

# Corpus Linguistics (L615)

## Application #2: Collocations

Markus Dickinson  
Department of Linguistics, Indiana University  
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# Lexicography

## Corpora for lexicography

- ▶ Can extract authentic & typical examples, with frequency information
- ▶ With sociolinguistic meta-data, can get an accurate description of usage and, with monitor corpora, its change over time
- ▶ Can complement intuitions about meanings

The study of loanwords, for example, can be bolstered by corpus studies

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# Lexical studies: Collocation

**Collocations** are characteristic co-occurrence patterns of two (or more) lexical items

- ▶ Tend to occur with greater than random chance
- ▶ The meaning tends to be more than the sum of its parts

These are extremely hard to define by intuition:

- ▶ Pro: Corpora have been able to reveal connections previously unseen
- ▶ Con: It's not always clear what the theoretical basis of collocations are

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# Collocations & colligations

A **colligation** is a slightly different concept:

- ▶ collocation of a node word with a particular class of words (e.g., determiners)

Colligations often create “noise” in a list of collocations

- ▶ e.g., *this house* because *this* is so common on its own, and determiners appear before nouns
- ▶ Thus, people sometimes use stop words to filter out non-collocations

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# Defining a collocation

“People disagree on collocations”

- ▶ Intuition does not seem to be a completely reliable way to figure out what a collocation is
- ▶ Many collocations are overlooked: people notice unusual words & structures, but not ordinary ones

But what your collocations are depends on exactly how you calculate them

- ▶ There is some notion that they are more than the sum of their parts

So, how can we practically define a collocation? . . .

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# What a collocation is

Collocations are expressions of two or more words that are in some sense conventionalized as a group

- ▶ *strong tea* (cf. *powerful tea*)
- ▶ *international best practice*
- ▶ *kick the bucket*

In examining collocations, we are placing an importance on the context: “You shall know a word by a company it keeps” (Firth 1957)

- ▶ In other words, there are lexical properties that more general syntactic properties do not capture

This slide and the next 3 adapted from Manning and Schütze (1999), *Foundations of Statistical Natural Language Processing*

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# Prototypical collocations

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Prototypically, collocations meet the following criteria:

- ▶ Non-compositional: meaning of *kick the bucket* not composed of meaning of parts
  - ▶ More subtly: *red/white hair* sort of composable, but the color of *red/white* here is different than usual
- ▶ Non-substitutable: *orange hair* just as accurate as *red hair*, but we don't say it
- ▶ Non-modifiable: often we cannot modify a collocation, even though we normally could modify one of those words: ??*kick the red bucket*

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# Compositionality tests

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The previous properties are good tests, but hard to verify with corpus data

(At least) two tests we can use with corpora:

- ▶ Is the collocation translated word-by-word into another language?
  - ▶ e.g., Collocation *make a decision* is not translated literally into French
- ▶ Do the two words co-occur more frequently together than we would otherwise expect?
  - ▶ e.g., *of the* is frequent, but both words are frequent, so we might expect this

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# Kinds of Collocations

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Collocations come in different guises:

- ▶ Light verbs: verbs convey very little meaning but must be the right one:
  - ▶ *make a decision* vs. \**take a decision*, *take a walk* vs. \**make a walk*
- ▶ Phrasal verbs: main verb and particle combination, often translated as a single word:
  - ▶ *to tell off*, *to call up*
- ▶ Proper nouns: slightly different than others, but each refers to a single idea (e.g., *Brooks Brothers*)
- ▶ Terminological expressions: technical terms that form a unit (e.g., *hydraulic oil filter*)

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# Semantic prosody & preference

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**Semantic prosody** = "a form of meaning which is established through the proximity of a consistent series of collocates" (Louw 2000)

- ▶ These are typically negative: e.g., *peddle*, *ripe for*, *get ONESELF VERBED*
- ▶ The idea is that you can tell the semantic prosody of a word by the types of words it frequently co-occurs with

This type of co-occurrence often leads to general semantic preferences

- ▶ e.g., *utterly*, *totally*, etc. typically have a feature of 'absence or change of state'

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# Collocation: from *silly ass* to lexical sets

Krishnamurthy 2000

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Firth 1957: "You shall know a word by the company it keeps"

- ▶ Collocational meaning is a *syntagmatic* type of meaning, not a conceptual one
- ▶ e.g., in this framework, one of the meanings of *night* is the fact that it co-occurs with *dark*

An example is that *ass* is associated with a set of adjectives (think of *goose* if you prefer)

- ▶ *silly*, *obstinate*, *stupid*, *awful*
- ▶ We can see a **lexical set** associated with this word

Lexical sets and collocations can vary across genres, subcorpora, etc.

