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Project A16) Regional variation of idioms (BNCweb + COCA via CQPweb)

Corpora:
British National Corpus (BNC), Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)

Programs:
BNCweb, CQPweb (different name, different colour, but virtually the same interface)

Tasks:

- Find all occurrences of both a drop in the bucket and a drop in the ocean in both corpora
- Compare the relative percentages of the above mentioned idioms.
- Use the collocation function of BNCweb/CQPweb to find out whether there are other common collocations for a drop in the.
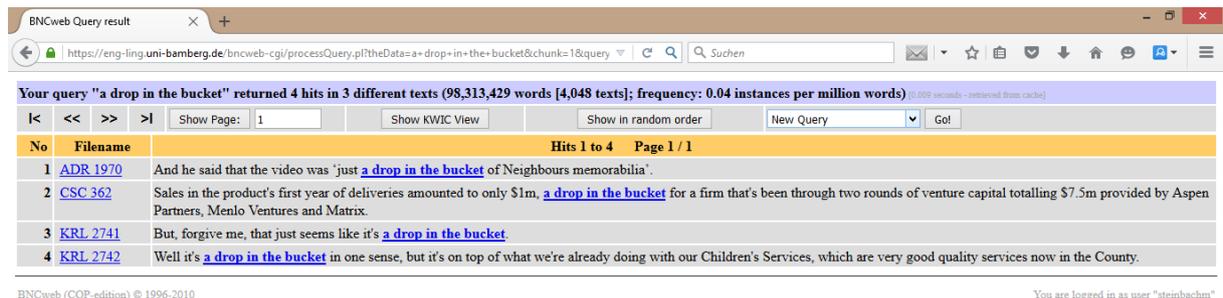
Notes:

- The corpora can be accessed via the departmental server: https://eng-ling.uni-bamberg.de/
- You have to sign up for a free user account to gain access to the corpora.
- The quick reference guide (https://eng-ling.uni-bamberg.de/bncweb/Simple_query_language.pdf) can also be accessed via the BNCweb interface.
- In addition, you can borrow the following user guide from Julia Schlüter: Hoffmann, Sebastian et al. (2008) Corpus Linguistics with BNCweb: A Practical Guide. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Last but not least, there is a youtube channel with instructional videos for the CQPweb interface
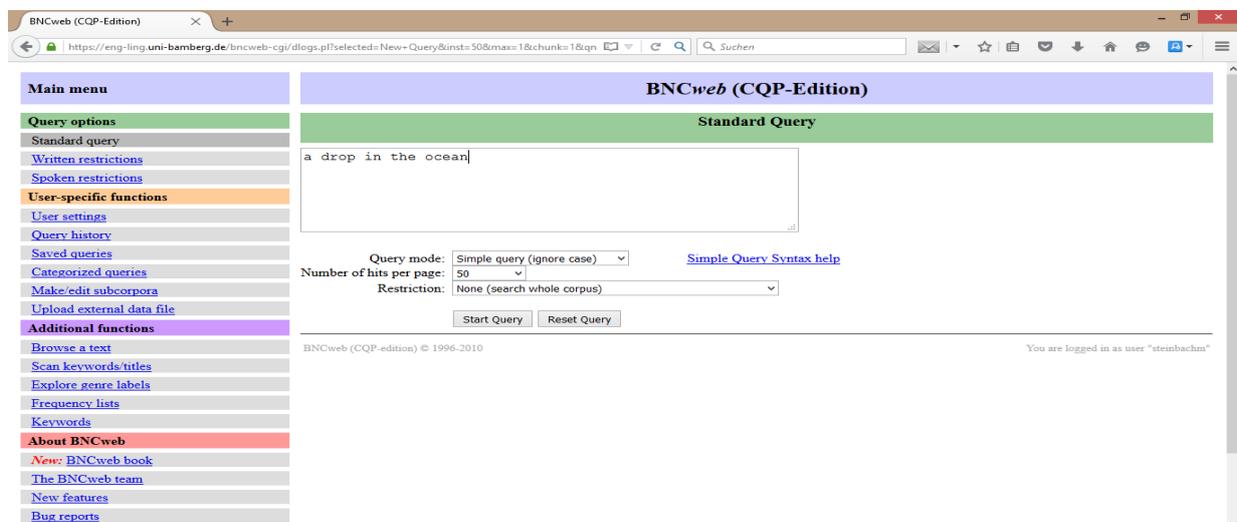
1) Create a free account and access the corpora via the departmental server: https://eng-ling.uni-bamberg.de/

2) Access the Web interface to the British National Corpus, enter the idiom "a drop in the bucket" into the query box and hit the button *Start Query*.

