

## Analysis of 50 key words from the BEC: an explanation and example

Fifty key words from the BEC were selected and subjected to various forms of analysis. An example of one of the fifty words - *business* - is presented here. In the example, several different kinds of analysis are shown:

- a) *Keyness* - how key the key word is.
- b) *Semantic prosody* - what lexical/semantic sets the word typically collocates with - collocating groups are shown both to the left of the main word and to the right.
- c) *3-word clusters* - typical 3-word clusters the word is found in or near.
- d) *Macro-generic distribution* - the range of use of the word across the macro-genres of the BEC shown using the *Dispersion Plot* function of WordSmith.
- e) *Colligation* - how the word typically behaves grammatically, and what grammatical patterning/meaning correlations there are, using the COBUILD (1995) dictionary as reference.
- f) *Associates* - key words that co-occur with the main word in a number of texts to a statistically significant level.
- g) *Comments* - any comments to be made on the above analyses.

### EXAMPLE WORD: 'BUSINESS'

#### a) Keyness

The lemma 'business' was the most significant key word in the BEC corpus.

N	Word	bec freq.	bec lst %	bnc freq.	bnc.lst %	Keyness	P
1	BUSINESS	2,837	0.28	542	0.03	3,557.8	0.000000

#### b) Semantic Prosody

Left: A total of 7 groups were identified. However, the positive and negative groups are small and are shown here to contrast positive and negative usage with the word.

semantic prosody	frequency/ 2,551& %	example
where business takes place (place)	56 - 2.19%	<i>Indian business</i> <i>UK business</i>
where business takes place (macro-level demarcation)	123 - 4.82%	<i>international</i> <i>world-wide business</i> <i>overseas business</i>
line of business	222 - 9.86%	<i>telecoms business</i> <i>hairdressing business</i> <i>contract hire business</i>
nature of business (characteristics)	124 - 4.86%	<i>core business</i> <i>family business</i> <i>daily business</i>
money/size of business	67 - 2.62%	<i>a high-yield business</i>

		<i>big business</i> <i>small business</i>
positive adjectives	50- 1.96%	<i>successful business</i> <i>sound business</i> <i>strong business</i>
negative adjectives	7 - 0.27%	<i>unviable business</i> <i>cut-throat business</i> <i>boring business</i>

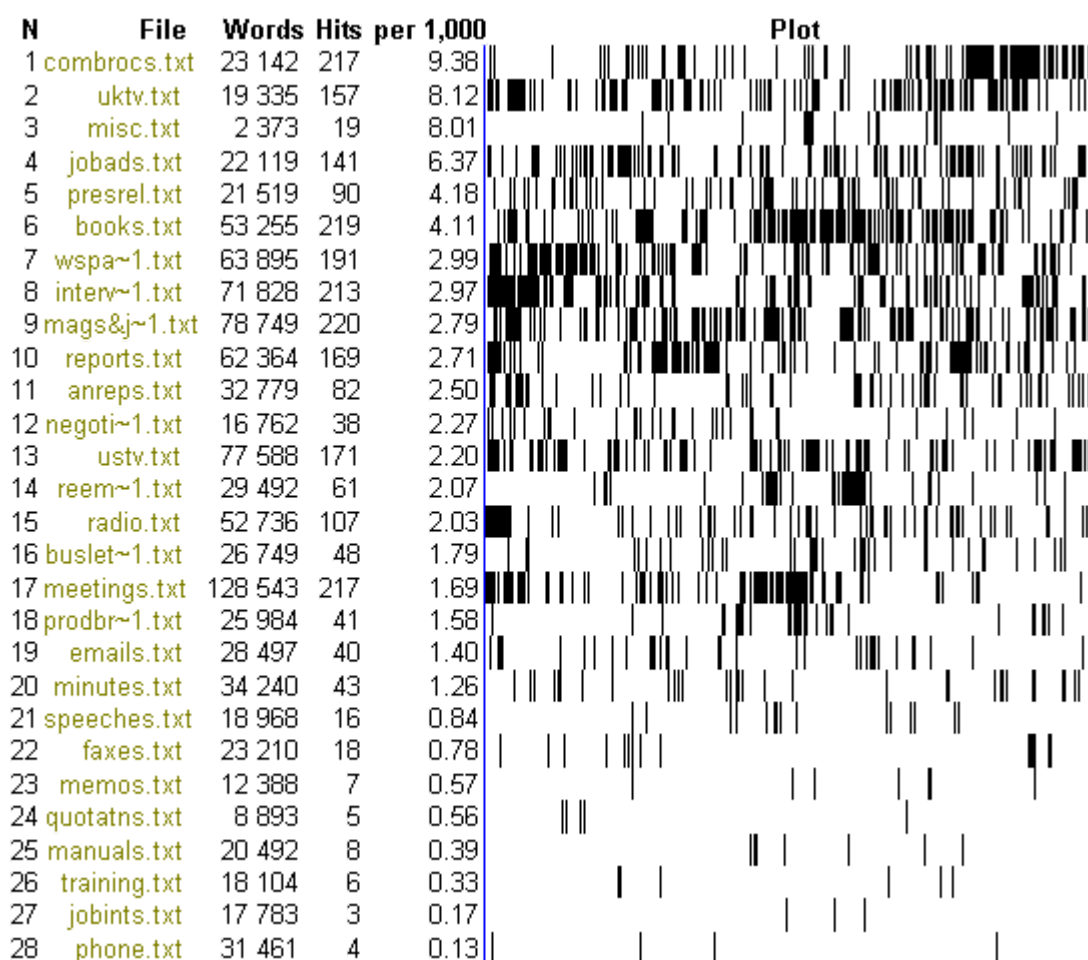
Right: Four groups identified.