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# Notes on a collocation's definition

Krishnamurthy 2000

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We often look for words which are adjacent to make up a collocation, but this is not always true

- ▶ e.g., *computers run*, but these 2 words may only be in the same proximity.

We can also speak of upward/downward collocations:

- ▶ *downward*: involves a more frequent node word A with a less frequent collocate B
- ▶ *upward*: weaker relationship, tending to be more of a grammatical property

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- Where collocations fit into corpus linguistics:
1. Pattern recognition: recognize lexical and grammatical units
  2. Frequency list generation: rank words
  3. Concordancing: observe word behavior
  4. Collocations: take concordancing a step further ...

Calculating collocations

(The slides from here on out are based on Manning & Schütze (M&S) 1999)

The simplest thing to do to find collocations is to use frequency counts: two words appearing together a lot are a collocation

The problem is that we get lots of uninteresting pairs of function words (M&S 1999, table 5.1)

$C(w_1, w_2)$	$w_1$	$w_2$
80871	of	the
58841	in	the
26430	to	the
21842	on	the

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POS filtering

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To remove frequent pairings which are uninteresting, we can use a POS filter (Justeson and Katz 1995)

- ▶ only examine word sequences which fit a particular part-of-speech pattern:  
A N, N N, A A N, A N N, N A N, N N N, N P N  
A N *linear function*  
N A N *mean squared error*  
N P N *degrees of freedom*
- ▶ Crucially, all other sequences are removed  
P D *of the*  
M V V *has been*

POS filtering (2)

Some results after tag filtering (M&S 1999, table 5.3)

$C(w_1, w_2)$	$w_1$	$w_2$	Tag Pattern
11487	New	York	A N
7261	United	States	A N
5412	Los	Angeles	N N
3301	last	year	A N

- ⇒ Fairly simple, but surprisingly effective
- ▶ This would need to be refined to handle verb-particle collocations
  - ▶ Also, kind of inconvenient to write out patterns you want

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Longer distance connections

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Two words may commonly go together, but they may not be strictly collocational, i.e., they may not be right next to each other, as in *knock* and *door*:

- (1) she knocked on his door
- (2) they knocked at the door
- (3) 100 women knocked on Donaldson's door
- (4) a man knocked on the metal front door

So, how can we tell if they're related?

Offsets: mean & variance

Generally, words that go together appear near each other, so we can examine the offset between the two words, *knocked* and *door*

- ▶ Mean, or average offset:  $\bar{x} = \frac{\sum_i d_i}{n}$ , where  $d_i$  is each offset, and  $n$  is the total number of examples

$$(5) \bar{x} = \frac{3+3+5+5}{4} = 4.0$$

- ▶ Variance ( $s^2$ ) measures how far off each offset is from the mean:

$$(6) s^2 = \frac{\sum_i (d_i - \bar{d})^2}{n-1} \approx 1.33$$

- ▶ Standard deviation ( $s$ ) is the square root of variance ( $s^2$ ) and is about 1.15 in this case

A low deviation means that the mean is a pretty accurate indicator of the distance

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## Longer distance connections (2)

It is a lot of calculations to look at the offsets for every possible pair of words

- ▶ Restrict the search to be within a window of a set number of words, e.g., 5

The standard deviation gives us useful information—i.e., the words restrict one another in position

- ▶ But if we search for “bigrams at a distance,” then we can use all the other techniques we’ll talk about

For now, though, we’ll focus on words next to each other ...

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## Determining strength of collocation

We want to compare the likelihood of 2 words next to other being being a chance event vs. being a surprise

- ▶ Do the two words appear next to each other more than we might expect, based on what we know about their individual frequencies?
  - ▶ Is this an accidental pairing or not?
- ▶ We will look at different techniques which define this differently
- ▶ The more data we have, the more confident we will be in our assessment of a collocation or not

We’ll look at bigrams, but techniques work for words within five words of each other, translation pairs, phrases, etc.

