



Corpora

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Definitions / Issues

What is a Corpus?

“A collection of linguistic data, either written texts or a transcription of recorded speech, which can be used as a starting-point of linguistic description or as a means of verifying hypotheses about a language.”

David Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, Blackwell, 3rd Edition, 1991.

What is *not* a Corpus...

- o Distinction made by Leech (1991):
 - Archive
 - Unordered collection of data
 - Corpus
 - Principled linguistic snapshot of language at a given point in time

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What is a Corpus?

“A collection of naturally occurring language text, chosen to characterize a state or variety of a language.”

John Sinclair, *Corpus Concordance, Collocation*, OUP, 1991.

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Chosen how?


“There is no consensus in the community as to the procedures to be followed in corpus design (balanced, opportunistic, statistically sophisticated and defiantly naive approaches all struggle with each other for acceptance) [...]”

C.M. Sperberg-McQueen (1994)

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Development of Corpora

Phases of Corpora

- Pre-electronic Corpora
- 1st generation Major Corpora
- 2nd generation "Mega-Corpora"

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Pre-electronic Corpora

Pre-electronic Corpora

- Pre-electronic Corpora
 - Biblical Concordances
- *Survey of English Usage*
 - UCL
 - 1m words
 - 200 x 5000 words
 - written/spoken

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SEU Structure



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Advent of the Computer


The computer “gives us the ability to comprehend, and to account for, the contents of such corpora in a way which was not dreamed of in the pre-computational era of corpus.”

Leech (1992)

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Major Corpora

- ### Major Corpora
- Brown Corpus
 - Brown Corpus of Standard American English
 - LOB Corpus
 - Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus
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- ### Brown Corpus
- Brown Corpus:
 - 1 million words
 - 500 x 2000 words
 - 15 text categories
 - Written American English
 - 1961
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LOB Corpus

- o Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen Corpus
 - Same design /date as Brown Corpus
 - But built from British English

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LOB (Untagged)

```
A01 1 ""[001 TEXT A01"]
A01 2 "<<7STOP ELECTING LIFE PEERS"">
A01 3 "<-4By TREVOR WILLIAMS->
A01 4 "A "OMOVE to stop "OMr. Galskell from nominating any more Labour
A01 5 life Peers is to be made at a meeting of Labour (OM P)s tomorrow.
A01 6 "OMr. Michael Foot has put down a resolution on the subject and
A01 7 he is to be backed by "OMr. Will Griffiths, (OM P) for Manchester
A01 8 Exchange.
A01 9 "Though they may gather some Left-wing support, a large majority
A01 10 of Labour (OM P)s are likely to turn down the Foot-Griffiths
A01 11 resolution.
A01 12 "<-7"ABOLISH LORDS"">
A01 13 "OMr. Foot's line will be that as Labour (OM P)s opposed the
A01 14 Government Bill which brought life peers into existence, they should
A01 15 not now put forward nominees.
A01 16 "He believes that the House of Lords should be abolished and that
A01 17 Labour should not take any steps which would appear to "prop up"" an
A01 18 out-dated institution.
A01 19 "Since 1958, 13 Labour life Peers and Peeresses have been created.
A01 20 "Most Labour sentiment would still favour the abolition of the
A01 21 House of Lords, but while it remains Labour has to have an adequate
A01 22 number of members
```

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LOB (Tagged)

```
A01 2 ^" " stop_VB electing_VBG life_NN peers_NNS "" "" "" ...
A01 3 ^by_IN Trevor_NP Williams_NP
A01 4 ^nominating_VBG any_DTI more_AP labour_NN
A01 5 life_NN peers_NNS is_BEZ to_BE BE made_VBN at_IN a_AT meeting_NN
A01 6 ^OMr. Michael_NP Foot_NP has_HVZ put_VBN down_RP a_AT
A01 7 resolution_NN on_IN the_ATI subject_NN and_CC
A01 8 Exchange_NP ...
A01 9 ^though_CS they_PP3AS may_MD gather_VB some_DTI left-wing_JJB
A01 10 of_IN labour_NN OM P_s_NPTS are_BER likely_JJ to_TO turn_VB down_RP
A01 11 resolution_NN
A01 12 ^" " abolish_VB Lords_NPTS "" "" ""
A01 13 ^OMr. NPT Foot's_NP line_NN will_WD be_BE that_CS as_CS labour_NN
A01 14 government_NN bill_NN which_WDTR brought_VBD life_NN peers_NNS into_IN
A01 15 not_XNOT now_RN put_VB forward_RB nominees_NNS
A01 16 he_PP3A believes_VBZ that_CS the_ATI House_NPL of_IN Lords_NPTS
A01 17 should_MD be_BE abolished_VBN and_CC that_CS
A01 18 would_MD appear_VB to_TO "" "" prop_VB up_RP "" "" "" an_AT
A01 19 out-dated_JJ institution_NN ...
```

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Helsinki Corpus of English Texts

