CorCenCC Newsletter

Issue 6: Sept 2016

CorCenCC
Corpws Cenedlaethol Cymraeg Cyfoes
National Corpus of Contemporary Welsh

Greetings from the PI

Welcome to the 6th edition of the CorCenCC newsletter which means we are now officially 6 months into the project (or 1/7 of the way through)! Members of the CPT met on 5th September to take stock of progress and to plan work for the next 12 months – there are lots of exciting things on the cards! We will keep you updated on this as time goes on. In this month's edition of the newsletter we will bring you updates on some of the work that is being carried out on Work Package 4 (WP4) – focusing in particular on a survey that has been developed for Welsh teachers and tutors – which aims to get a clearer sense of what bespoke pedagogic tools we should aim to build to ensure that the pedagogic toolkit is useful for you and your learners. Please take a look and help the team by sharing your thoughts on this! You can also read about recent CorCenCC conference papers delivered in Japan and get the opportunity to learn a little more about another member of the CorCenCC team – this month we feature Mair Rees from Swansea University.

Happy reading, Dr Dawn Knight (Cardiff University)

Swansea University CorCenCC PhD studentship

The College of Arts and Humanities in Swansea University is offering a PhD studentship attached to the CorCenCC project. They are looking for a suitable candidate to work with the project team with a focus on the pedagogic toolkit element as well as contributing to other developments on the project. Once the successful candidate is in post, the specific topic will be negotiated with the Swansea team members. Further information and application form can be found at: http://tinyurl.com/h3rqlgt

Applications need to be received by 15 October 2016 – please encourage anyone you know who might be interested to apply or to contact Steve Morris in the Department of Welsh at Swansea University (s.morris@swansea.ac.uk) in the first instance.

Learning/Teaching tools – teachers' and tutors' feedback needed!

Corpora are highly useful resources for a wide range of fields, including lexicography, research, publishing and translation. But one of the most innovative things about CorCenCC is the fact that special tools for a particular field – namely that of Welsh learning/teaching – will be available to complement the main corpus tools from the outset.

Corpora can show the most common words, phrases and patterns in a language. They can show which words tend to go together, and which ones occur in which types of text (e.g. formal written texts, spoken

Holiadur CorCenCC i athrawon/diwtoriaid Cymraeg
CorCenCC questionnaire for Welsh teachers/tutors

Corpws Cenedlaethol Cymraeg Cyfoes (CorCenCC) yw enw prosiect ymchwil cydweithredol (rhwng Prifysgolion Caerdydd, Abertawe, Bangor a Lancaster) sy'n anelu at adeiladu corpws o'r iaith Gymraeg. Mae corpws yn gasgliad o ddata iaith lafar, ysgrifenedig a digidol sy'n rhoi cipolwg o iaith fel y'i defnyddir mewn sefyllfaoedd 'go iawn'. Fel rhan o brosiect CorCenCC, byddwn ni'n datblygu adnoddau ar gyfer dysgu ac addysgu'r Gymraeg. Mae'n bwysig seilio'n gwaith ar anghenion athrawon a thiwtoriaid, felly **rydyn ni'n gofyn ichi gwblhau'r holiadur byr hwn. Dylai fe gymryd tua 20 munud i'w gwblhau.** Mae'r adran gyntaf yn holi am y cyd-destun yr ydych chi'n dysgu ynddo. Yn adran dau rydyn ni'n gofyn am enghreifftiau o adnoddau cyfredol sy'n hynod effeithiol, yn eich profiad chi. Mae adran tri yn holi am y mathau o adnoddau yr hoffech chi eu cael yn y dyfodol. Diolch i chi'n fawr iawn am eich amser. Mae'r holiadur yn dechrau gyda datganiad eich bod yn cydsynio i gyfranogi yn yr arolwg hwn.

