

# What is Corpus Linguistics and How can Corpora be Useful to Language Teachers?

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## Some key vocabulary:

**collocations:** two lexical words (not grammatical words) which occur next to each other

can be separated by an article (a, an, the) ; phrasal verbs count as single lexical items

**lexical chunks :** meaningful phrases, groups of words that often go together (can include grammatical words as well as lexical words)

as I was saying ; not only ... but also ; in point of fact

Some useful websites	
Google: search for	
<b>SkeLL</b>	<a href="https://skell.sketchengine.co.uk">https://skell.sketchengine.co.uk</a>
<b>byu corpus</b>	<a href="https://www.english-corpora.org/">https://www.english-corpora.org/</a>
<b>antconc</b>	<a href="http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software.html">http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software.html</a>
<b>sketch engine</b>	<a href="https://app.sketchengine.eu">https://app.sketchengine.eu</a>
<b>pattern grammar birmingham</b>	<a href="https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/englishlanguage/research/projects/patterngrammar/outputs.aspx">https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/englishlanguage/research/projects/patterngrammar/outputs.aspx</a>

## References:

The Applications of Pattern Grammar, from the Corpus Linguistics Conference held at the University of Birmingham on the 19 - 21 July 2017

Krieger, D. (2003) "Corpus Linguistics: What It Is and How It Can Be Applied to Teaching." *The Internet TESL Journal* Vol. IX, No. 3 Available at : <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Krieger-Corpus.html>

Rundell, M. Lecture notes from Lexicom Cambridge 2018

## Lexico-grammar or “grammaticalised lexis”

### Words or grammar: which are most important?

#### 1. Consider this paragraph:

At the end of the course you should be able to analyse written and spoken texts in terms of their discourse structure and show how writers and speakers create meanings through their choice of lexis (words), and grammar (how they put the words together), and how readers and listeners process those meanings. In addition, you should be able to use a corpus for answering questions about language use, and build your own corpus.

If we take out all the content words, like this ....

At the of the you should be to and in of their and how and through their of, and (how they put the), and how and those. In addition, you should be to a for about, and your own.

it has no meaning at all.

But if we take out the “grammatical” words and just leave the content words, ...

end course      able analyse written spoken texts terms discourse  
structure   show writers speakers create meanings choice lexis  
(words) grammar,      words together readers listeners process  
meanings.      able use corpus   answering questions  
language use      build corpus

we can get at least a rough idea of what it’s about.

So many linguists now claim that lexical knowledge is much more important than grammatical knowledge in understanding (and learning) a language.

# BEG

## CONCORDANCE

British National Corpus (BNC)

simple beg 1,995 (17.76 per million)

Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	Written books and perio... ice to include the Newton St. Loe pavement within this group; it	begs VVZ	the question, therefore, to describe it as the example upon which
2	Spoken context-governed d a man fishing on the right </s></s> this is a golf club? </s></s>	beg VV	your pardon? </s></s> It's a golf club? </s></s> er, er I'm sorry w
3	Spoken context-governed lay Mr referred in his evidence </s></s> not yesterday </s></s> I	beg VVP	your pardon, the last time before </s></s> yes, the day before ye
4	Written books and perio... r is straightforward: effective demand. </s></s> But this answer	begs VVZ	a further question: are there any circumstances in which an all r
5	Written books and perio... riations in the prices being paid for their products. </s></s> This	begs VVZ	the question: do producers respond only to perceived changes i
6	Written books and perio... ne management to release me from my contract.' </s></s> They	begged VVD	her not to take it so much to heart and pleaded with Ken to rega
7	Spoken context-governed tem look at that and say well that's what Lynda 's here er sorry I	beg VV	your pardon </s></s> Yeah Lynda 's here here for. </s></s> And
8	Spoken context-governed less have you or </s></s> No. </s></s> is that just. </s></s> Oh I	beg VVP	your pardon. </s></s> Sorry. </s></s> Is that a coincidence or </s></s>
9	Spoken context-governed t the same surname yes? </s></s> I got I'm </s></s> Oh I	beg VVP	your pardon. </s></s> You know I </s></s> There we go. </s></s>

