

# Chase or Pursue: A Corpus-Based Study

Blair W. B. Barr  
University of Birmingham  
Tamagawa University

## Reference Data:

Barr, B. W. B. (2015). Chase or pursue: A corpus-based study. In P. Clements, A. Krause, & H. Brown (Eds.), *JALT2014 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

This corpus study used a 400-concordance-line sample from the 100-million-word British National Corpus and a testing framework to identify contextual and semantic differences between *chase* and *pursue*. Distribution tables from BNCweb and chi-square tests alluded to *pursue* being more prominent in written and formal contexts, whereas *chase* was identified as more common in casual, spoken situations. Coding the sample for different meanings confirmed that the commonest meanings of these verbs are not synonymous. Similarly, coding the sample for literal and figurative meanings helped identify *pursue* as frequently figurative and *chase* as more likely literal. Finally, the most frequent collocations for each verb imbued *chase* with a rapid and urgent feel whereas *pursue* may be perceived as slower and enduring, using adverbs to quicken pursuits when required. Creative uses of these words and what these usages mean for teaching are problematized through Chomskyan linguistics and the goals of pedagogical activities.

本コーパス研究はBritish National Corpus の400コンコーダンスラインサンプルから*chase* と*pursue*の分脈的・意味的相違を特定する検証枠組みを使用した。BNCweb分布表とカイ二乗値テストの結果、*pursue*は記述やフォーマルな分脈での使用が目立ち、*chase*は会話やカジュアルな場で使われる傾向が分かった。異なる意味を特定するためサンプルをコード化すると、各動詞の最も共通の意味は同一では無かった。また、サンプルを文字通りの意味と比喩的意味特定のためコード化すると、*chase*はより比喩的に、*chase*はより文字通りの意味で使われる傾向があった。最後に、各動詞の最も高頻度なコロケーションに関し、*chase*が速度感や至急感の意味合いを含むのに対し、*pursue*はゆっくりとした持続的意味合いを持っていると考えられ、必要に応じた副詞を使う事で速度感を促している。これらの言葉の創造的利用とその利用の教育における意味に関しては、チョムスキー言語学や教授法の実現目的の面で問題視されている。

**F**OR MANY teachers and learners, it is common to encounter difficulties distinguishing between seemingly synonymous words, as a conversation with my wife—a Japanese native—illustrates. After playing with our son, she observed, “He really likes to be pursued.” At the time, I had no intention to question her use of *pursue*, as the meaning was unmistakable; however, she inquired about the appropriateness of this word. Instinctively, I agreed it was correct, but suggested *pursue* seemed too formal in conversation and perhaps *chase* was a better alternative. This proposal, however, left me rather unsatisfied, so I resolved to pursue the matter in this corpus study, comparing the verbs *chase* and *pursue*, to help me as a language teacher demonstrate how they are used in real-life texts.

With evidence supplied from the British National Corpus (BNC; Oxford University Computing Services on behalf of the BNC Consortium, 2013), my study demonstrates that, although synonym-

# JALT2014 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS



ous in their literal senses, the verbs *chase* and *pursue* are generally imbued in ways that restrict substitution in many contexts. First, corpus studies are introduced and assessed, with consideration given to how evidence-based corpus approaches have challenged intuitions. Next, an evidence-based “hypothesis-testing” framework (Hunston, 2002) for extrapolating the semantic differences between synonymous words is outlined before applying this framework to realize dissimilarities between the two most common senses of *chase* and *pursue*.

## Corpora

Here, a modern corpus is defined before summarizing how large corpora have broadened our understanding of language by both supporting and challenging instincts. Some of the complications in performing corpus studies are also considered.

### What Is a Corpus?

Nowadays, a corpus is a large collection of texts stored electronically to enable rapid search and retrieval of *concordance lines*—a computer-generated list of partial phrases spotlighting *node* words relevant to researchers attempting to identify the contexts of particular words (see Appendix A for an example). In some cases, lines may be expanded for broader co-text, statistics can identify commonly co-occurring words, and metadata can help track words across sociolinguistic contexts.

Corpora typically contain language appropriate for the research goals and in lexicographic studies, such as this, large *general corpora* that use material from a variety of written and spoken environments, such as BNC, are suitable for examining word usages across contexts.

## Checking Intuitions With Evidence

One outcome of computer-based corpora is that they have challenged our intuitions about language by identifying common usages. Sinclair (1991) argued that corpora offer researchers *evidence* for objective studies on “authentic” language. Such evidence can be used to challenge previously held assumptions about language and discover new phraseological and grammatical patterns (see e.g., McCarthy & Carter, 1995, on spoken grammar).

