A Music Word List for Non-native Speakers of English: A Corpus-based Study

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The acquisition of English as a second/foreign language is an additional burden for non-native speakers (NNSs) who must master English as well as developing expertise in their own profession. This corpus-based study aims to improve the English learning of music students by determining how many and what types of words music majors need to acquire in order to understand the most important texts in their discipline. We compiled a music corpus (MC) which we analyzed using the frequency count function of the Adelaide Text Analysis Tool (AdTAT). Then the word list was compared with the New General Service List (NGSL) and the New Academic Word List (NAWL). The findings provide English for Special Purposes (ESP) instructors with a clear picture of high-frequency words in the music discipline, so that they can support the English learning of music students and develop more appropriate materials for them. The findings also have methodological implications for the teaching of other Arts majors.

Introduction

In China, the specialized entrance examinations of Arts universities and institutes place an emphasis on the candidate’s professional skills and knowledge. However, once they enter the university, along with their specialization courses, candidates also have to take common core courses including English Communication, Physical Education, Literature, and Philosophy. Arts majors tend to pay less attention to their common core