

Module 2

Answering Questions Using Corpora

Main Goal:

1. Find questions corpora can help you answering.
2. Perform (complex) corpus queries, e.g. including the use of wildcards, several datasets etc.

Milestones (need specific deadlines):

1. Before performing your own queries, you are able to master the terminology that is listed on the handout.
2. You have read the suggested literature for this module.
3. You have formulated a draft question and discussed it with an instructor.
4. You have collected and documented corpus data related to your question.
5. You have analysed and discussed your data in order to draw some first conclusions.

Scaffolding Ideas:

1. Performing a complex corpus query is difficult to manage at the first time. Although you should be able to execute this on your own at the end of this module, you can still work with a partner of your choice to start off! Feel free to team up and navigate www.english-corpora.com together!
2. If you are having a hard time navigating the features on the website and you are confused by all the tools and key words, take a look at the handouts on corpus terminology and www.english-corpora.com again.

3. When performing a corpus query, it is always important to keep the overarching research aim or question in mind. You can easily get lost on corpus websites, so try to focus on your research goal and make sure you use the right tools for your specific aim. Focus on your sample sentences as well, that way you will get the results that you want. Work smarter – not harder!
4. If tip #3 has not helped you yet because you do not know how to approach your aim, the following steps could help you:
 - Take a look at your research question and try to explain to yourself or to a neighbor: What do I actually want to find out?
 - Find a suitable corpus and browse through the given tools. Try to remember the functions of the different features and ask yourself: Which ones do I really need?
While doing that, keep the corpus terminology handout next to you to look up key words again if you need to.
 - Even though the many possibilities can be overwhelming at the beginning, you need to and should start with one tool. Try to formulate specific input that maximizes the chance of getting the right results. You may try out different sample sentences or other forms of input!
 - If one feature does not serve your goal, try to move on to another one. If you have the feeling that you are not making any progress, do not hesitate to approach a neighbor or the lecturer.