conversations, professional e-mails, and personal text messages). Corpus users can search for specific words and see them in example sentences. Corpora are therefore excellent sources of language information to supplement other learning materials.
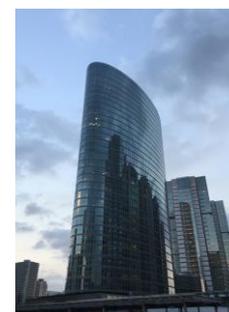
The aim of Work Package 4 (WP4) is to develop a series of bespoke tools to be used within and outside Welsh classes, from primary school to adult education. Over the next year, WP4 team members will be carrying out a survey (including questionnaires and focus groups) to investigate which tools would be particularly useful to Welsh learners and educators. The survey's first questionnaire asks teachers and tutors about their priorities for future learning/teaching resources, and the questionnaire was distributed to a number of Welsh tutors and teachers during conferences in July. An online version is now available, in order to reach a wider audience of teachers and tutors across Wales. You are very welcome to share the link with any Welsh tutors/teachers you know: http://arolwg.corcencc.cymru/holiadur/holiadur-i-addysgwyr/. The deadline for responses to the questionnaire is 30 September 2016. Thank you very much!

Conferences and events

On 8th September Dawn Knight, Steve Morris and Tess Fitzpatrick arrived in Tokyo for ten days of conference and seminar attendance, at which they presented a total of eleven papers, posters and colloquia.
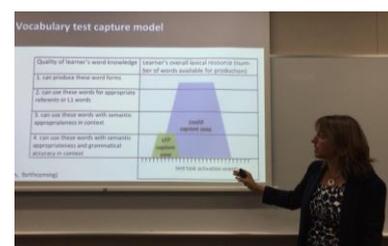
JALT seminar, 9th September 2016

The first engagement was an evening event at Tokyo Chapter of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT). The JALT tagline is "Learning to teach, teaching to learn", and the organisation promotes excellence in language teaching and research among its 3000+ members in Japan; that full-time teachers are happy to spend Friday evenings at research seminars is testament to its success! The event was held in the American Language Institute, on the 22nd floor of the Shinagawa Intercity Tower in central Tokyo. The views were breathtaking. The three presentations shared a "vocabulary" theme, and Steve started the evening with a talk about how under-resourced languages such as Welsh can formulate pedagogical wordlists in a principled way, without the benefit of corpus-based frequency lists. He then introduced the CorCenCC project, which linked neatly to Dawn's talk on recent innovations in corpus construction and enquiry, in which she outlined potential developments for the future of corpus-based language study. In the final talk of the evening, Tess presented a suite of tests that use corpus-based frequency lists to assess learners' productive vocabulary knowledge, and presented a model of vocabulary test 'capture' which can be used to support teachers in selecting and interpreting fit-for-purpose vocabulary tests.

PacSLRF, 10th-11th September 2016

The next two days were spent at PacSLRF, the Pacific Second Language Research Forum, held at Chou University on the outskirts of Tokyo. PacSLRF, founded in 1991, focuses on empirical and theoretical research in second language acquisition (SLA). Many of the talks took a psycholinguistic approach to the investigation of language processing, or considered the implications of processing theories for language learning and teaching; bilingual processing was another key theme. CorCenCC, introduced through Dawn, Steve and Tess's poster presentation "Creating Pedagogical Wordlists: A Comparison of Thematic and Corpus Approaches", fitted well with the conference theme of "Data and theories in SLA research", and attracted

interest from researchers interested in data-driven learning, corpus compilation, and the promotion of lesser used languages – as well as from those who had fond memories of study visits to Wales! Wales was also represented in a Cardiff University colloquium on lexical retrieval, presented by Tess Fitzpatrick and three current PhD students: Dale Brown, John Racine (both based in Japan), and Peter Thwaites (who lives and works in Korea).

Vocab@Tokyo Conference – Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo 12th-14th September 2016

The final conference at Tokyo was Vocab@Tokyo at the more traditional campus of Meiji Gakuin University. This followed the first successful Vocab@ conference held in Victoria, New Zealand in 2013. The focus here was on vocabulary studies including featured speeches from Batia Laufer, Diane Schmitt and CorCenCC consultant Tom Cobb. Project CI, Tess Fitzpatrick was the main conference plenary speaker and gave a well-received talk on 'Profiling word retrieval behaviour: Generic patterns and individual differences'. Later on the same day, Tess was joined by Dawn Knight, Steve Morris and Laurence Anthony to give a colloquium on the creation and application of CorCenCC.