Chomsky, in contrast, argued that corpus research focuses on pre-scribed constructs and fails to identify possibilities within language. For example, words or phrases may be identified as rare or nonexistent in a corpus, whereas individuals may more accurately identify what is possible through the *creative use* of language. In short, something is *generally not* said, but one *can* say it. Countering this, however, not one speaker can confidently know an *entire* language in all its contexts, as even Chomsky’s intuitions have been scrutinized with corpus evidence (McEnery & Wilson, 2001, p. 11).

Although the Chomskian view is often seen to oppose corpus linguistics, Stubbs (2001) argued “the long-term aim must be to integrate the insights from [these] different approaches” (p. 242). Neither approach is flawless, yet insights from both are invaluable to account for both formulaic language and style.

## Obstacles

Technical and theoretical limitations with corpora may affect this study. This section will account for some of these.

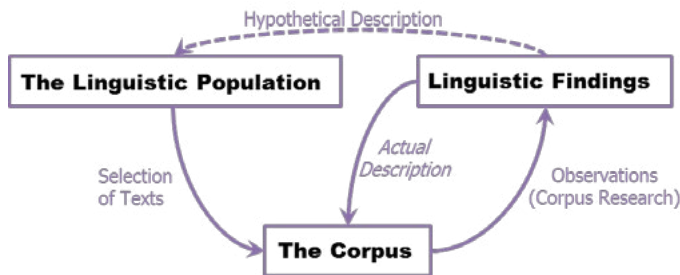


Figure 1. Observations fundamentally describe the sampled language rather than the entire language.

### Representativeness

Regarding general corpora, such as the BNC, whose aim is to represent whole populations across modes and contexts, Atkins and Rundell (2008, cited in Flowerdew, 2012) noted, “A truly representative corpus is an impossible goal because we are sampling from a population whose nature is unknowable and whose extent is unlimited” (p. 177). In other words, if the goal is to create a corpus representing the *whole* language, one would need to sample spoken and written language in correct proportions, from all contexts, from all regions, in all occupations, and representing all sexes, generations, races, social classes, and so on. In fact, the sampling bias of the BNC itself only accounts for the British English of the early 1990s for which it was designed, not American, Australian, nor any of the other World Englishes that are increasingly recognized.

Further complicating matters, sampling is constrained by the practicalities of amassing data. General corpora typically contain far more written than spoken language because such texts are readily available in electronic format. Similarly, spoken corpora tend to over-represent transcribed media language, whereas conversations, like the one motivating this study, are under-represented due to time-consuming collection. Burnard (2009) estimated that the con-

tents of the 100-million-word BNC are 90% written (newspapers, periodicals, sampled books, letters, essays, etc.) and 10% spoken (transcripts of conversations, business meetings, radio shows, etc.).

In summary, any linguistic findings from a corpus study actually describe the corpus itself and only hypothetically describe the language of the population (see Figure 1). As such, the conclusions of this study are based on the BNC and hypothetically describe English as it was used in Britain between 1991 and 1994.

### Annotation Errors

Regarding grammatical tagging used in this study to identify verbs, Leech (1991, p. 15) reported an accuracy rate of 96-97% overall. In this current study, 8.5% (17/200) of the verbal lemma *CHASE* were incorrectly labelled, because the software could not always confidently distinguish between the noun and verb forms. Conversely, the entire sample for *PURSUE* was accurately labeled, because the noun form, *pursuit*, is spelled differently.

Sinclair (2004) advocated using raw corpus data, arguing that grammatical tags were forcing real language into pre-existing categories that inadequately represent authentic language. Nevertheless, grammatical tags were appropriate for this study to focus on the active form of *CHASE*. The high rate of accuracy was sufficient for noticing trends and concordance lines containing tagging errors were discounted.

### Concordance Limitations and Subjectivity

Another concern with concordance lines is the decontextualized language, limiting analysts to a bottom-up approach in order to understand the context (Swales, 2002). Although many concordancers allow users to view the wider co-text, analysts have to subjectively notice patterns and features that may be ambiguous. Relatedly, Béjoint (2010) classified lexicographers into two groups:

“splitters” who find subtle differences and define multiple senses and “lumpers” who define general patterns. This means dictionary definitions “can have about as many senses as the lexicographer cares to perceive” (Hanks, 2002, p. 159), meaning any interpretation is motivated by a degree of subjectivity.

### Analytical Framework Using BNCweb

The aim of this study was to compare the usages of two synonymous words, *chase* and *pursue*, using tools available in BNCweb. This section outlines the study’s framework for analyzing distribution tables, concordance lines, and collocations.

### Distribution: Mode and Register

Mode and register provide a means to identify formality in language. Register is “a variety of language used in a particular social or economic setting, for example, legal or academic register” (Van Herk, 2012, p. 110), whereas mode refers to the means of communication—written or spoken.