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## (Pointwise) Mutual Information

One way to see if two words are strongly connected is to compare

- ▶ the probability of the two words appearing together if they are independent ( $p(w_1)p(w_2)$ )
- ▶ the actual probability of the two words appearing together ( $p(w_1 w_2)$ )

The pointwise mutual information is a measure to do this:

$$(7) I(w_1, w_2) = \log \frac{p(w_1 w_2)}{p(w_1)p(w_2)}$$

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## Pointwise Mutual Information Equation

Our probabilities ( $p(w_1 w_2), p(w_1), p(w_2)$ ) are all basically calculated in the same way:

$$(8) p(x) = \frac{C(x)}{N}$$

- ▶  $N$  is the number of words in the corpus
- ▶ The number of bigrams  $\approx$  the number of unigrams

$$(9) I(w_1, w_2) = \log \frac{p(w_1 w_2)}{p(w_1)p(w_2)}$$

$$= \log \frac{\frac{C(w_1 w_2)}{N}}{\frac{C(w_1)}{N} \frac{C(w_2)}{N}}$$

$$= \log \left[ N \frac{C(w_1 w_2)}{C(w_1)C(w_2)} \right]$$

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## Mutual Information example

We want to know if *Ayatollah Ruhollah* is a collocation in a data set we have:

- ▶  $C(\textit{Ayatollah}) = 42$
- ▶  $C(\textit{Ruhollah}) = 20$
- ▶  $C(\textit{AyatollahRuhollah}) = 20$
- ▶  $N = 14,307,668$

$$(10) I(\textit{Ayatollah}, \textit{Ruhollah}) = \log_2 \frac{\frac{20}{N}}{\frac{42}{N} \times \frac{20}{N}} = \log_2 N \frac{20}{42 \times 20} \approx 18.38$$

To see how good a collocation this is, we need to compare it to others

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## Problems for Mutual Information

The formula we have also has the following equivalencies:

$$(11) I(w_1, w_2) = \log \frac{p(w_1 w_2)}{p(w_1)p(w_2)} = \log \frac{P(w_1|w_2)}{P(w_1)} = \log \frac{P(w_2|w_1)}{P(w_2)}$$

Mutual information tells us how much more information we have for a word, knowing the other word

- ▶ But a decrease in uncertainty isn’t quite right ...

A few problems:

- ▶ Sparse data: infrequent bigrams for infrequent words get high scores
- ▶ Tends to measure independence (value of 0) better than dependence
- ▶ Doesn’t account for how often the words do **not** appear together (M&S 1999, table 5.15)

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# Motivating Contingency Tables

What we can instead get at is: which bigrams are likely, out of a range of possibilities?

Looking at the Arthur Conan Doyle story *A Case of Identity*, we find the following possibilities for one particular bigram:

- ▶ *sherlock* followed by *holmes*
- ▶ *sherlock* followed by some word other than *holmes*
- ▶ some word other than *sherlock* preceding *holmes*
- ▶ two words: the first not being *sherlock*, the second not being *holmes*

These are all the relevant situations for examining this bigram

# Contingency Tables

We can count up these different possibilities and put them into a contingency table (or 2x2 table)

	B = holmes	B ≠ holmes	Total
A = sherlock	7	0	7
A ≠ sherlock	39	7059	7098
Total	46	7059	7105

The *Total* row and *Total* column are the **marginals**

- ▶ The values in this chart are the observed frequencies ( $f_o$ )

# Observed bigram probabilities

Because each cell indicates a bigram, divide each of the cells by the total number of bigrams (7105) to get probabilities:

	holmes	¬ holmes	Total
sherlock	0.00099	0.0	0.00099
¬ sherlock	0.00549	0.99353	0.99901
Total	0.00647	0.99353	1.0

The marginal probabilities indicate the probabilities for a given word, e.g.,  $p(\textit{sherlock}) = 0.00099$  and  $p(\textit{holmes}) = 0.00647$

