



A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE INTERSECTION OF CORPUS AND TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Research indicates that the corpus as well as transformative learning involvement in language learning are favorable. Nevertheless, there are few empirical studies investigating the application of these focuses on language classrooms. Moreover, the collaboration of these two focuses are scarce. This systematic literature review analyzes intersection of corpus linguistics and transformative learning. It examined the application of corpus tools and transformative learning in the classroom through analysis of 10 peer-reviewed articles published between 2016 and 2026. Current research indicates that the application of corpus in language learning serves to identify sentence patterns, analyze vocabulary usage in various contexts, and error analysis. Meanwhile, transformative learning was incorporated in activities such as critical reflection, student discussion, and self-assessment. The implementation of these two focuses promotes language learning achievement. However, the empirical integration of corpus and transformative learning is still fragmented and limited. This study highlights conceptual and methodological gaps in the existing research and proposes future investigations that explicitly integrate corpus tools and transformative learning to facilitate the advancement of language learning practices.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has significantly transformed the approach in language learning. The role of technology affects the process and environment of language learning as numerous tools and websites were developed to support the implementation (Müller, 2020). In contemporary contexts, technology facilitates access to diverse linguistic resources, which involves natural language datasets analyzed with specific software tools, such as digital corpus. The corpus-based approach enables students to study directly from real language usage examples for enhancing linguistic awareness and communication abilities in a contextual style.

A corpus-based approach enables scholars and educators to examine authentic language use through large collections of real-life texts (Salabai, 2025). Unlike traditional intuition-based approaches, corpus linguistics allows researchers to observe patterns of vocabulary, grammar, and discourse directly from naturally occurring language data. Through the use of digital corpora and concordance tools, the frequency, collocation, and contextual usage of linguistic forms can be analyzed more systematically (Zafar & Khan,

2021). This approach has significantly contributed to the development of data-driven learning, in which students explore language patterns independently and discover how words and structures function in authentic contexts. As a result, corpus-based learning promotes greater learner autonomy while also supporting teachers in designing instructional materials that reflect actual language usage (Charles & Hadley, 2022; Guo, 2023).

In the field of language research, the corpus-based produces empirical and replicable findings about language patterns and development. Researchers employ corpora to investigate a wide range of topics, including vocabulary acquisition, grammatical variation, discourse features, and learner language (Paquot, 2022). By relying on large-scale language data, corpus-based studies provide stronger evidence for linguistic claims and enable comparisons across genres, registers, and learner populations (Al-Hamzi et al., 2020; Sanagar & Gupta, 2020). Furthermore, advances in computational tools and digital resources have expanded the accessibility of corpora, allowing both researchers and educators to integrate corpus analysis into classroom practices and academic studies. Consequently, corpus-based approaches not only enrich theoretical understanding of language but also bridge the gap between linguistic research and practical language pedagogy.

Within the context of language education, corpus-based learning is often associated with data-driven learning (DDL), in which learners actively explore language patterns from corpus data rather than relying solely on teacher explanations (Crosthwaite et al., 2021). This approach have gained increasing attention in language education because they provide systematic access to authentic language data and enable learners to observe real patterns of language use. Corpus linguistics is generally defined as the study of language based on large collections of texts, known as corpora, which are stored and analyzed using computer-assisted tools. Through concordancers, frequency lists, and collocation analysis, corpora allow users can examine how words, phrases, and grammatical structures occur in real contexts (Casal & Kessler, 2020; Garner, 2016). The learning-based corpus has evolved fast during the 1990s, particularly with the advent of Corpus-Based Language Learning (CBLL) and Data-Driven Learning (DDL). Moreover, it employs the collection of authentic text analyzed by software tools in linguistics to investigate patterns like as collocation, concordance, and word frequency (Bennett, 2013; Boulton, 2017). This approach shifts the focus of language learning from prescriptive rules toward empirical observation of authentic language use. Therefore, corpus linguistics has become an important methodological foundation for both linguistic research and language pedagogy.