# REQUEST

5	Spoken context-governed ackage, a request, I'm abbreviating this to give the main points,	request VVP	the County Council to consult this Council at an early stage upo
6	Spoken context-governed ty of Council officers already established and we would formally	request VV	that the responsible dog ownership group be allowed a represen
7	Spoken context-governed hemselves at United Kingdom Immigration Nationality offices to	request VV	asylum. </s></s> There is clearly refutable evidence to suggest t
8	Spoken context-governed ommittee did resolve at their meeting erm, earlier this month, to	request VV	the finance sub- committee to make er, an allocation. </s></s> If
9	Spoken context-governed ed by its inclusion in the structure plan. </s></s> According they	request VVP	the panel to recommend that policy T seven and the key diagra
10	Spoken context-governed , it can still be obtained through the library service if you care to	request VV	it, which I have . </s></s> I'm afraid I haven't a spare copy to forv
11	Spoken context-governed ining seven hundred and eighty three signatures of people who	request VVP	the provision of a pedestrian crossing in Brook Side, Burghley fc
12	Spoken context-governed ndred and forty nine signatures of residents of Broadstone who	request VVP	a ped pedestrian crossing on Broadstone Lane near road. </s></s>
13	Spoken context-governed an hundred and twelve signatures, residents of Broadstone who	request VVP	the installation of a pedestrian crossing on Broadstone Lane, bo
14	Written books and perio... eject the memorandum with only one dissenter but it went on to	request VV	: that Conferences of the Labour Party League of Youth be emp
15	Written books and perio... out a detailed appraisal of the merger. </s></s> It has power to	request VV	further information from the parties and to inspect documents at
16	Written books and perio... as commissioned an accou	request VV	that the vendor warrants the accuracy of the report. </s></s> Su

# ASK

word ask 18,392 (163.71 per million)

Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	Written books and perio... l enclosing a s.a.e. for an application form. </s></s> They should	ask VV	two academic referees to recommend them to the Principal with
2	Written books and perio... generous in the sums we dispense. </s></s> May I, once again,	ask VV	anyone who knows of someone who could benefit from a grant t
3	Written books and perio... o the Indians, but he adds that:" lots of scientists just come and	ask VVP	and ask and ask and then go away and we never hear about the
4	Written books and perio... ians, but he adds that:" lots of scientists just come and ask and	ask VVP	and ask and then go away and we never hear about their results
5	Written books and perio... t he adds that:" lots of scientists just come and ask and ask and	ask VVP	and then go away and we never hear about their results". </s></s>
6	Written miscellaneous </s></s> 'A police inspector is coming round to speak to us all -	ask VV	us a few questions.' </s></s> 'An inspector!' babbled Malcolm. </s></s>
7	Written miscellaneous 'I'm said: 'Absolutely nothing!' </s></s> I gathered my courage to	ask VV	: 'What is it all about?' </s></s>
8	Written miscellaneous e'll get over it - might even enjoy a bit of free time - you ought to	ask VV	him to help you more, M
9	Written miscellaneous - it's not just women's work, you know, all that.' </s></s> 'I could	ask VV	him - I don't suppose he's ever thought of it. </s></s> Having to r
10	Written books and perio... right there. </s></s> But he	ask VV	or tell him to leave the Apache alone. </s></s> Or say anything li

## Example exercise

From the corpus ....

- This is going to be a test like **any** other test, like, for example
- If there are **any** questions about how we're going to do it, please ask now.
- and I didn't receive **any** materials for the November meeting.
- and it probably won't make **any** difference. I mean, that's the next ....
- You can do it **any** way you want.
- Do you want to ask **any** questions? make any comments?
- I don't have **any** problem with that. I'm just saying
- if they make **any** changes, they would be minor changes.
- I think we can use **any** kind of calculator we want.
- I see it and it doesn't make **any** sense to me, but that's OK.

Source: Corpus of Spoken Professional American English

**What are the three main uses of “any” in order of frequency?**  
(questions, negatives, affirmatives, others?)

“any” 1:

“any” 2:

“any” 3:

(Krieger, 2003)

Powerpoint and handout:

<http://tinyurl.com/y6ckf3xp>

or at:

<http://materials.stoptothink.org/>

Click “Workshops for English Teachers”