<b>semantic prosody</b>	<b>frequency/ 2,551&amp; %</b>	<b>example</b>
people and groups of people	145 - 5.68%	<i>business agents</i> <i>business analyst</i> <i>business controller</i>
business activities	135 - 5.29 %	<i>business administration</i> <i>business analysis</i> <i>business development</i>
institutions, organisations and companies	129 - 5.05%	<i>business conglomerates</i> <i>business school</i> <i>the business press</i>
macro-level demarcation	89 - 3.48%	<i>business area</i> <i>business sector</i> <i>business segment</i>

### c) Three-word clusters

<b>N</b>	<b>cluster</b>	<b>Freq.</b>
1	of the business	85
2	in the business	63
3	to the business	31
4	the business and	29
5	the business is	29
6	the business English	24
7	for the business	20
8	business and the	19
9	in international business	18
10	the institute for	18
11	a business plan	17
12	for global business	17
13	institute for global	17
14	of business administration	17
15	the business of	16
16	the business plan	14

### d) Macro-generic distribution



\* Each file represents one macro-genre found in the BEC

#### This dispersion plot shows:

**File:** The rank frequency order of macro-genres where *business* appeared (thus, for example, *business* was most frequent in Company Brochures - Combprocs.txt, and second most frequent in UK television programmes - uktv.txt).

**Words:** The number of words in each macro-genre - one file for each macro-genre.

**Hits per 1,000:** How many hits of the word *business* per 1,000 words there were in each macro-genre/file

**Plot:** Each time the word *business* occurs in a macro-genre/file it is marked by a small black line, thus showing its distribution of occurrence over all the texts in each macro-genre. For example, in company brochures we see heavy usage at the right-hand side, indicating that *business* occurred in these texts very often, and less in others, creating an uneven distribution across the *company brochures* macro-genre.

#### e) Colligation

COBUILD Sense 1 (work relating to the buying and selling of goods)

1,351 instances 52.95% of sample

Patterns: Uncount noun

*we put together a business plan*

*... greatly affected the way they did business*

*carried out in cooperation with our business partners*

COBUILD Sense 2 (how many products/services a company is able to sell)

163 instances 6.38% of sample

Patterns: Uncount noun

*business fell by a third*

COBUILD Sense 3 (a company/firm)

523 instances 20.5% of sample

Patterns: Count noun

*We go into a business and try and rescue it*

*You must think of the pros and cons of starting a business from scratch*

COBUILD Sense 4 (what you do for your job and not for pleasure)

8 instances 0.31% of sample

Patterns: Uncount noun

*Travel agencies have special departments dealing with business travel*

*a business dinner to end all business dinners*

COBUILD Sense 5 (line of business)

436 instances 17.09% of sample

Patterns: Singular noun

*telecoms business, hairdressing business, contract hire business, my line of business*

COBUILD Sense 7 (important matters you have to deal with)

3 instances 0.11% of sample

Patterns: Uncount noun

*conduct the following business, any other business?*

COBUILD Sense 8 (my own business - no-one else's concern)

2 instances 0.07% of sample

Patterns: Uncount noun

*It's not my business to manage a business*

COBUILD Sense 9 (an event, situation or activity)

