A Corpus-based Analysis of the Auxiliary Verb HAVE in a corpus of Adult ODL Learners’ Writing

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What are Auxiliary verbs

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Auxiliary Verbs</th>
<th>Main Verb</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>The ship</td>
<td>Modal</td>
<td>HAVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IS</td>
<td>(prog)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Had</td>
<td>(V+ed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>has</td>
<td>been (V+en)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>must</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>may</td>
<td>have</td>
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</table>

Adapted from Quirk, et al. (1985:159)
The Phrase-Structure rule

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{AUX} & \rightarrow \{ \{ T \} \} \quad (\text{pm}) \quad (\text{perf}) \quad (\text{prog}) \\
& \quad \text{M} \\
& \quad \text{-imper}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
T & \rightarrow \{ \{ \quad \} \} \\
& \quad \text{-past} \\
& \quad \text{-pres}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Prog} & \rightarrow \text{Be} \quad \ldots \quad \text{-ing} \\
\text{Perf} & \rightarrow \text{Have} \quad \ldots \quad \text{-en}
\end{align*}
\]
What I found when I analysed HAVE in the corpus?
• In L1 position, only two occurrences with high probability of non-grammatical construction. Both can however still be grammatical if both constituents function in the postmodifier position of Noun phrases.

• All occurrences in the R1 position do not indicate high probability of nongrammatical construction
HAD

No occurrences in both L1 and R1 positions do not show constructions that that most probably nongrammatical
HAS

- No occurrences in both L1 and R1 positions do not show constructions that that most probably nongrammatical
No occurrences in both L1 and R1 positions do not show constructions that most probably nongrammatical
What does this mean in relation to the corpus as a whole?

- The collocations of HAVE and its morphological variations show the following:
  A. Significant occurrences of HAVE and variant auxiliary verbs show probable grammatical usage. Above 100 occurrences regarded as significant.
  B. Occurrences listed in Collocations show minimal probable ungrammatical construction.
What does this suggest about the students' mastery of English?

- The learners / students appear to be able to use the auxiliary verb HAVE in the form of HAVE, HAD, HAS, and HAVING properly.
What is this corpus made of?

- The corpus analysed for this paper comprises 4920 assignment papers which has been chosen from about 29000 assignment papers.
- The papers are chosen after removing papers that:
  - Contain programming characters
  - Bugs
- This is learner corpus: comprising written work by students
- This is a corpus-based analysis (based on corpus findings) rather than a corpus-driven analysis (totally built on basis of corpus analysis)
How is this significant to ELT in general?

• The learners in question seem to have learnt the use of the HAVE auxiliary verb.
How is this significant to ELT in OUM?

- OUM’s adult learners appear to have a relatively good command of the use of the Auxiliary verbs HAVE.
Maybe we are not teaching adults the way they should be taught?

• Suggestion:
  • We should employ overt teaching of syntax and grammar
  • Use authentic texts
  • Use authentic situations
References

