

Preface

This book grew out of sets of lecture notes for a graduate course on computational methods for corpus annotation and analysis that I have taught in the Department of Applied Linguistics at The Pennsylvania State University since 2006. After several iterations of the course, my students and I realized that while there is an abundance of introductory sources on the fundamentals of corpus linguistics, most of them do not provide the types of detailed and systematic instructions that are necessary to help language and linguistics researches get off the ground with using computational tools other than concordancing programs for automatic corpus annotation and analysis. A large proportion of the students taking the course were not yet ready to embark on learning to program, and to them the introductory sources on programming for linguistics, natural language processing, and computational linguistics appeared overwhelming. What seemed to be lacking was something in the middle ground, something that enables novice language and linguistics researchers to use more sophisticated and powerful corpus annotation and analysis tools than concordancing programs and yet still does not require programming. This book was written with the aim to provide that middle ground.

I owe a special thanks to all the students who have taken the course with me at The Pennsylvania State University. This book could not have been written without their inspiration. In particular, I want to thank Brody Bluemel and Ben Pin-Yun Wang for providing very detailed feedback on earlier drafts of several chapters; Edie Furniss, Qianwen Li, and many others for pointing me to various stylistic issues in the book; Haiyang Ai, Brody Bluemel, Tracy Davis, Alissa Hartig, Shibamouli Lahiri, Kwanghyun Park, Jie Zhang, and Xian Zhang for numerous discussions about the lecture notes that the book grew out of while taking and/or co-teaching the course with me.

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