How significantly do the modes of communication and the registers we use influence lexical choices? With the growing number of tools to evaluate corpus metadata, it has become increasingly possible to explore the relationship between lexis and contextual features such as mode and register. The BNC is particularly suitable for examining this relationship, as its *distribution* function displays frequencies across numerous sociolinguistic categories, based on the text’s metadata. Frequencies across modes and registers were used to perform chi-square tests to reveal statistically significant findings that mark formality differences between *chase* and *pursue*.

### Concordance Lines

Examining concordance lines helped determine which patterns are associated with the words under study. The massive size of the cor-

pus may deter, but users do not have to read every line to recognize trends. Sinclair (1999) outlined a straightforward methodology in which researchers sort and scan only 30 lines concurrently, note associations, and continue until no new patterns are observed. Hunston (2002, pp. 52-56) adapted this technique to incorporate *hypothesis testing*, in which researchers initiate targeted search strings based on noted patterns, checking their significance within the *entire* corpus. For this study, I adapted Hunston’s approach to collect a sample of 200 concordance lines, in stages (30/50/50/70), for each word and then tested hypotheses as needed.

After collecting notes, the 200 concordance lines were coded, identifying senses of the words on two levels: literal or figurative and by their meanings from the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE5; Summers, 2009), with additional definitions generated when necessary (Appendix B). The aim here, motivated by the claim that the literal sense of *pursue* is far less common (Sinclair, 1991, p. 113), was to determine which meanings are in the BNC.

### Collocations and Semantic Prosody

“Collocation is the way words combine in a language to produce naturally-sounding speech and writing” (McIntosh, Francis, & Poole, 2009, p. V). Notably, these words co-occur “repeatedly” (Carter, 1998, p. 51), meaning they are statistically more likely to appear together than if they had been distributed randomly throughout texts. In this study, the log-likelihood (LL) value was used for this measure, comparing the observed and expected frequencies of co-occurrence within a span of four words from the node word. For this measure, a statistically significant value (99.9% confidence;  $p < 0.001$ ), resulting in an LL value of greater than 10.827, was used to identify collocates. This measure alone produced a satisfying number of collocates for this study, but it should be noted that frequency affects this calculation, whereby the measure favours combinations with more evidence.

The reason for comparing collocations between two synonymous words was not simply to identify common patterns, but also to determine *semantic prosody*, “a consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates” (Louw, 1992, p. 176). Semantic prosody may be exemplified by words having negative or positive connotations, but it could be other less-obvious distinctions such as the pace or urgency of activities connected to words. In this study, concordance lines were generated for all statistically significant collocates in BNC to facilitate their grouping under appropriate senses of *chase* and *pursue* (see Appendix C). Once grouped, collocates were compared to identify semantic prosody for different senses of each word.

### Corpus Study: Chase or Pursue

In this section, the results of the above evidence-based framework are used to compare and contrast *chase* and *pursue*.

#### Distribution

Examining the distribution tables comparing modes and other contexts generated in BNC for the lemma of the verbs *CHASE* (search: {chase/V}) and *PURSUE* (search: {pursue/V}) respectively, I identified that formality may prime when and where these words are used.

Table 1. Frequencies Across Modes of *CHASE* and *PURSUE*

Mode	Words per million	
	<i>CHASE</i>	<i>PURSUE</i>
Spoken	22.48	20.94
Written	20.78	49.40

Examining the distribution of *CHASE* across modes (Table 1), written and spoken, I found that although the frequency per million words (PMW) was slightly greater in the spoken mode, 22.48 vs. 20.76, the difference was not statistically significant ( $X^2 = 1.23$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ); therefore, we can conclude *CHASE* is used at about the same rate in both spoken and written communication in the BNC.

In contrast, the distribution across modes for *PURSUE* was highly significant ( $X^2 = 161.86$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with the rate in writing (49.4) being more than double the spoken rate (20.94). Notably, *PURSUE* also occurred significantly more than *CHASE* in writing (49.4 vs. 20.76;  $X^2 = 1025.86$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), hinting at a more formal register for the former. In the spoken mode, however, they occur about equally (22.48 vs. 20.94) and sampling odds alone may account for the differences ( $X^2 = 0.50$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). This last point may have suggested that my suspicions about *pursue*'s atypical usage in conversation may have been false; however, registers, different senses, and semantic prosodies accounted for my intuitions.