The database delivers the results on a page as follows:

3) Repeat the steps for the idiom "a drop in the ocean"

Your query "a drop in the ocean" returned 17 hits in 17 different texts (98,313,429 words [4,048 texts]; frequency: 0.17 instances per million words)

No	Filename	Hits 1 to 17 Page 1 / 1
1	A64 1197	Makarenko's colony near Poltava was **a drop in the ocean** at a time when 200 children a day were abandoned in Samara.
2	AHJ 338	The EBRD has 10 billion Ecus (£7 billion) of capital, **a drop in the ocean** compared with the needs of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union — the latter alone got £15.7 billion of aid from the Group of Seven last week.
3	AT8 1204	Although some consider that this method of electricity generation offers one of the synthetic fuel industry's best options, the project has stirred up much opposition from those believing its contribution — 4,300 barrels of oil daily — **a drop in the ocean**.
4	C85 3668	There's no money to stake you — if you had an eye on that win from the cockfight — it's gone towards paying my debts … **a drop in the ocean**.'
5	CBC 9966	The Maxwell Pensioners' fighting fund will receive the publisher's profits from the Robert Maxwell joke book, **A Drop in the Ocean** (Corgi, £4.99).
6	EDT 104	The money — **a drop in the ocean** to KPMG — is hardly big.
7	GX6 308	But, as exploration manager Colin Gray told Pipeline , even this considerable sum could prove **a drop in the ocean** if the company gets all, or a fair proportion at least, of what it wants.
8	GXG 4982	However, I believe this is but **a drop in the ocean** compared to the vast number of communities that could play some form of active role, however modest.
9	H94 3859	'I'd willingly plunge all my earnings into the venture, but I suppose it would be **a drop in the ocean**.'
10	HDD 338	And we can think of other people like [pause] Mother Theresa too, in the face of [pause] so much er you know what people have said to her is, you know, don't you think that er [pause] what you're doing is just **a drop in the ocean**?
11	HH3 4584	This is **a drop in the ocean** for a country of around four million people with an illiteracy rate of some 80 per cent.
12	K1B 2986	It's important to put Oxfam's work into perspective, we are **a drop in the ocean** but an important drop in the ocean.
13	K4D 414	Though the most successful Welsh language programme on S4C, its daily audience of an average 200,000 (almost half Wales's Welsh-speaking population) is **a drop in the ocean** compared with what it can attract on BBC2.
14	K5H 1571	The Chancellor's ACT reforms will also be widely welcomed, although the £550 million saving is likely to be **a drop in the ocean** compared to the surplus ACT hiding away in many large companies' balance sheets.
15	K61 155	I, I think it was only **a drop in the ocean** really towards the national effort, but, but I remember erm [gap:name] at Darlaston, they used to build tanks over there and they, they used to pay us visits in [pause] sometimes they'd send some of their men over in the tanks to give us a pep talk about the war effort and all that but er, they used to do things like that then to gee you up erm [pause]

4) Access the Web interface to the Corpus of Contemporary American English, enter the idiom "a drop in the bucket" into the query box and hit the button Start Query.

Your query "a drop in the bucket" returned 162 matches in 153 different texts (in 471,114,660 words [189,745 texts]; frequency: 0.34 instances per million words) [0.04 seconds - retrieved from cache]

No	Filename	Solution 1 to 50 Page 1 / 4
1	4016483	other studies , 440 species out of the 300,000-plus types is just **a drop in the bucket** . " <p> While the scientists are understandably proud of their continually
2	4017535	coolant concentrate to make up for evaporated fluid , but that 's **a drop in the bucket** compared to replacing all the used fluid . " <p> Several Sanborn
3	4018044	pay the return postage . 275 slides in an image bank is **a drop in the bucket** . One can not count on many @ @ @ @ @
4	4012269	large company needs the money . The proceeds from such sales are **a drop in the bucket** . Recognizing this , IBM will devote all its profits to charity
5	4005483	high-school students , but , overall , the offering is less than **a drop in the bucket** of what 's available in print . Oddly enough , slave narratives
6	4017380	out of service in September and was completed within two months . **A Drop in the Bucket** <p> While the repairs and upgrades made at the treatment plant required
7	4018717	Sun 's catch , which came from Indonesian waters , was just **a drop in the bucket** , however : Some 20,000 tons of live reef food fish were
8	4000890	Executive Director Julia Erickson said her organization is able to provide " **a drop in the bucket** -- but a pretty big drop . We just do n't have
9	4017807	@ @ @ @ @ @ met . <p> Fresh water is **a drop in the bucket** : Just 2.53 percent of the Earth 's water is fresh .
10	4019132	ask , is between $10 and $15 billion per year -- just **a drop in the bucket** of our total healthcare budget . (n7) But litigation costs are
11	4021704	complicated , and so far Google 's million books digitized is just **a drop in the bucket** . " The majority of Information , " said Jens Redmer ,
12	4080338	you need to demonstrate that the price you are charging is **a drop in the bucket** compared to the incredible value the product delivers . Here 's an
13	4081021	ads in national consumer magazines , you know your writing fee is **a drop in the bucket** @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ a look
14	1002072	borders with the passports I 've collected . I know this is **a drop in the bucket** , it 's not enough , nothing is , life is not
15	1040107	it as such . The work of a single sorceror was hardly **a drop in the bucket** , compared to that . Generation after generation , the rakh were