In addition to supporting language awareness, corpus-based approaches play an important role in improving specific language skills, particularly vocabulary, grammar, and writing. Corpus tools allow learners to explore word frequency, collocation patterns, and phraseology, which are often difficult to capture through traditional textbooks (Dutra & Marques, 2023; Grazib, 2009). By examining how words appear in authentic contexts, learners can develop more accurate lexical knowledge and more natural language production (Feng, 2023). Moreover, corpus-informed instruction helps learners understand the differences between formal and informal registers as well as between spoken and written language. Therefore, corpus-based approaches contribute to the development of communicative competence and linguistic accuracy.



On the hand transformative learning is a pedagogical approach that emphasizes a change in thinking and perspective among students through critical reflection, meaningful experiences and active engagement in the learning process (Eschenbacher, 2020). In the area of language education, transformative learning compels students not only to comprehend the structure of language but also to explore the values, culture and meaning, embedded into the dialogical and reflective process. Transformative learning, as articulated by Mezirow (Fleming, 2018), underscores the framework of change through critical reflection, conversation, and experiential learning. Meanwhile, in the realm of language acquisition, Taylor (2018) argued that this technique aids students in cultivating knowledge of culture, identity, and values through engagement with textual and socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, with this approach, learning is not solely focused on mastering linguistic structure, but also on developing a critical viewpoint for its application. Language is integral to real life .

Numerous studies indicate that transformative approaches are beneficial in creating thoughtful and personalized learning experiences, particularly in second language acquisition, which encompasses issues of cross-cultural understanding, gender equality, and fundamental human rights (Cranton, 2023). Transformative learning refers to the process through which learners critically reflect on their existing assumptions and perspectives, leading to meaningful changes in their understanding and behavior (Landry-Meyer et al., 2019). In educational settings, transformative learning emphasizes reflection, critical inquiry, and active engagement with knowledge. This approach enables a proficient facilitator to establish a dialogic and secure environment for the investigation of identity and values (Sarja & Arvaja, 2023). At the same time, transformative learning theory offers another perspective (Fritz & Marchewka, 2024) that complements corpus-based approaches in language education . As when learners interact with authentic language data through corpora, they often encounter patterns that challenge their prior beliefs about language rules and usage. This process can stimulate reflective thinking and encourage learners to reconstruct their understanding of language.

Literature examining the merging of corpus and transformational learning remains comparatively constrained. Preliminary studies indicate the possible application of corpus data to stimulate critical reflection on the use of language that is ideological, biased, or non-inclusive. In this regard, the corpus serves not just as a tool for linguistics but also as a data source for critical discourse analysis and social investigation. The integration creates a data-driven learning model that is simultaneously introspective and humanistic. However, to far, there is a paucity of comprehensive research examining the methods, obstacles, and impacts of language integration in the classroom. This systematic investigation is essential for identifying trends, gaps, and new directions for future research, integrating the strengths of the corpus and transformational learning in a more effective manner.

However, studies on the integration of corpus-based learning with transformative learning principles remain relatively limited because the two approaches originate from different theoretical traditions and research orientations. Corpus-based learning is primarily rooted in applied linguistics and focuses on the use of large digital language databases to analyze authentic language patterns, vocabulary usage, and grammatical structures while transformative learning emphasizes reflection and perspective

transformation. Together, these frameworks encourage learners to explore language critically, construct knowledge independently, and develop greater awareness of authentic language use. Therefore, examining research on corpus-based approaches and transformative learning is important for understanding how these two perspectives contribute to more effective and meaningful language learning practices. Therefore, the article's objective is to systematically assess literature on studies that examine the relationship between corpus and transformative learning in the context of language learning. This review not only aims to map trend and conclusion of prior studies but also identify the research gap, implementation issues and direction of moving forward by providing theoretical and practical contribution for educator, researcher, and curriculum developer in building more meaningful critical and data driven learning experiences. It also has the potential to significantly enhance the quality of language learning by merging both aspects of study which Remains comparatively restricted. Previous research tends to consider corpus and transformative learning separately, without exploring the potential synergy between the two. The merger of transformational approaches can establish a learning environment that is not solely grounded in actual data but also fosters a deeper understanding and reinforces the linguistic identity of educational participants.