Table 2. Distribution Across Some BNC Sociolinguistic Categories for *CHASE* and *PURSUE*

Categories	Words per million		
	<i>CHASE</i>	<i>PURSUE</i>	
Derived text types (spoken & written)	Academic prose	6.08	75.80
	Other spoken material	21.05	34.17
	Spoken conversation	24.56	1.65
Spoken domains	Public/Institutional	17.34	76.52
	Leisure	30.49	10.80

In examining the distribution tables for *CHASE* and *PURSUE* (Table 2), I could further identify formality differences. First, the distribution PMW between *academic prose* and *spoken conversation*

was notable. Taking academic prose to epitomise formality in text, *PURSUE*'s frequency of 75.8 was significantly greater than that of *CHASE*'s, 6.08 ( $X^2 = 934.87$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Conversely, in spoken conversation, *CHASE* occurred significantly more regularly at 24.56 PMW compared to *PURSUE*'s 1.65 ( $X^2 = 83.03$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). However, *PURSUE* itself occurred significantly more often in the category *other spoken material*, which includes more formal material from news reports, lectures, and meetings, 34.17, than in *spoken conversation*, 1.65 ( $X^2 = 125.24$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Focusing strictly on text from spoken domains, *PURSUE* appeared at a significantly greater rate in the more formal *public/institutional* domains, 76.52, than in *leisure* domains, 10.80 ( $X^2 = 77.00$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), whereas for *CHASE* the reverse was the trend, with 30.49 *leisure* and 17.34 *public/institutional* ( $X^2 = 5.37$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Overall, the trend consistently pointed to *pursue* being used significantly more in formal contexts than *chase*. Furthermore, *PURSUE* was a low-frequency word in *spoken conversation* with only seven hits in the BNC, of which the majority had the senses of performing activities or questioning, whereas one was used in a sense of romance, and, in support of my instincts, none had the same literal sense of "following in order to catch" used in the phrase that motivated this research (Appendix A).

### Defining Through Concordance Lines

This study verified that *chase* and *pursue* are used in different ways as a result of nonsynonymous meanings. A close examination of the 200 concordance lines sampled for each verb found evidence for all the LDOCE5 senses, with the exception of sense C8 [find]. Some corpus lines, however, were idiomatic or unequivalent to those in LDOCE5; therefore, some additional senses were defined based on the sampled data (Appendix B).

Although 200 concordance lines were sampled for both words, the final tallies were slightly decreased for two reasons. First of all,

because the samples were collected in random lots, some examples reoccurred in different batches. In these cases, I did not count the repeated lines, thus slightly decreasing the sample size for each verb. Additionally, the sample for *chase* decreased slightly as nouns incorrectly tagged as verbs were excluded from the final sample. In the end, 167 unique lines were sampled for *chase*, and 194 for *pursue*.

The phrasal verbs *chase up* and *chase down* were included in this sample as these senses are less frequent in the corpus and tend to have enough in common with the figurative senses of *chase* to warrant their inclusion. Moreover, one cannot exclude all lines containing *CHASE up*, for example, as a closer read is required to distinguish between sense C1 [follow] and the phrasal verb senses, C9 [remind] and C10 [hasten].

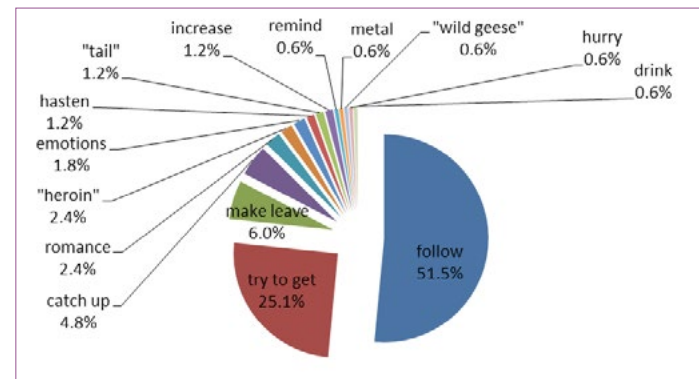


Figure 2. Distribution of the different senses of *chase* (see Appendix B).



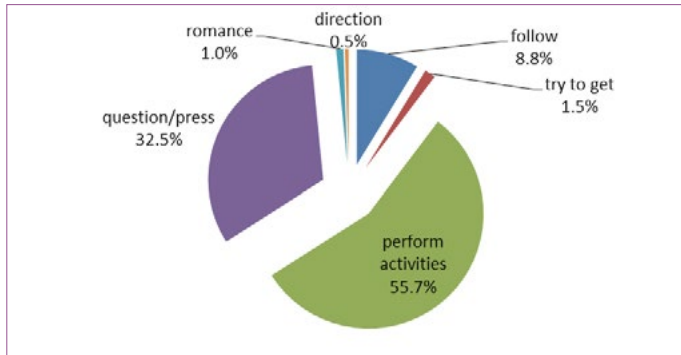


Figure 3. Distribution of the different senses of *pursue* (see Appendix B).

Comparing the relative use of the different senses (Figures 2 & 3), it is revealing that in both instances over 75% of the occurrences were assigned to only two of the words' respective senses: C1 [follow] and C3 [try to get] for *CHASE*, and P1 [perform activities] and P2 [question/press] for *PURSUE*. More importantly, these senses are not synonymous, accounting for some differences in their usage and collocations.

