

# CORPUS LINGUISTICS AND THE CASE FOR NARROW READING

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Corpus linguistics can help in the process of second language acquisition, for example, by examining a number of well-established claims or "myths" about second language teaching and learning. One of these claims, which is rarely examined, is the assumed benefit of extensive reading to the successful acquisition of the vocabulary (Krashen et al). This claim states that a language learner can accumulate sufficient lexical knowledge of a second language only by exposing oneself to sufficient input by extensive reading. Corpus analysis can help answer the vital questions which often arise to language teachers and learners like the following: is extensive reading really adequate and sufficient to accumulate the most important lexical items of the second language; what impact will reading of various types of texts have; is it better to read texts by one or by various authors (i.e. "broad" or "narrow" reading)? The study of two relatively large corpora ( 1 100 000 words each) attempted to compare how the reading of texts can help learners encounter with the highest frequency vocabulary and how many gaps would be left in their vocabulary exposure. The study revealed that in order to successfully acquire the adequate range of English vocabulary, the learner must receive enormous amounts of input, which often does not seem very feasible. Thus, neither the „broad“, nor the „narrow“ reading are found to be adequate for the sufficiently frequent encounter with all most important English lexical items necessary for a learner to successfully function in an English language environment (the so-called „lexical minimum“). After analysing the study results, further suggestions and research guidelines are discussed.