- o [^ TEXT: ALFRED'S PREFACE TO CURA PASTORALIS. KING ALFRED'S WEST-SAXON VERSION OF GREGORY'S PASTORAL CARE, PART I. EARLY ENGLISH TEXT SOCIETY, O.S. 45. ED. H. SWEET. LONDON, 1958 (1871). PP. 3.1 - 9.7^] [^B9.1.1^] <P 3> <R 1> [^+DEOS BOC SCEAL TO WIOGORA CEASTRE.]) -alfred kyning hate+d gretan W+arfer+d biscep his wordum luflice & freondlice; <R 2> & +de cy+dan hate +d+at me com swi+de oft on gemynd, hwelce wiotan iu w+aron giond Angelcynn, +ag+der ge godcundra hada ge woruldcundra; <R 4>

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Corpus Linguistics

Corpus Linguistics

- o The study of language through corpus-based research, but it differs from traditional linguistics in its insistence on the systematic study of authentic examples of language in use.
 - Text linguistics vs Corpus Linguistics
 - Illustration vs Evidence
 - Introspection and Informant Testing vs Observation of Text

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Methodological Issues

- Is the Corpus large enough to answer the question?
- Is the Corpus representative?
 - What were the sampling procedures?
- Is the transcription (or annotation) reliable?
- Is the study design sound?

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Approaches to Corpora

- Corpus-driven
- Corpus-based
 - Corpus-formed

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2nd Generation Corpora

“Mega-Corpora”

- COBUILD
- Bank of English®
- British National Corpus (BNC)
 - 1994 : 100m

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COBUILD

- Collins Birmingham University International Language Database (COBUILD)
- University of Birmingham (1980)
- Funded by Collins
- Directed by John Sinclair
- *Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary* (1987), based on the study of the COBUILD corpus.
 - Monolingual learner's dictionary

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BNC

- British National Corpus (BNC)
 - Developed between 1991–94
 - 100 million words
 - 100,106,008 (to be precise...)
 - 1.5 gigabytes

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Types of Corpora

DWDS

- Das Ergebnis der Corpuserstellung sind zwei verschiedene Corpora:
- Das **Kerncorpus**: Größe: 100 Millionen Textwörter
 - ausgewogene Textgrundlage
 - rechtlich abgesicherte Nutzungsvereinbarungen
 - annotiert gemäß XML/TEI
- Das **Ergänzungscorpus**: 980 Millionen Textwörter
 - opportunistisch

● http://www.dwds.de/pages/pages_info/dwds_info.htm

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Reference / Monitor Corpus

- Reference Corpus
 - fixed
 - publicly-available
- Monitor Corpus
 - open ended
 - in-house

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Real Academia Española Corpora

- CREA
 - Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual
- CORDE
 - Corpus Diacrónico del Español

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Corpus Size

- Growing ever larger...
 - Brown / LOB Corpus 1,000,000
 - British National Corpus 100,000,000
 - Bank of English 450,000,000
 - DWDS 900,000,000
- Constraints
 - Workflow
 - Financial
 - Copyright issues

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Corpus Exploitation

- NLP
- Speech Processing
- Lexicography
- Language Change
- Stylistics
- TEFL

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Corpus Typology

- ### Broad Typology
- Native Speaker
 - Monolingual
 - Original
 - Synchronic
 - Plain
 - Learner
 - Multilingual
 - Translations
 - Diachronic
 - Annotated
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- ### Narrow Typology
- Spoken
 - Written
 - Genre
 - Domain
 - Register
 - Text Types
 - Multimedia
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Corpus Taxonomies

Categories

- o Medium
- o Design Method
- o Language Variables
- o Language States
- o Plain / annotated

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Medium

- o Medium
 - Printed
 - Electronic Text
 - Digitized Speech
 - Video
 - Mixed
 - Multimedia

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Design Method

- o Design Method
 - Balanced
 - Pyramidal
 - Opportunistic

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Language Variables

- o Language Variables
 - Monolingual Multilingual
 - Original Translations
 - Native Speaker Learner

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Language States

- o Language States
 - Synchronic Diachronic

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Plain / Annotated

- Plain / Annotated
 - Perfectly plain
 - Marked up for formatting attributes
 - e.g. page breaks, paragraphs, font sizes, italics, etc.
 - Annotated with identifying information
 - e.g. edition date, author, genre, register, etc.
 - Annotated for part of speech, syntactic structure, discourse information, etc.

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National Corpora


Not only in English...

- [CNC](#) (Czech National Corpus)
- [SNC](#) (Slovak National Corpus)
- [IDS](#) (Institut für Deutsche Sprache)
- [FIDA](#) (Corpus of Slovene Language)
- [CNC](#) (Croatian National Corpus)

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British National Corpus

BNC Definition

- o BNC (British National Corpus)
 - Monolingual
 - Synchronic
 - General
 - Sample

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Corpus Design

- o Sampled (max 45,000 words)
- o Synchronic (informative from 1975, imaginative from 1960)
- o Not subject-specific
- o Monolingual British English
- o Spoken and Written

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BNC Composition

- 90% Written
- 10% Spoken

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Written: Selection Criteria

- Domain
 - 75% *Informative*
 - 8 sub-domains
 - 25% *Imaginative*
- Time
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- Medium
 - 60% Books
 - 25% Periodicals
 - 15% Misc.

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Spoken: Selection Criteria

- 50% Demographic
 - Spontaneous conversation in a natural setting
- 50% Context-Governed
 - Meetings and events, structured situations
 - 4 sub-domains

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Links

Gateways

- [UCREL](#) (University of Lancaster)
- [Bookmarks for Corpus-based Linguists](#)

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