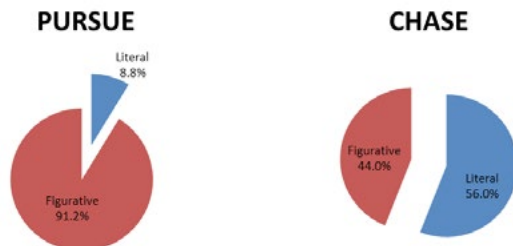


Figure 4. Comparing literal and figurative uses of *chase* and *pursue*.

Comparing the literal senses—those involving physical movement in pursuit of something (C1 & P3 [follow]) and C11 [catch up]) and excluding the single metallurgic form (C6)—with the more figurative senses revealed a highly significant difference in the usages of *chase* and *pursue* (Figure 4). *Chase* was found marginally more in the literal sense (93/166), whereas *pursue* occurred predominantly in the figurative sense (177/194), with the difference being highly significant ( $X^2 = 91.95$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These numbers confirm Sinclair's (1991) observation that *pursue* is used less in the literal sense.

### Patterns, Collocations, and Semantic Prosodies

In this section, I identify semantic prosody for the two most common senses of *CHASE* and *PURSUE* respectively, using evidence from BNC concordance lines, collocations, and hypothesis testing (see Appendix C).

### CHASE

The collocations for sense C1 [follow] clearly indicate the physical nature of the chase. For one, the most typical subjects and objects are humans or animals, capable of running or flying from the scene. The only exceptions being presumably fast moving *balls* and *cars*, with the latter being stolen enough to make *stolen* a significant collocate. Additionally, the frequent co-occurrence with prepositions and adverbs indicating directions (*up*, *after*, *around*, etc.) seem to highlight the motions important to this sense. The word *chase*, therefore, seems to be imbued with speediness and the need to expend energy to catch something. Considering this, it might be unusual to hear, “I *chased* the ants *around* the yard” because ants are not fast enough to chase; however, note that the following exception from the BNC seems intuitively ordinary, despite the inanimate nature of the chased: “Others chased rashers round the plate with a vague air of disenchantment.”

Instinctively, it seems stylistically common to imagine someone chasing food around his or her plate in a state of contemplation or boredom, yet not significant enough to mark common usage in corpus data. Therefore, despite a scarcity of corpus evidence, it seems fair to suggest the Chomskyan view endorsing intuitiveness cannot be ignored here.

The collocations for sense C3 [try to get] seem to be imbued with the idea that hard work leads to victory or achievement. This sense is often realized in sports, where *clubs* or *teams* chase *wins* or *championships*. A look at the concordance lines also shows that teams aggressively chase particular players, in hopes of acquiring them to help the organization earn those *victories*. Similarly, individuals are seen to be chasing hard for *dream jobs* and *promotions*, where *hard* is another significant collocate. It is also noteworthy that the time one spends chasing is more likely to be measured in this sense, suggesting that although *chase* gives a sense of urgency or drive, the objects being chased can prove elusive.

## PURSUE

One striking difference about collocates for *pursue* is the numerous adjectives, adverbs, and even phrases frequently co-occurring. Instinctively, it does not entirely seem out of place for some of this language to be in the company of *chase*, despite a lack of BNC evidence. For example, combinations such as *interested in chasing*, *decided to chase*, *worth chasing*, *unlikely to chase*, *vigorously chased*, and *energetically chased* all seem intuitively plausible. The reasons for the lack of evidence in BNC could relate to the smaller sample size for *chase*; however, we will return to this shortly.

In contrast, many collocates, especially nouns, that occur with *pursue* would seem a bit unusual in the company of *chase*—\**chase the matter*, \**chase a policy*, \**chase a hobby*, or \**chase questions*. This occurs largely because, as we have seen, the two primary senses of *pursue* are not synonymous with *chase*.

The first sense, P1 [perform activities], relates to doing an activity for a long time. Unlike the literal senses, all of the objects following the verb are abstract nouns, whereas sometimes the pursuers are public organizations, such as *institutions* or *government*. Based on these abstract collocates, I identified at least two subcategories. In one sense, there are routines, in which one pursues *hobbies*, *sports*, *courses*, *careers*, or *interests*. In the second, there are nouns focused on labour, pursuing *goals*, *objectives*, *aims*, or *ends*, or specified *policies*, *themes*, *ideas*, and so on. In general, these nouns tend to give the reader the sense of persistent routines that imbue the verb as slower and more consistent than *chase*. For this reason, I propose that the adverbs quicken the pursuit when using this verb, because with the exception of *consistently* and *doggedly*, the most common adverbial collocates have the effect of increasing the pace (e.g., *vigorously*, *energetically*, *actively*, and, for sense P3, *hotly*).

