Linguistics Laboratory University of Augsburg Fiona Huijie Tan January 2008



Oxford WordSmith Tools Manual

I. Introduction

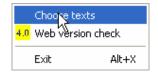
There are four menu-options in the WordSmith tools controller, a continually-changing saying, three buttons for the main tools (the tool in use usually shown in red), and a series of tabs. No texts have been chosen yet for any of the tools:



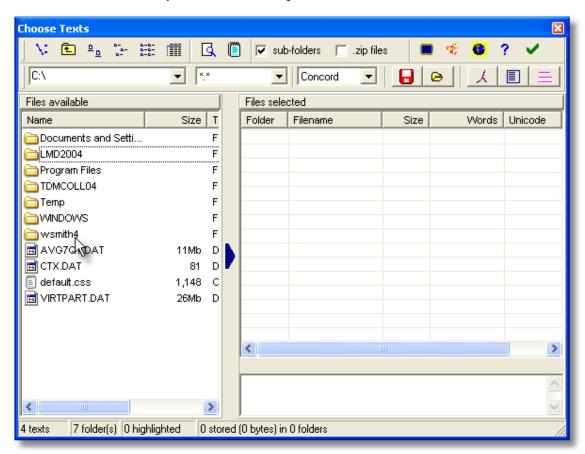
II. Choosing Your Texts

To choose text files for the *Concord*-tool, for example, click on *File* in the main controller:

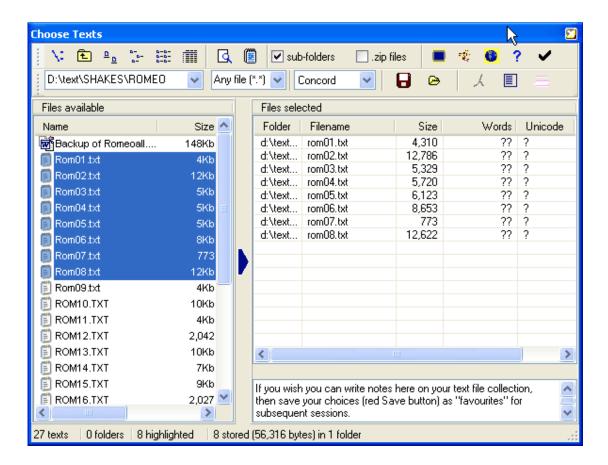




Click on Choose Texts and you will see something like this:



To select files for the *Files selected*-window, click on the big blue arrow, or drag some text files from the *Files available*-window to the right. You should see something like this:



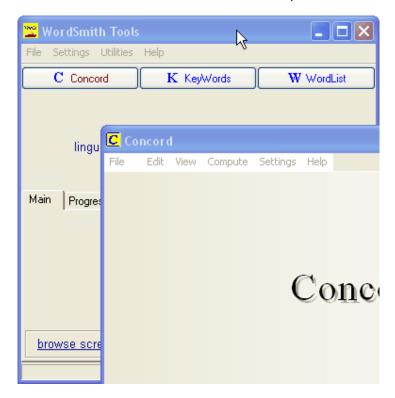
WordSmith shows in the status bar at the bottom that 8 texts have been chosen. The file-sizes are visible, but WordSmith doesn't know yet the number of words contained in each text file.



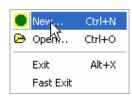
Click on the green tick for just close the window.