One of the big positive aspects of attending conferences such as this is that it not only gives us the opportunity to showcase the project but also to talk to academics from other language communities. Many of these are working on either developing their own corpora, making wordlists or reversing language shift within lesser used language contexts. These included Danish, Miyakoan (in Japan) and Mohawk (from the United States). Helping, sharing information and working with these different language communities is an important and integral part of the CorCenCC vision.

Meet the team

Every month we will be featuring a different member of the extended CorCenCC team in our newsletter. This will give everyone a chance to tell you a little about their background; what they want to see from CorCenCC and how they think it might contribute to their own work, or more broadly, to the work of others in Wales. This month we spotlight Mair Rees, who is a Research Assistant (RA) on the CorCenCC project, based at Swansea University.

Profile: Mair Rees

I must confess, the task of introducing myself in a few words was a bigger challenge than I expected. The main reason for that perhaps is that I'm a bit of a patchwork quilt of a Welsh woman! I have a wide range of interests, both academic and personal.

I originate from Fforest-fach, on the Western side of Swansea. It's an area which has undergone a transformation over the past decades, from being a semi-rural, Welsh-speaking area to being a largely English-speaking retail centre. My own family was bilingual, my father a Welsh speaker from the area and my mother a non-Welsh speaker (apart from the odd 'cwtsh', 'ych-a-fi' and 'dirty mochyn'!) from the cosmopolitan docklands of Swansea. As a result, I have at least two perspectives on everything!

I started my career as an art therapist working with people who

Searching for CorCenCC contributors

have learning disabilities and by the end of that career I was managing an arts therapies Service in Cardiff. However, after taking a career break to raise my family, I had the urge to follow a different career path. I therefore returned to the education world and completed a BA and then subsequently a PhD at the School of Welsh, Cardiff University. The subject of my doctoral thesis was Welsh-language fiction by women, which also reveals another aspect of my personality, my staunch feminism. I've never been afraid of using the old 'f' word!

By now you are probably asking, 'what on earth has this to do with CorCenCC?'. Well, it's a fair question. As far as I see it, my main interests and beliefs share three fundamental principles, which are fair play, respect and equality. I was appointed to CorCenCC partly because of my knowledge of the Welsh-language publishing world (I also work as a creative editor for Gomer Press). For my part, I saw an enormous potential for CorCenCC to be a support for the Welsh language and I feel that its aims resonate with the principles which are so important to me personally.

Miss Welsh Stereotype 1963

The project will reflect all types of Welsh speakers, from north to south, from bards to beginners, women and men, old and young. It is an inclusive project which is open to all, and via crowdsourcing methods we will ensure that ordinary people have an accessible way to contribute. By attracting individuals to contribute, the hope is that we will be engendering feelings of ownership of the project, and more important still perhaps, of the language that constitutes the project. Because CorCenCC reflects everyone's language it could be argued that it

also legitimises language without judging it. That is crucially important for a nation where a substantial number of Welsh speakers feel that their language is not good enough. It's time to discard the shame and to own and use our Welsh without fear. CorCenCC's future potential to be a bank for developing correct and well-formed language-learning resources is obvious, but it can also contribute towards raising confidence and freeing the tongue-tie of reluctant speakers who use Welsh of all sorts.

Mair Rees, mair.rees@swansea.ac.uk

CorCenCC online

You can keep up to date with developments on the project via Facebook www.facebook.com/CorCenCC/; Twitter https://twitter.com/corcencc (Tweet us @CorCenCC). You can also contact us on the project email address: corcencc@cardifff.ac.uk or visit our holding website at: http://sites.cardiff.ac.uk/corcencc/

If you have any comments or questions about the content of this newsletter please contact Dr Dawn Knight: KnightD5@cardiff.ac.uk