The second sense (P2 [question/press]) also has a deliberate feel to the action; therefore, many of the same quickening adverbs from sense P1 have the same effect here. This sense also seems to have two main groups. The first involves expanding on details about a topic, such as pursuing *questions*, *hypotheses*, *arguments*, or *matters* in, for example, an essay, in which sometimes you want to pursue *points further*. The second seems to be connected to fighting for justice, such as *through the court system*, where one pursues *claims*, *complaints*, or *legal actions*, often *against* people. The subjects for this sense seem to be more *individuals*, yet formality seems imbued by the collocates, with language seemingly used in higher registers—academic, public, or legal.

Overall, *PURSUE* seems to take place in more formal contexts that proceed slowly, whereas *CHASE* seems to instil urgency and speed while being preferred in casual situations.

## Conclusions

Although corpus tools are affected by processing errors, representational concerns, subjectivity, and selection biases, they do provide



some evidence to both support and challenge intuitions about language. Using an evidence-based approach to compare distributions across modes and registers, and extrapolate patterns and collocations in the BNC, this study showed that *pursue* is more often produced in a figurative sense that denotes something occurring at a gradual pace, whereas *chase* is more often literal and rapid. However, it was also noted that different senses, intuition, and creativity can counter the formulaic trend.

Now, as a teacher, what approach should I take when someone says, “He really likes to be pursued” in conversation? My answer is, “It depends.” If time permitted in a classroom, this could interestingly exemplify the effects of mode, register, and semantic prosody on lexical choices, helping learners sound more accurate and educated in production. On the other hand, if the goal of the conversation is communication, as it was in the context it occurred, I would likely say nothing, unless specifically asked, because it was successful in this respect. The sentence can be said and understood despite a lack of evidence in the BNC.

In the end, however, I was asked, and I felt rather unconfident about my instinctive reply; therefore, now I would suggest the use of a directional adjective after the word *chase* and then use a conversational tag to prompt a reply, as in “He really enjoys being chased around the apartment, doesn’t he?” But, naturally, you may have your own way to say the same thing.

## Bio Data

**Blair W. B. Barr** is a recent graduate of the University of Birmingham’s MA TESL/TEFL program. He works at Tamagawa, Meisei, and Musashino universities, as well as private institutions in the Tokyo area. His various research interests include corpus, world Englishes, vocabulary, and extensive reading. <blairbarr@lab.tamagawa.ac.jp>

## References

- Atkins, S., & Rundell, M. (2008). *The Oxford guide to practical lexicography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Béjoint, M. (2010). *The lexicography of English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burnard, L. (2009). *What is the BNC?* [Online] Retrieved from <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/corpus/index.xml>
- Carter, R. (1998). *Vocabulary: Applied linguistic perspectives* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Flowerdew, L. (2012). *Corpora and language education*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hanks, P. (2002). Mapping meaning onto use. In M. H. Corréard (Ed.), *Lexicography and natural language processing: A festschrift in honour of B. T. S. Atkins* (pp. 156-198). Göteborg, Sweden: Euralex.
- Hunston, S. (2002). *Corpora in applied linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leech, G. (1991). The state of the art in corpus linguistics. In K. Aijmer & B. Altenberg (Eds.), *English corpus linguistics* (pp. 8-29). New York: Pearson Education.
- Louw, B. (1992). Irony in the text or insincerity of the writer: The diagnostic potential of semantic prosodies. In M. Baker, G. Francis, & E. Tognini-Bonelli (Eds.), *Text and technology: In honour of John Sinclair* (pp. 157-176). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- McCarthy, M., & Carter, R. (1995). Spoken grammar: What is it and how can we teach it?. *ELT Journal*, 49, 207-218.
- McEnery, T., & Wilson, A. (2001). *Corpus linguistics* (2nd ed.). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- McIntosh, C., Francis, B. & Poole, R. (2009). *Oxford collocation dictionary* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Oxford University Computing Services on behalf of the BNC Consortium. (2013). *The British National Corpus, version 4.3* (BNC CQP ed.). Retrieved from <http://bncweb.lancs.ac.uk>. Register at <http://bncweb.lancs.ac.uk/bncwebSignup/user/register.php>

- Sinclair, J. (1991). *Corpus, concordance, collocation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sinclair, J. (1999). A way with common words. In H. Hasselgard & S. Oksefjell (Eds.), *Out of Corpora: Studies in honour of Stig Johansson* (pp. 157-179). Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Sinclair, J. (2004). *Trust the text: Language, corpus and discourse*. London: Routledge.
- Stubbs, M. (2001). *Words and phrases: Corpus studies of lexical semantics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Summers, D. (Director). (2009). *Longman dictionary of contemporary English* (5th ed.). Harlow, UK: Pearson Education.
- Swales, J. (2002). Integrated and fragmented worlds: EAP materials and corpus linguistics. In J. Flowerdew (Ed.), *Academic discourse* (pp. 150-164). London: Longman.
- Van Herk, G. (2012). *What is sociolinguistics?* Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

## Appendix A

### BNC Concordance Lines for PURSUE in Spoken Conversation

Below are the seven concordance lines that appeared in the BNC coded as being from the context of spoken conversation.

