

# Concordance

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## Roadmap

1. What is a concordance?
2. What can we learn from looking at concordance lines?
3. Common aspects to look at from concordance
4. My typical workflow in analysing concordance
5. Practice

## What is a concordance?

- “a collection of the occurrences of a word-form, each in its own textual environment. In its simplest form, it is an index. Each word-form is indexed, and a reference is given to the place of each occurrence in a text” (Sinclair 1991: 32).
- “gives contextual information about a word” (Barth & Schnell 2021: 82).

## What is a concordance?

7	<b>Lover's Complaint</b>	<b>Shakespeare</b>	261	'My parts had power to <b>charm</b> a sacred nun, Who, disciplined, ay, dieted in grace, Believed her eyes when they to assail begun, All vows and consecrations giving place: O most potential love! vow, bond, nor space, In thee hath neither sting, knot, nor confine, For thou art all, and all things else are thine.
8	<b>Macbeth</b> [IV, 1]	<b>Second Witch</b>	1559	Fillet of a fenny snake, In the cauldron boil and bake; Eye of newt and toe of frog, Wool of bat and tongue of dog, Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting, Lizard's leg and owlet's wing, For a <b>charm</b> of powerful trouble, Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.
9	<b>Macbeth</b> [IV, 1]	<b>Second Witch</b>	1584	Cool it with a baboon's blood, Then the <b>charm</b> is firm and good.
10	<b>Macbeth</b> [IV, 1]	<b>First Witch</b>	1699	Ay, sir, all this is so: but why Stands Macbeth thus amazedly? Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites, And show the best of our delights: I'll <b>charm</b> the air to give a sound, While you perform your antic round: That this great king may kindly say, Our duties did his welcome pay.
11	<b>Macbeth</b> [V, 8]	<b>Macduff</b>	2491	Despair thy <b>charm</b> ; And let the angel whom thou still hast served Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb Untimely ripp'd.
12	<b>Measure for Measure</b> [IV, 1]	<b>Vincentio</b>	1810	'Tis good; though music oft hath such a <b>charm</b> To make bad good, and good provoke to harm. I pray, you, tell me, hath any body inquired for me here to-day? much upon this time have I promised here to meet.

Figure 1: A snippet of a concordance of *charm* in Shakespeare's works.

“a collection of the occurrences of a word-form, each in its own textual environment. In its simplest form, it is an index. *Each word-form is indexed, and a reference is given to the place of each occurrence in a text*” (Sinclair 1991: 32, emphases mine).

## What is a concordance?

MS Word find is a kind of concordance!



## What is a concordance?

Take away:

- essentially a means to display (raw, unanalysed) data more efficiently
- does not perform the analysis to answer the research question
  - *we*, the researcher, need to analyse them in such a way that these concordance data could provide answer to our research question(s).
  - It is insufficient just to know the how-to of *corpus* linguistics, but also the *linguistics* side.

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### ~~1. What is a concordance?~~

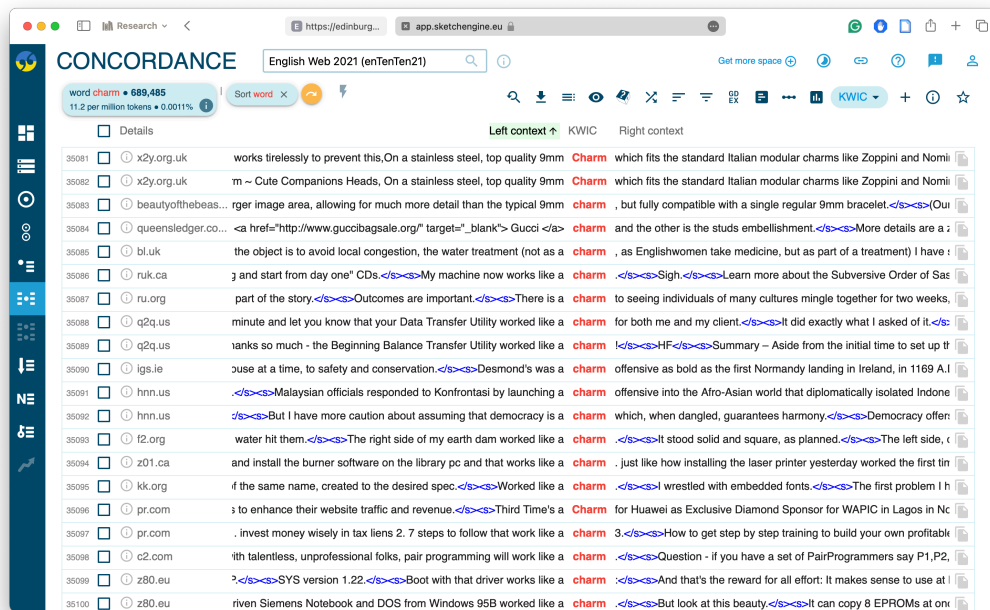
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## What can we learn from looking at concordance lines?