Menu	
Corpus of Contemporary American English: *powered by CQPweb*	

Corpus queries
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Standard Query

a drop in the ocean

Query mode: Simple query (ignore case)   Simple query language syntax | Video tutorials

Number of hits per page: 50

Restriction: None (search whole corpus)

Start Query   Reset Query

Your query "a drop in the ocean" returned 18 matches in 18 different texts (in 471,114,660 words [189,745 texts]; frequency: 0.04 instances per million words) [0.039 seconds - retrieved from cache]

|<   <<   >>   >| Show Page: 1   Line View   Show in random order   New query   Go!

No	Filename	Solution 1 to 18 Page 1 / 1	
1	4003892	garments from Jamaica , although sizeable in local terms , represent but	**a drop in the ocean**	in respect of the total of textile imports coming into the United
2	4081245	in Ireland . Yet Durville warns that these appointments will be "	**a drop in the ocean**	if you consider the number we actually need in order to do
3	2035682	An ancient steamroller plugs away at a new strip of asphalt --	**a drop in the ocean**	of what needs to be done . Hapless pedestrians are sprayed with
4	2036726	speak English and know how to program . They are but	**a drop in the ocean**	of six billion people on Earth , barely 2 percent of whom
5	2040439	selections or 8 to 10 children annually . Unfortunately , it is	**a drop in the ocean**	. Tens of thousands of children are still suffering , working away
6	3073468	as I 'm concerned . " <p> But the Belmont is only	**a drop in the ocean**	of racing . There were more than 82,000 @ @ @ @
7	3008077	over this . It 's high profile even though it 's just	**a drop in the ocean**	. " <p> TDA is developing some of the first certification standards
8	3071001	that for Japanese efficiency ? " Agent 007 answers , " Just	**a drop in the ocean**	. " (It 's not a very funny quip , but
9	3039191	shape , " he says . " What Armenia gets is just	**a drop in the ocean**	. We give Israel $ 3.5 billion year after year , no
10	3072476	<p> Refugee groups argue that a few dozen interpreters are just	**a drop in the ocean**	of refugees that have spilled westward from Iraq into Syria and Jordan
11	3073965	we can hire against the needs of their countries , it 's	**a drop in the ocean**	, " said Miguel Angel Garcia , head of human resources for
12	222465	said they would sue . @!Ms-MARY-BLAIR : I would -- I 'm	**a drop in the ocean**	compared to McDonald 's . I do n't even make the same
13	241293	do n't get a lot worse , no big deal , just	**a drop in the ocean**	, bucket , whatever you want to use as a cliche here
14	12296	Ken Patterson has managed to rescue 165 girls , but thats just	**a drop in the ocean**	. Every night , boatloads of them are shipped off for the
15	55092	Paul O'Brien of CARE International in Kabul says the amount pledged is	**a drop in the ocean**	. What exactly was the promise that the United States made to

5) Results:

   A DROP IN THE BUCKET:
   - BNC: frequency 0.04 instances per million words
   - COCA: frequency 0.34 instances per million words

     → More frequently used in **American English**

   A DROP IN THE OCEAN:
   - BNC: frequency 0.17 instances per million words
   - COCA: frequency 0.04 instances per million words

     → More frequently used in **British English**

6) To find out whether there are other common collocations for a drop in the, access the Web interface to the British National Corpus, enter "a drop in the" into the query box and hit the button Start Query.

BNCweb (CQP-Edition)

Main menu

Query options
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Bug reports

Standard Query

a drop in the

Query mode: Simple query (ignore case)   Simple Query Syntax help
Number of hits per page: 50
Restriction: None (search whole corpus)

Start Query   Reset Query

BNCweb (CQP-edition) © 1996-2010   You are logged in as user "steinbachm"

7) When this result page can be seen, click on the arrow next to *New Query* and choose the option *collocations*.

Your query "a drop in the" returned 55 hits in 52 different texts (98,313,429 words [4,048 texts]; frequency: 0.56 instances per million words)

Show Page: 1   Show KWIC View   Show in random order   New Query   Go!