III. Concordancing

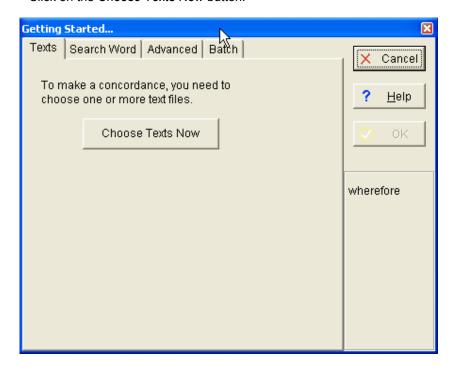
Click on the Concord-button and a new window opens:



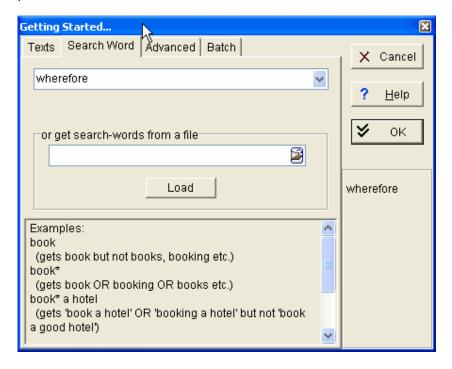
In the new Concord-window choose File | New:



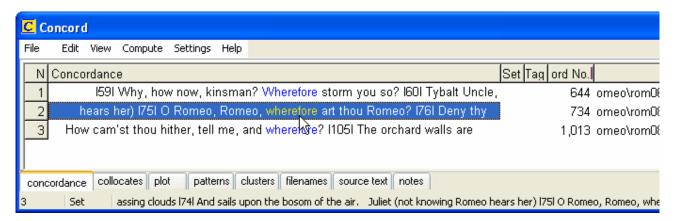
If no text files have been chosen yet, you are asked to choose some. Click on the *Choose Texts Now* button:



Once the texts have been selected, enter a suitable *Search Word*, for example *wherefore*. Then press *OK*:

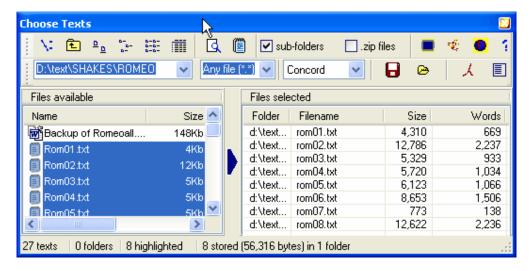


You then get a concordance of all occurrences of wherefore in the above-chosen text files:



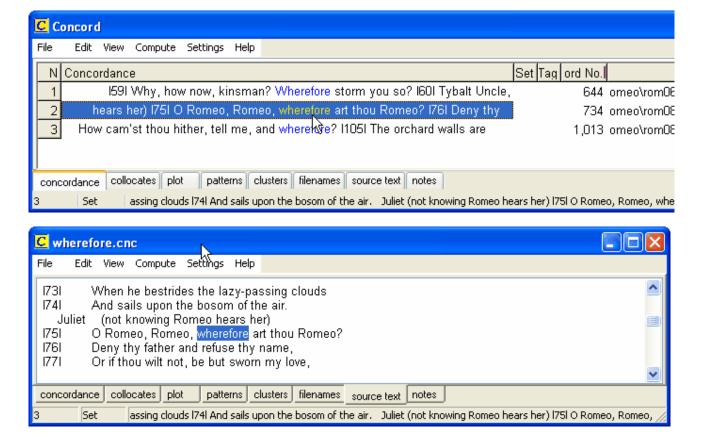
The first instance of wherefore occurs as 644th word of one of the chosen texts, rom06.txt.

Now, WordSmith also knows the number of words in each text file (e.g. 1,506 words in rom06.txt):

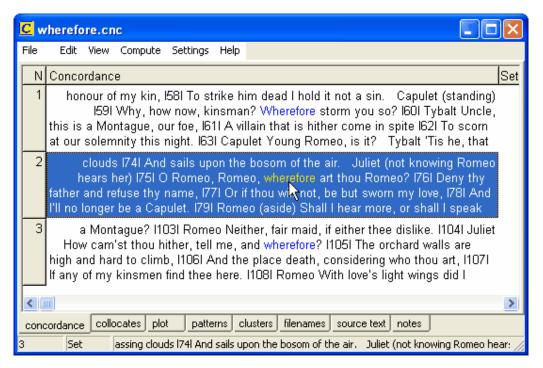


Accessing the Source Text

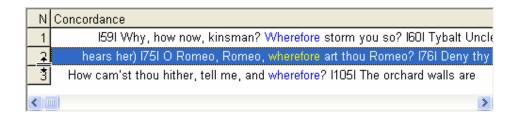
To access the source text, double-click on the line in question:



or press F8 to expand the context:

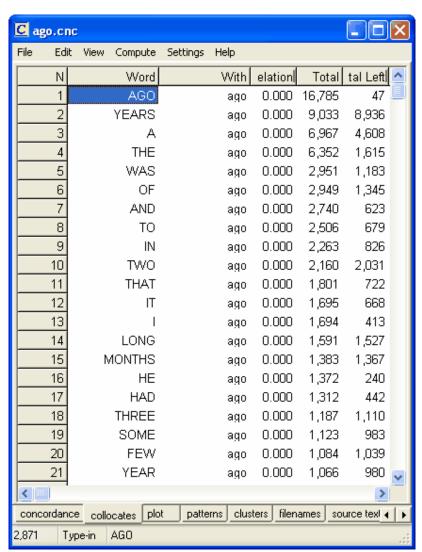


or place the cursor between line 2 and 3 in the left column to expand them:



Collocates and Mutual Information

Here are the collocates of AGO from the written section of the BNC, ordered by frequency:



Of the nearly 17,000 instances of AGO, YEARS is the top collocate, co-occurring 9,000 times. At this point, only alphabetic sorting or sorting according to frequency is possible.

To measure the strength of each word-pair, the *Mutual Information* score is established:

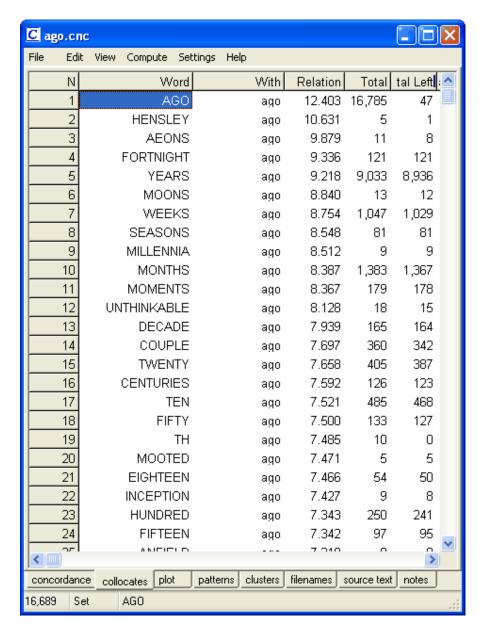
Choose Compute | Mutual Information:



and select a suitable wordlist for the comparison:



Then sort the list by clicking on the *Relation*-column:



The higher the number in the *Relation*-column, the stronger the collocation. The top items in the list now reflect the tendency of AGO to co-occur with periods of time and numbers.

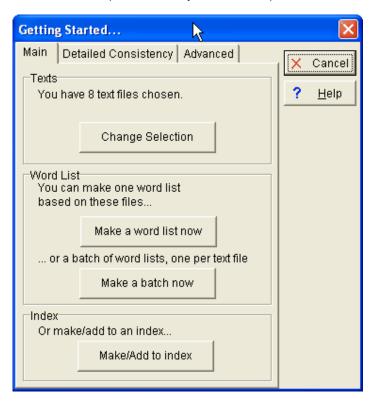
IV. WordList

A *WordList* in WordSmith shows the absolute number of occurrences of each word in the text files, this number converted into percentage of running words, and the number of text files the words occur in.