Electronic concordance can be sorted (alphabetically) in various ways (Tribble 2010: 175):

- by the node/target word/lemma/phrase
- by the left context of the node
- by the right context of the node

These sorting help reveals different kinds of usages of the node (cf. Hunston 2002: 42–52).



Left-context sorting for the *concordance of charm*. Any regularity/pattern?

Concordance link: <https://ske.li/15z>

## What can we learn from looking at concordance lines?

See Hunston(2002: 42–52) for details of the following points.

- “Observing the ‘central’ and ‘typical’”
  - in frequency terms
- “Observing meaning distinctions”
  - different usage patterns of near-synonyms
- “Observing meaning and patterns”
  - distinct senses/meanings of a word and their patternings (lexical, morpho-syntactical, morphological, etc.) (cf. Gries 2006)
  - “Distinguishing between the meanings is a matter of distinguishing between patterns of usage.” (Hunston 2002: 47)

- “Observing detail”
  - mass of data, more specific observation of individual words
  - e.g., different semantic type of verbs following the phrase *advice<sub>noun</sub> as to* (Hunston 2002: 52)

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## Common aspect to look at from concordance

See Sinclair (2004, Ch. 2) for further details for “The search for units of meaning”

- *collocation* (Sinclair & Carter 2004: 28): “a frequent co-occurrence of words”
- *colligation* (Sinclair & Carter 2004: 32): “co-occurrence of grammatical choices”
- *semantic preference*
  - semantic abstraction/categorisation from a group of collocates
  - example:
    - \* categorising the semantic type of noun collocates of the EXPERIENCER argument of ANGRY vs. MAD (Suari, Rajeg & Sudipa 2024); categorisation based on the cross-linguistic semantic catalogue *Concepticon* (List et al.)
      - [visualising the results](#) based on the collocation strength of these collocates with the adjectives in COCA corpus
- *semantic prosody*
  - pragmatic aura of the context surrounding the node word
  - typically whether the context is positive or negative

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## My typical workflow in analysing concordance

- Define my research question(s) (RQs)
  - usually within theoretical contexts, mainly in Cognitive Linguistics (esp. cognitive lexical semantics & construction grammar) and/or Austronesian/Indonesian linguistics.
- Extract concordances of the phenomenon from a corpus (not using Sketch Engine)
  - remember, concordance is *just* a way to display the raw data
  - operationalise your RQs such that they translate into **what** to extract from the corpus to retrieve the (candidate) data to be analysed (i.e., qualitatively annotated and further analysed statistically) to answer your RQs.
- Annotate/Code each line of the concordance in MS Excel/Spreadsheet software
  - identify the variable(s) to be analysed based on your research question
    - \* annotate that as columns in Excel; **one variable, one column**
    - \* at this stage, theoretical framework/linguistic skills will be important (at least for me)
- Statistical/quantitative analyses + visualisation in R
  - *any* statistical/programming software can be used **as long as** they provide the statistical techniques you are going to use.
  - very much dependent on your RQs
- Report the results