- |   |  |                 |  |
|---|--|-----------------|--|
| 1 | urgent, so therefore, I haven't really | <b>pursued</b>  | it to its limits. Mm. So, you know if [pause]      |
| 2 | hissel? Mm. Because he'd been          | <b>pursuing</b> | the same man [pause] for years. What, I used to    |
| 3 | on our prices. [unclear] they can't    | <b>pursue</b>   | it till we come back to them. They're not          |
| 4 | we come back to them. They're not      | <b>pursuing</b> | it until we put these things out. [unclear] My     |
| 5 | I must admit that I got fed up with    | <b>pursuing</b> | it and I think it's like banging your head against |

- |   |  |               |  |
|---|--|---------------|--|
| 6 | Yes. Didn't really have the energy to  | <b>pursue</b> | it. Yeah. No I don't blame you. If       |
| 7 | it's I suppose human nature to want to | <b>pursue</b> | your craft [pause] wherever you can. Mm. |

## Appendix B

### Meanings of Chase and Pursue CHASE

Examples for *chase* are based on definitions from the fifth edition of the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (Summers, 2009). Senses and examples in **blue** are from the original source and others, in black, were added for this study with examples from the BNC. All senses for the verb *chase* are labeled with a C followed by a number.

---

#### chase (verb)

---

##### C1) follow

- The police chased the suspect along Severn Avenue.*

##### C2) make somebody/something leave

- Anne went to chase the dog out of the garden.*

##### C3) try to get something

- Top graduates from the university are chased by major companies.*

##### C4) hurry

- I was chasing around getting everything organized.*

##### C5) romance

- 'Sometimes a girl wants to be chased,' Amelia said.*

##### C6) metal

- They were each cut from an individual chunk of crystal chased with gold.*

C7) heroin

- *...a method of use which creates many more problems than “chasing the dragon,” not least of which is the potential spread...*

---

**chase somebody/something ↔ down (phrasal verb)**

---

C8) find

- *We had to chase down everyone we'd sold a bike to.*

---

**chase somebody/something ↔ up (phrasal verb BrE)**

---

C9) remind

- *David hasn't paid yet – you'd better chase him up.*

C10) hasten

- *Can you chase up those photos for me tomorrow?*
- 

The following definitions were created for different senses of the verb *CHASE* based on examples from the BNC.

---

**chase (verb)**

---

C11) catch up – in racing, to attempt to catch up to and pass someone

- Jens Österlund emerged as the first Sailing Challenge contender but he was chased home by two British boats

C12) emotions – to feel moods/emotions move through one's body

- Odd sensations chased through her body and she found herself gasping for air.

C13) tail – chase one's tail (idiom): to be unproductive despite doing a lot of work

- From continually chasing my tail in the first month and being late for everything, and always being in trouble in varying degrees, punctuality became second nature.

C14) higher – to make something to go up/down

- Foreigners have been instrumental in chasing share prices higher.

C15) wild geese – chase wild geese (idiom): to go after something that is impossible to attain

- “Wild geese, mon vieux, is what you presume me to chase,” said the gentleman to Bramble, “but I assure you the stable door is bolted.”

C16) drink – swirl the liquid at the bottom of a cup

- as she chased the last milky drops round her saucer she went on dreamily
- 

## PURSUE

Examples for *pursue* are based on definitions from the fifth edition of the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (Summers, 2009). Examples in blue are from the original source and others, in black, were added for this study with examples from the BNC. All senses for the verb *pursue* are labeled with a P followed by a number.

---

**pursue (verb)**

---

P1) perform activities

- *She plans to pursue a career in politics.*

P2) question/press

- *Janet did not dare pursue the matter further.*

P3) follow

- *Briggs ran across the field with one officer pursuing him.*

P4) romance

- *I was pleased, but somewhat embarrassed, when she pursued me.*
-

The following definitions were created for different senses of the verb *PURSUE* based on examples from the BNC.

### **pursue (verb)**

P5) try to get something – to spend a lot of time and energy trying to get something, such as teams trying to acquire players in sports; similar to C3

- *Royle is now pursuing Grobbelaar (pictured) in a deal that could initially be on a loan basis, but may develop into a £400,000 permanent transfer.*

P6) direction – to continue in a particular direction; to follow a course

- *On leaving Croydon, the road pursued a straight course over the wide expanse of scrubland.*

## Appendix C

### Corpus Findings for Chase and Pursue

#### CHASE

This appendix presents all collocations and phrases that have a statistically significant tendency to co-occur with the verb *CHASE*. They have been divided by their different senses, with those typically associated with more than one sense listed towards the bottom.