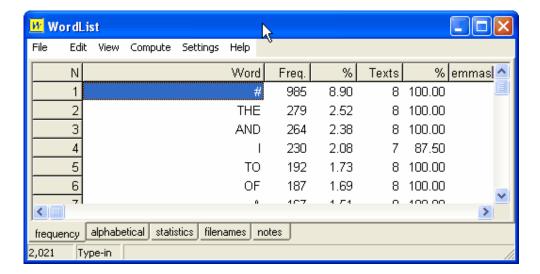
To create a WordList, first click on the button in the main controller:



When WordList opens, choose your texts and press Make a word list now:



The WordList shows a frequency listing ("#" by default is used to represent any number):

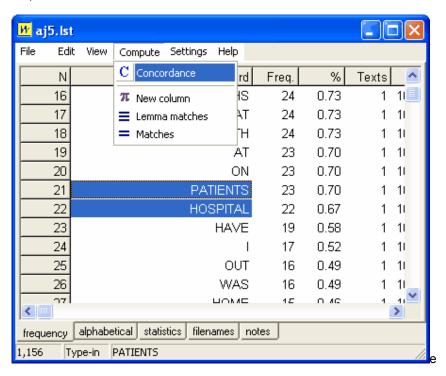


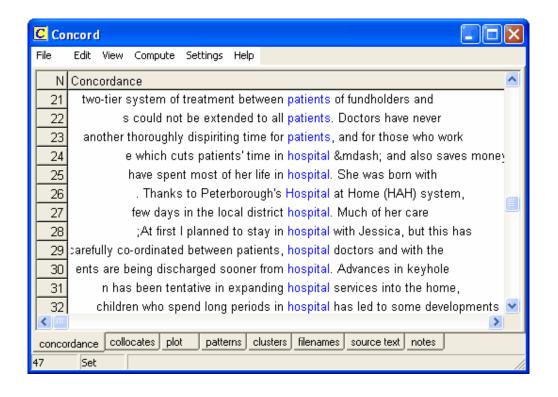
The most frequent words, besides numbers, are given (the, and, I etc.), the percentage of running words, and how many texts a particular word occurs in.

To have the words alphabetised, click on the *alphabetical*- tab at the bottom of the window.

Concordancing Selected Words

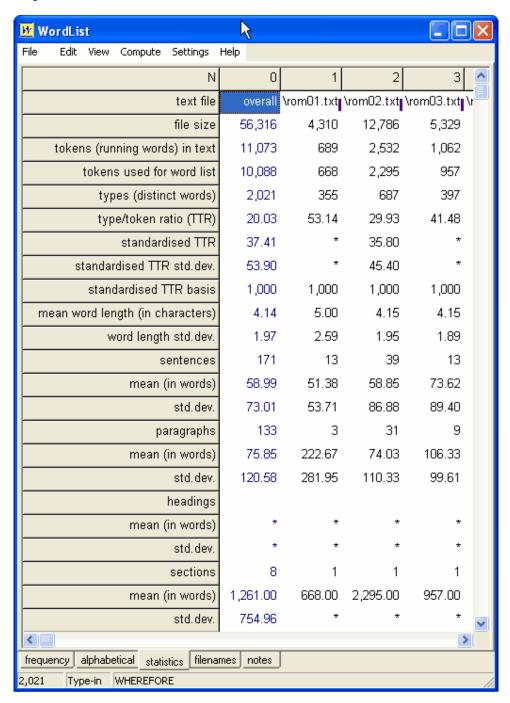
Select a word (or more), choose *Compute* | *Concordance* and you will get the words in their respective contexts:

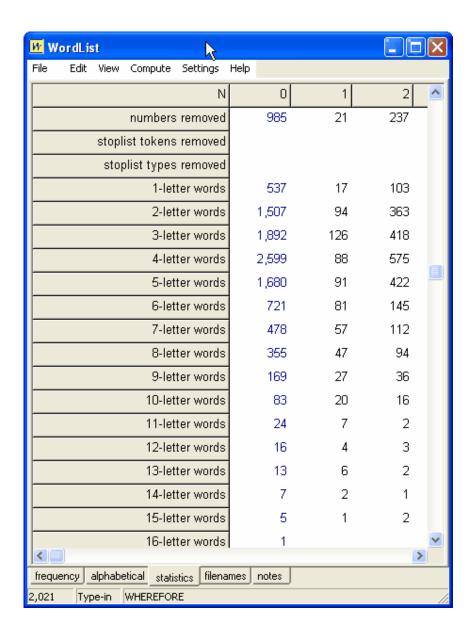




WordList Statistics

To get statistical results, click on the statistics-tab at the bottom of the word list:





V. KeyWords

Keywords are words which occur unusually frequent in a text. This frequency is compared to the keyword's frequency in some kind of reference corpus.

To create a KeyWords-list, click on the button in the main controller:

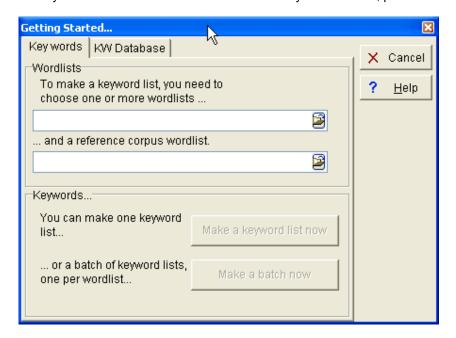


When KeyWords opens, choose wordlists by pressing this button:

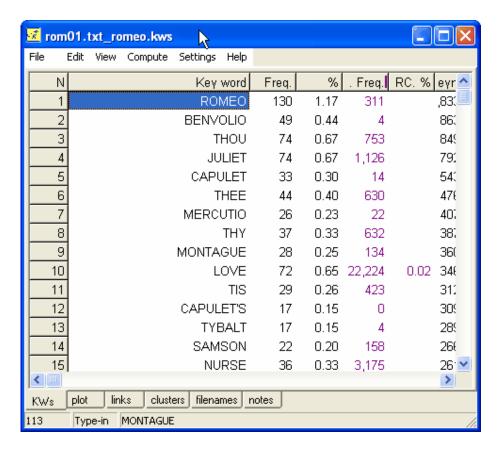


The reference-corpus wordlist should be big enough to be able to work out significant differences!

Once you have chosen a wordlist and another for your reference, press Make a keyword list now:

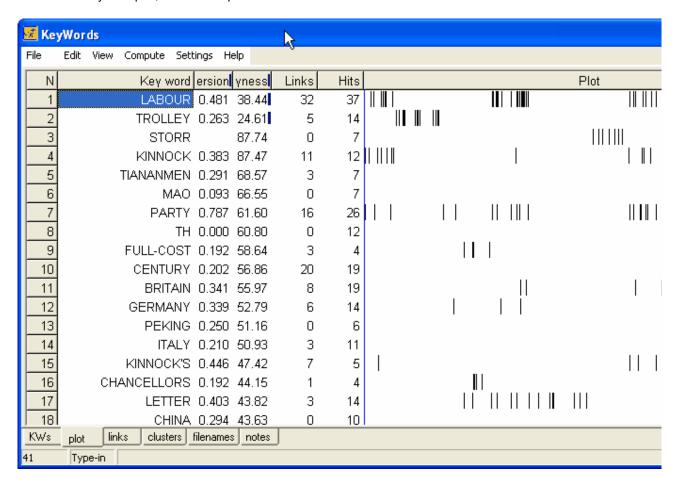


Besides the keyword, its frequency in the source text(s) is given, as well as its frequency in the reference corpus (here, in the BNC).



KeyWords Plot

To create a keyword plot, click on the *plot*-tab at the bottom of the window:



The measure of a keyword's dispersion and its keyness are given, as well as the number of links with other keywords of the same text, the absolute number of hits in the text, and a plot-graphic showing the keyword's position in the text.

Concordancing Selected Keywords

Select a keyword (or more), choose *Compute* | *Concordance* and you will get the keywords in their respective contexts:

