) Type/Paste/Dbl-Click any w	ords to block:			
Sa) Number questions? S	FOR PAPER - Gaps not	menus?	Caps not gaps? = [?]	(0) SUBMIT

Figure 5. VP cloze builder.

5. If you want to work outside the frequency framework altogether, but not entirely independently, then you can read a novel with full click-on lexical support. You could also make your own resource-supported texts at Hypertext Builder, figures 6, 7.

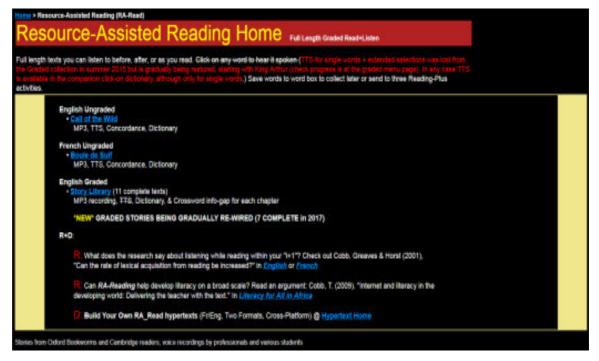


Figure 6. Resource-assisted reading home.

Language and Language Teaching Volume 7 Number 1 Issue 13 January 2018

33



Figure 7. Hypertext builder.

For tutorials on using the *Compleat Lexical Tutor*, watch the youtube channel *Using Lexical Tutor Web Site* at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43CrLOtule4.

## The Compleat Lexical Tutor and Teachers of Poetry

In this section, I will highlight two tools that are most directly relevant to the poetry classroom. The first tool is Vocabprofile. Teachers can input poems into the WebVP Classic, as seen in figure 8.



Figure 8. Web VP classic.

When you hit submit, you get the analysis of the text at the lexical level, as shown in figure 9.

34

Nordis 1  academic): > Anglo- Sas:	1 1	0.65%	76.13 9.03 9.65 14.19	76.13 85.16 85.81 100.00	Pertaining to onlist only Tokanic Types: Families: Tokanis per family: Types per family: Anglo-Sax Internet: Anglo-Sax Internet: Personal IP-Cogniste Index: Invested	133 84 75 1,75 1,75 1,75 1,75 1,75 1,75 1,75 1	
and the second se	20 22 104 155						

Figure 9. Lexical analysis of 'I wandered lonely as a cloud'

The output shows that the percentage of the K1-K2 words (most frequently used 2000 words) in the text is about 85 per cent, the percentage from the AWL is under 1 per cent, while off-list words (which may be proper nouns, archaic words, abbreviations, etc.) constitute a little over 14 per cent. This lexical frequency breakdown is crucial to the teacher of poetry, especially at the stage of text selection. It provides an answer to the decades-old debate about which poems to select for the language classroom. If the learners have taken vocabulary tests and determined their vocabulary size, teachers can select the right text for their class with the help of Vocabprofile. It may be noted here that learners can also benefit from this tool by inputting their essays and monitoring the percentage of AWL words in their writing.

The second tool is Concordance. This tool allows teachers to demonstrate to learners how the words they encounter in poetry, both classic and modern, are actually used today. It also allows a demonstration of how words collocate, and whether the collocates the learners find in poetry are also found in common use. To do this, click Concordance, Corpus: English and the screen in figure 10 pops up.

h German Speniah English	Add more for extras (associated words, family search, sub-corport)
Keyword(s): equals +	In corpus: Brown (1 million vids)
CONTROLS	
Sort By 1 + word(s) to Lett + of k Ce STARTS or FAMILY searches. Net by keyword	eyword   Line Witth 120 * Number of Lines 1,000 * Gapped? No *
OPTION With associated word(s)	within 4 + words to Exter + side
and NONE of these words anywhere in th	se line :
Soan for any recurring word (potential	i colloc.) within [5 +] words presenting <= [4 +] times
DEMOS : Demo 1 Demo 2 Demo	3 Demo 4 Demo 5 dis-flority/tilsers >> River bank Morey bank

Online Concordance concept by Chris Greaves, HK Polytechnic; v.7 PERL code by Tom Cobb, UQAM Montreal

Figure 10. Corpus concordance English.

35

Extract CALLER Encloy 211202100 Gev			
😥 🕻 equais 🧧 Nander 📲 Brown (1 million walc)	E BORDO 1 mil 2 mil 2	access lanely and ether	
hits Diandardized to <b>0 per million</b> chita/es Click any <b>KITHORD</b> for more context	epus mine x 1,000,000)		
Defrect. (2) 40 1 (2) and (2) 40 1 (2) 4 (2) 1 (2) 4 (3) 4 (4)			
EFT IMMEDIATE 1 WD COLLOCS (Freip+r2, with leftright x 1	2-3 wd sort) for wander (associationely)		
nore			
	Second constant only within \$ was allowd		
LL POTENTIAL COLLOGS (++1) for wander (assocritoraly) (	underer one and the states in white RECEL		

Figure 11. Output of collocation analysis of Wander and Lonely in Brown Corpus.

## Conclusion

In my present paper, I have explored the relevance of corpus tools in the poetry classroom. I have provided evidence that corpus-driven tools can provide valuable insights with regard to the selection of poems for the language class. Moreover, vocabulary from the poems selected need to be examined against the corpora of language use in order to decide their frequency and relevance to the learners' needs. The language in the poem examined 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud' is quite simple in terms of vocabulary, but it contains words and collocations that are not frequently seen outside the poem. Tools such as the Compleat Lexical Tutor provide a better understanding of the different and unusual nature of language in poetry. They may serve to maximize the benefits from the introduction of poetry, classic or modern, into the language classroom.

## References

- Cobb, T. (1997). *The Compleat Lexical Tutor*. Retrieved from <lextutor.ca>.
- Hadley, G. (2002). Sensing the winds of change: An introduction to data-driven learning. *RELC Journal*, *33*(2), 99-124.
- Johns, T. (1990). From printout to handout: Grammar and vocabulary teaching in the context of datadriven learning. *CALL Austria*, 10, 14-34.

Widdowson, H. (2004). A perspective on recent trends. In A. P. R. Howatt & H. Widdowson (Eds.), *A history of English language teaching* (2nd ed.) (pp. 353-372). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**Gibreel Sadeq Alaghbary** has a Ph.D. in Stylistics and has served as Fulbright post-doctoral fellow and adjunct faculty at San Diego State University, USA. His research focuses on the investigation of ideology in political discourse.

gibreelsadeq@yahoo.com