# Expected bigram probabilities

If we assumed that *sherlock* and *holmes* are independent—i.e., the probability of one is unaffected by the probability of the other—we would get the following table:

	holmes	¬ holmes	Total
sherlock	$0.00647 \times 0.00099$	$0.99353 \times 0.00099$	0.00099
¬ sherlock	$0.00647 \times 0.99901$	$0.99353 \times 0.99901$	0.99901
Total	0.00647	0.99353	1.0

- ▶ This is simply  $p_e(w_1, w_2) = p(w_1)p(w_2)$

# Expected bigram frequencies

Multiplying by 7105 (the total number of bigrams) gives us the expected number of times we should see each bigram:

	holmes	¬ holmes	Total
sherlock	0.05	6.95	7
¬ sherlock	45.5	7052.05	7098
Total	46	7059	7105

- ▶ The values in this chart are the expected frequencies ( $f_e$ )

# Pearson's chi-square test

The chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test measures how far the observed values are from the expected values:

$$(12) \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(7-0.05)^2}{0.05} + \frac{(0-6.95)^2}{6.95} + \frac{(39-45.5)^2}{45.5} + \frac{(7059-7052.05)^2}{7052.05}$$

$$(13) = 966.05 + 6.95 + 1.048 + 0.006$$

$$= 974.05$$

If you look this up in a table, you'll see that it's unlikely to be chance

NB: The  $\chi^2$  test does not work well for rare events, i.e.,  $f_e < 6$

<h2>Working with collocations</h2> <p>The question is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ What significant collocations are there that start with the word <i>sweet</i>?</li> <li>▶ Specifically, what nouns tend to co-occur after <i>sweet</i>?</li> </ul> <p>What do your intuitions say?</p>	<p>Corpus Linguistics</p> <p>Application #2: Collocations</p> <p>Collocations Defining a collocation Krishnamurthy</p> <p>Calculating collocations</p> <p>Practical work</p> <p>31 / 35</p>	<h2>Calculating collocations: web interface</h2> <p>For today's practice, let's work with an online concordancer of the BNC, <a href="http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/">http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Enter <i>sweet</i> in the Search String box. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ We can use this search to get our bearings.</li> <li>▶ Better yet, change the SORT option to be done by RELEVANCE ... This calculates &amp; sorts collocates by MI scores</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Or, on the left side, check COMPARE WORDS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Enter <i>sweet</i> and some other word (e.g., <i>sour</i>)</li> <li>▶ This calculates collocates with each word</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Corpus Linguistics</p> <p>Application #2: Collocations</p> <p>Collocations Defining a collocation Krishnamurthy</p> <p>Calculating collocations</p> <p>Practical work</p> <p>32 / 35</p>
<h2>Calculating collocations: Perl script</h2> <p>I wrote a Perl script which does the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reads in a corpus file (could be changed to read over a directory of files, if need be)</li> <li>2. Stores unigram and bigram counts as it reads the file in</li> <li>3. Loops over all bigrams</li> <li>4. For each bigram, calculates the pointwise mutual information score</li> </ol>	<p>Corpus Linguistics</p> <p>Application #2: Collocations</p> <p>Collocations Defining a collocation Krishnamurthy</p> <p>Calculating collocations</p> <p>Practical work</p> <p>33 / 35</p>	<h2>Frequency counts &amp; statistical analysis</h2> <p>You'll note that I simply wrote a function (pmi) which calculate pointwise mutual information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ This could be replaced by any function that someone (else) writes to calculate a score</li> <li>▶ Or, you could output the data without a score and input that into a statistical package <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ e.g., we could change the output into a comma-separated value (CSV) file, readable by excel and other software</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Corpus Linguistics</p> <p>Application #2: Collocations</p> <p>Collocations Defining a collocation Krishnamurthy</p> <p>Calculating collocations</p> <p>Practical work</p> <p>34 / 35</p>
<h2>Testing our intuitions</h2> <p>Let's play around with collocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Trying different corpora on jones</li> <li>▶ Hypothesizing better/worse collocations</li> <li>▶ Trying to implement a POS filter in our Perl code</li> <li>▶ ... or any other ideas we get ...</li> </ul>	<p>Corpus Linguistics</p> <p>Application #2: Collocations</p> <p>Collocations Defining a collocation Krishnamurthy</p> <p>Calculating collocations</p> <p>Practical work</p> <p>35 / 35</p>		