4 instances 0.15% of sample

Patterns: Singular noun

*with the forty pound business*

*the business of lists*

*the business of making strategic choices*

COBUILD Sense 10 (an unpleasant or costly task)

3 instances 0.11% of sample

Patterns: Singular noun

*Ill health - a costly business*

*it's always been a dangerous business*

COBUILD Sense 11 (big business/show business)

big business: 8 instances 0.31% of sample

show business: 1 instance 0.03% of sample

COBUILD Sense 12 (do business - companies/people that do business with each other)

13 instances 0.5% of sample

Patterns: Phrase with noun

N Concordance  
 7 f course. But we would **strongly** recommend that before you **do business** and certainly with overseas companies, that you  
 8 to any organization which **supports** Israel; (v) refraining from **doing business** in or with Israel or with any person who does  
 9 I partners look for reassurance that **they** are good people to **do business** with before they look at the deal itself. Orga  
 10 with the products supplied by Heat **wave**. Look forward to **doing business** with you and Company name. Sincerely,  
 11 worked with for a while that I trust, **you** know, I'm happy to **do business** with them, I would prefer to put all the business

COBUILD Sense 14 (in business: a company that is currently operating or trading)

9 instances 0.35% of sample

Patterns: verb + link phrase

*you've already been in business for a period of time*

*you may find after a year in business that you need bigger premises*

COBUILD Sense 16 (to mean business)

1 instance 0.03% of sample

Patterns: Verb (inflect)

*gives further evidence that Daimler means business*

COBUILD Sense 20 (out of + business)

8 instances 0.31% of sample

Patterns: phrase after verb

N Concordance  
 1 **tract** is not fulfilled perhaps **because** the supplier has gone **out of** business, you may still be able to sue TIFCO. If you  
 2 country's 30 **merchant** banks - are now effectively **out of** business. The remaining banks must sub  
 3 , Gantcher says: "After Mayday, **most** people like us went **out of** business. We were able to survive when we should h  
 4 **through** the industry, many of the smaller companies went **out of** business, while others were forced to merge. Those  
 5 inroads into paying our running costs we'd be **out of** business because we didn't have that la  
 6 will meet a significant financial **penalty**. You can be forced **out of** business for not paying a debt as low as £50, so it i  
 7 **erty** back into business. **Unfortunately** was then knocked **out of** business by a hurricane after I left. I've also run the  
 8 - things may be difficult right now, but **we** aren't about to go **out of** business." As it becomes impossible to deny t

COBUILD Sense 22 (business as usual)

4 instances 0.15% of sample

Patterns: usually verb link phrase

*Business as usual is a common refrain ...*

ADDITIONAL Senses:

Conversational filler:

2 instances 0.07% of sample

*all this sort of business*

*that sort of business, you know. The usual story*

Other COBUILD entries:

business card: 2 instances

business class: 5 instances

business hours: 5 instances

Other patterns:

i) In the BEC, 'business' occurs in an *end of sentence* position 267 times, (10.46% of sample).

‘Business’ in the PMC occurs 157 times (15.49%) of sample.

... *to show that we mean business.*

... *a climate for creativity in business.*

ii) possessive pronoun + business:

163 instances 6.38% of sample

In the PMC there were 68 instances 6.81% of sample

*my own business, your business*

iii) definite article *the* + *business*

485 instances 19.01% of sample

There are links between definite article usage and COBUILD senses 3 & 5:

*The minimum target for the business to survive is £250 million* (sense 3)

*How did you come into the business then originally, the car business?* (sense 5)

iv) indefinite article *a* + *business*

127 instances 4.97% of sample

There are links between indefinite article usage and COBUILD Sense 3:

*The skills that are needed to start a business*

Points iii) and iv) above are true except when ‘business’ is used as part of a noun group:

*the business community, the business mix for 1993 was 65.5% personal ....*

*a business magazine*

v) noun group + *of* + *business* (these refer to process/activity/people/place/amount related to business)

150 instances 5.88% of sample

*principle place of business, major branch of business, close of business*

vi) *do* + business

41 instances 1.6% of sample

This compares to 59 instances in the PMC - 5.81% of sample.

## f) Associates

N	WORD	NO. OF FILES	AS %
1	BUSINESS	109	100.00
2	COMPANY	27	24.77
3	WE	21	19.27
4	CUSTOMER	19	17.43
5	MANAGEMENT	19	17.43
6	BUSINESSES	18	16.51