METHODS

This current study is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), part of qualitative research design that systematically find, analyze, and synthesize pertinent papers about the use of corpora and transformational learning in language teaching. The paper selection aims to generate a thorough, systematic, and transparent literature mapping, as well as to identify existing gaps in ongoing research (Kitchenham, 2008).

Data of this study was acquired from the various scientific publication repository. The search process was conducted using the tool Publish or Perish, employing the following keyword combinations:

"corpus linguistics" AND "language learning"
"transformative learning" AND "language education"
"corpus" AND "transformative pedagogy"
"data-driven learning" AND "critical reflection"

As for the criteria inclusion in studies includes :

1. Article published between 2016 to 2026 .
2. Article written in English or Indonesia.
3. It is peer-reviewed articles in journal academic .
4. Focus studies covers use corpus and/ or learning transformative in context education Language .
5. The article presents empirical data or review relevant theory with topic study .

The research process was conducted through systematic stages as follows:

1. Identification : Search beginning produced 126 articles potential from various databases.
2. Screening: Abstract and title checked For see relevance . Duplicate and irrelevant articles relevant deleted .



3. Eligibility: 37 articles selected more carry on through reading comprehensive For ensure suitability with criteria inclusion .
4. Inclusion end : A total of 10 articles main thing that fulfills all criteria chosen to be analyzed in this study.

The data analyzed employed a qualitative thematic method, by categorizing literature findings according to the primary topics, including: the purpose and context of corpus use in language learning, the transformational learning strategies implemented, and possibly the intersection between corpus and transformational learning. Each article examined aims to ascertain its contribution to development theory, practice, and the possible integration between corpus-based approaches and transformational pedagogy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following a thorough the screening process, a total of 10 research articles that met the requirements for inclusion were analyzed thematically. The 10 article compositions are shown in table 1. Analysis results revealed three primary findings about implementation of corpus tools, transformative learning, and the potential integration of corpus and transformational learning within the context of language teaching. The articles result were categorized into three different topics, including the corpus usage in language learning, transformative learning roles in ESL context, and the intersection between the corpus and transformative learning in the area.

Corpus Usage in Language Learning

Eight out of ten publications indicate that corpus are utilized, particularly in the context of Data-Driven Learning (DDL), to enhance awareness of lexical items, grammatical structures, and academic writing skills. The corpus utilized in form concordance, word frequency, and collocation serves as a tool for exploration. Hence established enhancement of independent learning encourages students to identify linguistic patterns autonomously and facilitates data-driven comprehension as it is shown in data code C01 and C02, (Emir & Yangın-Ekşi, 2023; Huo et al., 2021). These two studies showed that use corpus in teaching ESL writing supports students to actively correcting structure syntax through concordance exploration.

Transformative Learning Implementation

Out of the 10 publications, 4 articles showed applied sustainable transformative learning principles, particularly through critical reflection, meaningful discussion, and a dialogic approach. This result underscores the significance of language as a vehicle for fostering self-understanding, cultural awareness, and social ideals. Data *TS 01*, *TS2*, *T01*, and *T02* (Broermann et al., 2025; Forté & Blouin, 2016; Lehmann et al., 2025; Rodríguez Aboytes & Barth, 2020) showed that reflective activity based can form students' perspective in understanding daily and global issues.

Table 1. Analyzed Articles

C o d e	Author(s)	Study Focus	The Role of the Corpus	Approach Transformative	Key Findings
C 0 1	Gamze Emira, Gonca Yangın-Ekşi (Emir & Yangın-Ekşi, 2023)	Corpus for teaching writing	Corpus as tool to support students' writing	Not explicit	A significant impact on the academic writing skills
C 0 2	Caizhao Huo, Liping Jiao, Wenjun Wang (Huo et al., 2021)	Corpus integration in curriculum	Corpus application is combined in the teaching practice	Not explicit	Language accuracy and vocabulary are improved, and students provide highly positive feedback.
C S 1	U Novella (Novella, 2021)	Corpus for sustainability research	Corpus as medium for sustainable research	Sustainability and prospect of improvement	The availability of a corpus is highly essential for sustainable research.
C S 2	Matteo Fuoli, Annika Beelitz (Fuoli & Beelitz, 2023)	Corpus-assisted discourse analysis of sustainability	Combines corpus and discourse approaches to examine responses	Environmental sustainability	Major carbon-emitting companies are focusing on climate issues and increasingly committing to net-zero goals.
C T 1	Fatemeh Esmaeli, Naser Rashidi (Esmaeli & Rashidi, 2021)	How students construct and express their authorial identity	Corpus as tools to support the analysis	Students transformation	Authorial identity restructured the process of negotiation with various individual, discorsal, sociocultural, and demographic characteristics
C T 2	Lucy Oates, Alison Edwards, Aksel Ersoy, Ellen van Bueren (Oates et al., 2022)	Corpus-assisted discourse analysis of the sustainability transitions	Corpus to assist in discourse analysis of the sustainability transitions literature	Sustainability	Sustainable urban services address environmental problems while overlooking social aspects of sustainability
T S 1	Tarsilla Lehmann, Usha Iyer-Raniga, Kathleen Mahoney (Lehmann et al., 2025)	How transformative learning foster behavioral changes to address complex global challenges.	Not explicit	Transformative to drive positive behavior change for addressing complex and wicked global problems	Transformative learning improves students' awareness and understanding, taking a holistic approach to a sustainable future
T S 1	Jorge Gustavo Rodriguez Aboytes, Matthias Barth	Transformative learning for sustainable development (ESD) and	Not explicit	To analysis of the learning processes, outcomes and conditions of transformative learning	The connection between transformative learning and sustainability is becoming a new and growing area of research.



C o d e	Author(s)	Study Focus	The Role of the Corpus	Approach Transformative	Key Findings
	(Rodríguez Aboytes & Barth, 2020)	sustainability learning			
T 0 1	Marianne Broermann, Salla-Riikka Kuusalu, Minna Majjala (Broermann et al., 2025)	Transformative Language Teaching Practices for Sustainability	Not explicit	Transformative learning be implemented in language teaching and learning	A deeper and more refined understanding of the complexity of sustainability issues had been gained.
T 0 2	Karin Sprow Forte, David Blouin (Forté & Blouin, 2016)	Fostering Transformative Learning in Professional Development Program	Not explicit	Transformative learning features present throughout students learning experiences	Shifting perspectives helps strengthen teaching practices, especially in choosing appropriate materials and promoting reflective thinking in the classroom.

Corpus and Transformative Learning Integration

Four publications clearly demonstrate the potential synergy between corpus and transformational learning, particularly in the context of critical discourse analysis utilizing corpus-based data. Data *CS1*, *CS2*, *CT1*, and *CT2* (Esmaeeli & Rashidi, 2021; Fuoli & Beelitz, 2023; Novella, 2021; Oates et al., 2022) explored the corpus news for sustainability research and education. The corpus utilized for exploration comprises language that embodies gender bias, racial stereotypes, or social power dynamics, which is subsequently transformed into critical reflective material for the class.

However, empirical findings also suggest that the integration of these two approaches is often implicit rather than systematically designed. Most corpus-based studies remain focused on linguistic outcomes, while transformative learning studies emphasize reflective processes without leveraging corpus methodologies. Consequently, the intersection emerges most clearly in sustainability-oriented contexts, where authentic discourse analysis naturally invites critical engagement and reflection as illustrated in Figure 1.

The findings on this study showed intersection of corpus approaches and transformative learning, when examined through the lens of sustainability, reveal a complementary but underexplored relationship. Studies indicate that corpus-based learning facilitates learners' engagement with authentic, sustainability-related discourse, enabling to identify linguistic patterns, discourse structures, and underlying ideologies embedded in texts about environmental, social, and economic issues. This data-driven exposure supports the development of critical language awareness, which is a foundational element for engaging with sustainability.

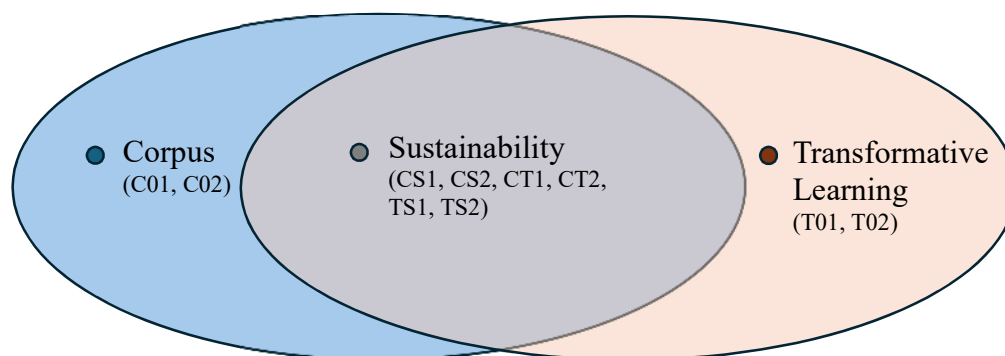


Figure 1. The Intersection of Corpus And Transformative Learning Research

At the same time, transformative learning research showed that critical reflection on authentic materials lead to shifts in learners' perspectives, values, and assumptions, particularly regarding global challenges and responsible citizenship. When corpus tools are used to analyze sustainability-themed texts, it is to question dominant narratives, recognize bias, and reconstruct their understanding of complex issues. This process aligns with the core principle of transformative learning, perspective transformation. Overall, the findings suggest that corpus-informed transformative learning has significant potential to enhance sustainability education by promoting critical, reflective, and socially responsible language use, although more explicit and structured pedagogical models are still needed.

The result of systematic review in this study demonstrates that both corpus-based approaches and transformative learning make substantial contributions to the context of language learning. However, the combination of both remains hardly examined in depth within academic practice and study. the results address three important aspects: the effectiveness of the corpus in learning, the significance of the transformative method, and the possible synergy between the two in fostering critical and data-driven language learning.

1. *Effectiveness Corpus in Increase Language Competence*

The majority of the studies under evaluation This confirms that the use of corpora, particularly through the Data-Driven Learning (DDL) approach, can enhance linguistic awareness, writing abilities, and students' comprehension of grammar. Encourage students to actively engage in research by exploring language patterns using authentic data. Furthermore, the corpus provides access to the linguistic variations derived from ordinary book texts. This finding is inline with (Dosi & Douka, 2021; Lin, 2016; Paquot, 2024). However, this technique necessitates technological preparedness and instructor proficiency to facilitate the educational use of the corpus. A gap persists between the technical and pedagogical competencies of educators, particularly in integrating a corpus into a communicative and reflective curriculum.



2. *Learning Transformative: Strengthening Dimensions Humanistic in Language Education*

Learning transformation emphasizes altering perspectives through a reflective and dialogical approach. In the realm of language acquisition, transformative learning allows students to comprehend language as a tool for representing meaning, identity, and power. The analyzed research indicate that transformational learning is helpful in creating meaningful educational experiences, particularly when students are encouraged to reflect on social and cultural concerns through texts and discussions. It is in line with (Cummins, 2000; Eisenclas & Shoecraft, 2024). The issues emerge with resistance to a method that is excessively "abstract" and difficult to quantify. Furthermore, educators frequently lack practical guidance for systematically applying reflective approaches in language classes.

3. *Potential Synergy: Corpus as a Reflection Tool Critical in Learning Transformative*

A number of articles under review demonstrates that the integration of corpus and transformative learning is highly promising, particularly in the context of critical discourse analysis. Corpus data can be utilized to uncover linguistic patterns that embody bias, ideology, or social representation, which can then serve as crucial material for participant education (Fuoli & Beelitz, 2023; Novella, 2021; Oates et al., 2022). In other words, the corpus serves not only as a tool for linguistic study but also as a gateway to social awareness and a means of facilitating change in perspective.

The research showed that corpus-based approaches and transformative learning are not explicitly linked in much of the existing literature, their intersection can be understood through their shared potential to support sustainability-oriented education. Corpus-based learning promotes data-driven inquiry, critical language awareness, and evidence-based reasoning, while transformative learning emphasizes perspective transformation, critical reflection, and shifts in worldview. When combined, these approaches can indirectly contribute to sustainability by fostering learners' ability to critically engage with authentic discourse on global issues, question dominant narratives, and develop informed, responsible perspectives. In this sense, corpus-informed analysis of sustainability-related texts can serve as a catalyst for transformative learning processes, ultimately encouraging learners to adopt more reflective, adaptive, and sustainability-conscious practices in both academic and real-world contexts. Collaboration between the secondary approach for developing an empirical language learning model is emancipatory, being data-driven while also liberating participants from passive or mechanistic thinking patterns.

Even though corpus-based approaches and transformative learning are rarely directly connected in existing studies, their relationship can be interpreted through their mutual capacity to advance sustainability-focused education. Corpus-based learning encourages learners to engage in data-driven exploration, develop critical awareness of language use, and rely on evidence-based reasoning. In contrast, transformative learning focuses on fostering shifts in perspective, deep critical reflection, and changes in one's worldview. When these approaches are integrated, they can indirectly support sustainability by enabling learners to critically analyze authentic texts on global issues, challenge prevailing assumptions, and construct well-informed and responsible viewpoints. Thus, the use of corpus-based analysis of sustainability-related discourse can act as a trigger for transformative learning, guiding learners toward more reflective,

flexible, and sustainability-oriented behaviors in both academic settings and everyday life.

This study identifies the absence of a comprehensive pedagogical paradigm that explicitly integrates corpus and transformative learning. Furthermore, there is an inadequacy of studies that longitudinally assess the impact of integration within the setting on language learning. It is essential to build systematic language learning models that integrate corpora with transformative concepts, accompanied by realistic implementation guidelines and applicable evaluative instruments. Collaborative design between educators and researchers are essential for bridging theory and practice on this topic.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that corpus-based learning and transformative learning each possess complementary strengths within the context of language education. The corpus-based approach effectively enhances participants' linguistic skills through authentic data analysis, while transformative learning fosters critical, reflective, and experiential awareness for meaningful education. Nonetheless, the outcomes evaluation indicates that the integration between the two remains exceedingly modest. Only a limited number of minor studies attempt to integrate corpus as a tool to facilitate critical reflection within a humanistic and dialogical learning framework. It demonstrates significant research gaps and potential for developing a learning model that integrates robust analytical frameworks with reflective and transformative methodologies.

Based on the findings in this review, the author provides many recommendations: More empirical studies are required, particularly in the form of action research or longitudinal studies, to evaluate the efficiency of corpus integration and transformative learning in real language classroom contexts. Educators propose initially exploring the use of corpora, not just for linguistic analysis but also as a resource to stimulate critical reflection and conversation regarding the social implications of language use. In the curricular domain, it is anticipated that the curriculum language can be constructed to be more integrative, allowing for a data-driven (evidence-based) approach while simultaneously fostering self-awareness and societal ideals through reflective learning.

This study reinforces the notion that a technology-based learning method, such as corpus utilization, need not be in conflict with humanistic approaches like transformative learning. Indeed, both can be integrated into a pedagogical framework that emphasizes critical thinking grounded in facts and reflection. The integration of corpus and transformational learning can generate new opportunities for teachers to develop more participatory, critical, and meaningful learning experiences. One major issue of this study is the limited access to high-quality databases or full-text articles, restricting the comprehensiveness of the review. Moreover, the explicit and systematic implementation of integrating corpus and transformative learning is remain unfound in any article. Therefore, further research is suggested to examine a systematic model for the implementation and analysis of the integration between corpus-based approaches and transformative learning. Such a model should clearly outline the pedagogical framework, instructional procedures, and assessment strategies that guide how corpus tools can be effectively incorporated into transformative learning environments.

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