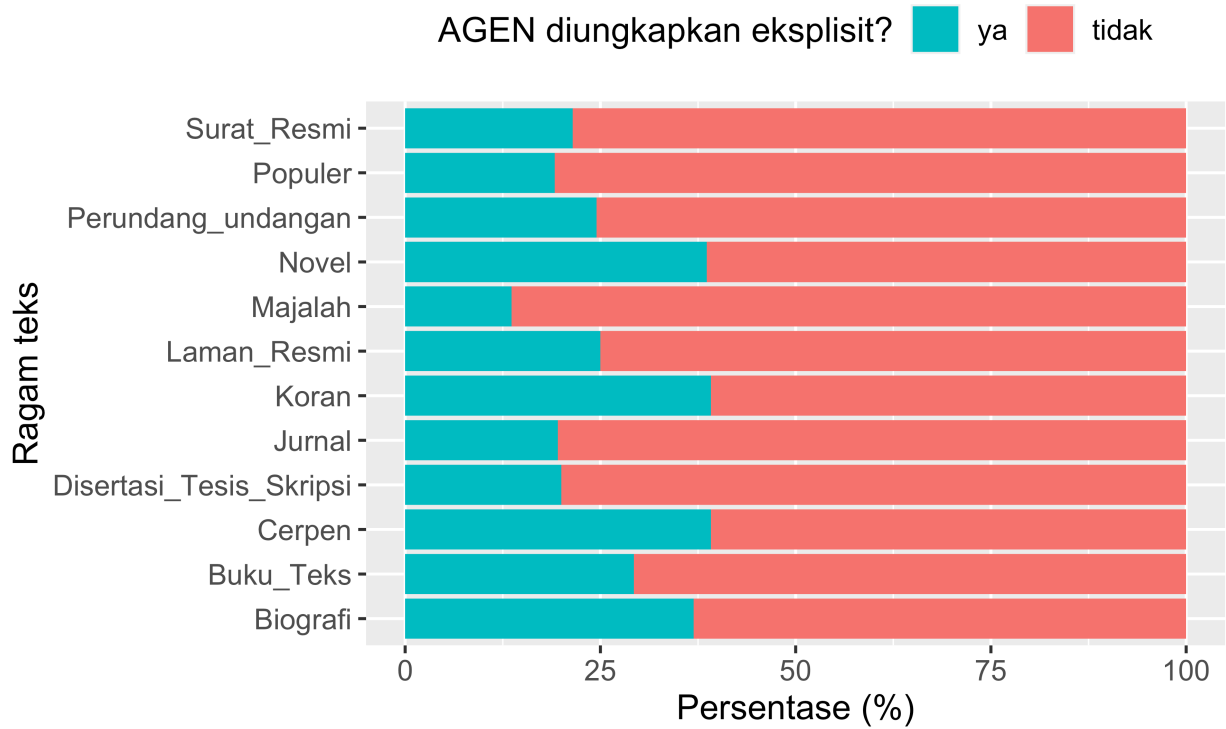
## My typical workflow in analysing concordance: *Example*

- Topic: Indonesian diathesis (cf. Rajeg & Artawa, *forthcoming*)
- Context - Qualitative (theoretical) claim (Moeliono et al. 2017: 257; Sneddon et al. 2010: 470):
  - In Indonesian passive clause, AGENT can be **optionally** expressed
  - How would we measure this optionality?
- Context - Quantitative (null-hypothesis/theoretical) prediction:
  - If we look at a sample of passive clauses (say from a corpus), the presence/absence of AGENT would be roughly equal
- Research question:
  - To what extent does AGENT is explicitly expressed or suppressed in a sample of passive clauses (with the Indonesian passive *di-* prefix)?
- Operationalisation - corpus query:
  - What should we extract from the corpus as a concordance?
    - \* passive sentences containing verb marked with *di-*
  - **No syntactic parsing** in the Indonesian corpus; what to do?
    - \* regular expressions [Regex] “`di[a-z]{5,}`”
  - 50 random concordance lines for each of the total 12 genres
    - \* Total raw data to analyse: 600 lines (50 lines \* 12 genres)
  - save the concordance into tab-separated plain text to be opened in MS Excel
- Operationalisation - annotating the concordance:
  - Given the RQ, what variable/aspect would we annotate from the concordance sample? How?
    - \* we need to annotate the presence/absence of AGENT argument such that later on we can **count/quantify** how much is the AGENT present/absent.
  - Let’s see the [concordance data](#)
- Results
  - Theoretical claim: AGENT is optionally expressed in Indonesian passive with *di-*



\* How would we measure this optionality?

- RQ: To what extent does AGENT is explicitly expressed or suppressed in a sample of passive clauses (with the Indonesian passive *di-* prefix)?
- Corpus finding:



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## Practice

- Extract concordance of a word or phrase from SkE
- Retrieve random sample from SkE
- Try to sort the concordance into more meaningful display to detect pattern
- Export to .csv/.xlsx
- Open in MS Excel
- Annotate co-occurrence of the node in terms of its:
  - lexical co-occurrence (collocation)
    - \* e.g., the subject/object of a verb; the modifier of a head noun; any recurring prepositional combination (?); others (?)
  - grammatical preference of the node word
    - \* e.g., syntactic patterning
  - semantic preference
  - semantic prosody
- share and discuss your finding

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