No	Filename	Hits 1 to 50 Page 1 / 2
1	A64 1197	Makarenko's colony near Poltava was **a drop in the** ocean at a time when 200 children a day were abandoned in Samara.
2	A8J 194	The initial stimulus was **a drop in the** price of Soviet oil, which has meant that Soviet industry can no longer afford to buy so much Czechoslovak machinery.
3	AB6 929	Agriculture would be the biggest loser, with the volume of production cut by 10.7 per cent and employment reduced because of **a drop in the** number of livestock.
4	ACX 1971	Mixing cocoa shell with limey soil produces **a drop in the** soil's Ph
5	ADR 1970	And he said that the video was 'just **a drop in the** bucket of Neighbours memorabilia'.
6	AHJ 338	The EBRD has 10 billion Ecus (£7 billion) of capital, **a drop in the** ocean compared with the needs of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union — the latter alone got £15.7 billion of aid from the Group of Seven last week.
7	AKL 481	**A drop in the** tax charge from 37 p.c. to 33½ p.c., thanks in part to some windfall factors, helped earnings too.
8	ALL 1162	All that was **a drop in the** Clyde compared with the crowd at Celtic Park in April 1898, when 50,000 turned up to see THE game … and the rest!
9	AT8 1204	Although some consider that this method of electricity generation offers one of the synthetic fuel industry's best options, the project has stirred up much opposition from those believing its contribution — 4,300 barrels of oil daily — **a drop in the** ocean.
10	B30 1556	The introduction in 1985 of a restricted list of preparations available on the NHS in the United Kingdom, if accompanied by **a drop in the** number of prescriptions for psychotropic drugs, may have an affect on the rates of self-poisoning with such drugs.
11	B7M 745	But new research by Alan Bennett of Cornell University and Stephen Williams of Lebanon Valley College in Pennsylvania suggests that leaf closure in the Venus fly-trap (Dionaea muscipula is due to rapid growth triggered by **a drop in the** pH of the cell walls of the leaf (Science .
12	BMA 888	For these methods, used to regulate consumption on the basis of **a drop in the** economic power of the town relative to the village, will be quite inappropriate to a state of affairs whose basis lies in developing the productive forces …
13	C85 3668	There's no money to stake you — if you had an eye on that win from the cockfight — it's gone towards paying my debts … **a drop in the** ocean.'
14	CBC 9966	The Maxwell Pensioners' fighting fund will receive the publisher's profits from the Robert Maxwell joke book, **A Drop in the** Ocean (Corgi, £4.99).
15	CNC 214	The old certainties that ruled computer industry analysis over the past 30 years are tumbling like autumn leaves, and commercial realities are now eating away at the traditional determination of Japanese companies to forget the bottom line and stick with major product sectors for the long term: Sony Corp says it is considering pulling out of Japan's competitive word processor market to save the cost of developing and manufacturing new models, Reuter reports from Tokyo; Sony began making word processors in 1985 and …

New Query
New Query
Thin…
Frequency breakdown
Distribution
Sort
Collocations…
Download…
Categorize hits…
Save current set of hits…

8) Hit the button *Submit*.

9) Using the option *Collocation window span*, you can select how many words to the left and the right of your entered query are included in the search/ results. In this case, the word following "a drop in the" is of interest. Hit the button *Go!*.

There are 250 different types in your collocation database for "[word="a"%c] [word="drop"%c] [word="in"%c] [word="the"%c]". (Your query "a drop in the" returned 55 hits in 52 different texts)

No.	Word	Total No. in whole BNC	Expected collocate frequency	Observed collocate frequency	In No. of texts	Log-likelihood value
1	ocean	1,999	0.002	17	17	277.8872
2	number	48,716	0.047	12	11	110.5265
3	bucket	960	0.001	4	3	59.1457
4	price	17,882	0.017	3	3	25.0772
5	surpluses	333	0.000	1	1	14.1022
6	clyde	425	0.000	1	1	13.6139
7	gdp	942	0.001	1	1	12.0217
8	prevalence	967	0.001	1	1	11.9694
9	ph	1,529	0.001	1	1	11.0537
10	soil	4,028	0.004	1	1	9.1208
11	proportion	6,533	0.006	1	1	8.1583
12	stock	7,670	0.007	1	1	7.8395
13	amount	14,494	0.014	1	1	6.5796
14	tax	15,583	0.015	1	1	6.4368
15	rate	18,744	0.018	1	1	6.0734
16	report	20,743	0.020	1	1	5.8746
17	level	23,650	0.023	1	1	5.6178

10) Results:
Based on the search results of the BNC, it seems that there are no other collocations with "a drop in the" used in British English.