C1) “follow [I,T] to quickly follow someone or something in order to catch them; chase somebody along/down/up something etc; chase after” (LDOCE5)

**The chasers:** police, dogs, hounds, cats, bears

**The chased:** (stolen) cars, balls, thieves, (elusive) prey, sheep, ducks, foxes, fish, rabbits, deer, birds, men, women, children, boys, somebody, females, males, each other

**Where:** streets

**Binomial:** chased and caught

**Phrases:**

- *CHASE* after (someone)
- *CHASE* (someone) through / all over / all the way (to) / round / around / along / up / down / away\* / off\* / out\*

C3) “try to get something [I,T] to use a lot of time and effort trying to get something such as work or money; chase after” (LDOCE5)

**The chasers:** clubs, teams, bosses, building societies

**The chased:** (hard for) promotions, dreams, jobs, vacancies, championships, titles, gold, wins, games

**Phrase:** *SPEND* (time) chasing

C5) “romance [T] to try hard to make someone notice you and pay attention to you, because you want to have a romantic relationship with them” (LDOCE5)

**The chased:** women, girls, men

**Phrase:** *CHASE* after (someone)

C10) “chase sth up – to try to make something happen or arrive more quickly, because it has been taking too long” (LDOCE5)

**The chased:** debts

C11) In racing: to attempt to catch up to and pass someone

**Phrase:** *CHASE* home (another horse)

#### Additional Phrases

*BE* chased (by someone) ^passive form  
in chasing (something) ^clause

*KEEP* chasing (something/someone)

\*Sense C2 – “make someone/something leave” (LDOCE5) – typically includes these words. They have been lumped with sense C1 here because they share these and other collocates and sometimes the literal sense of someone running after something.

## PURSUE

The following table presents all collocations and phrases that have a statistically significant tendency to co-occur with the verb *PURSUE*. They have been divided by their different senses, with those typically associated with more than one sense listed towards the bottom.

P1) “to continue doing an activity or trying to achieve something over a long period of time → pursuit; pursue a goal/aim/objective etc.” (LDOCE)

**The pursuers:** governments, students, managers, individuals, organizations, states, forces

**The pursued:** policies, careers, interests, goals, objectives, strategies, aims, self-interests, ends, paths, opportunities, studies, activities, hobbies, lines (of), avenues (of), research, courses, vendettas, themes, investigations, remedies, ambitions, ideas, conceptions, options, priorities, quests, integration, reforms, routes, initiatives, tasks, degrees, projects, programs, subjects, approaches, sport, independence, profit goals, trade, monetary policies, foreign policies, fiscal policies

**Adjectives describing the pursued:** active, economic, academic, vigorous, legitimate, separate, radical, socialist, political, common, business, private, broad, professional, consistent

**How:** energetically, consistently, (with) enthusiasm

**Phrases:**

- freedom/ability/leisure to pursue

- *ENCOURAGE/ENABLE* (someone) to pursue
- *PURSUE* (something) regardless of (something)

P2) “pursue the matter/argument/question etc.; to continue trying to find out about or persuade someone about a particular subject” (LDOCE)

**The pursuers:** individuals

**The pursued:** the matter, claims, enquires, lines (of), avenues (of), inquires, actions, issues, questions, points, hypotheses, arguments, details, complaints, dismissal claims

**Adjectives describing the pursued:** legal, unfair

**Phrases:**

- *PURSUE* (something) further
- *PURSUE* (something) against (someone)
- *PURSUE* (something/someone) through the courts

P3) “to chase or follow someone or something, in order to catch them, attack them etc. → pursuit”

**The pursuer:** police

**The pursued:** enemies

**How:** hotly

**Sense similar to *chase up* – “to try to make something happen or arrive more quickly, because it has been taking too long”**

**The pursuer:** creditors

**The pursued:** debtors

**Adjective/Adverbs for multiple senses of *PURSUE***

**Adjectives describing the pursued:** different, particular, similar,

independent, alternative

**How:** vigorously, actively, relentlessly, successfully, effectively, doggedly, simultaneously, independently

### Additional Phrases

*BE* pursued (by someone) ^passive form

in pursuing (something) ^clause

*INTERESTED* in pursuing

*WISH/CONTINUE/INTEND/DECIDE/CHOSE/SEEK* to pursue

free/reluctant/able/unable to pursue

intention to pursue

(one's) determination to pursue

*BE* pursued with vigour/determination

*BE* pursued with/without (noun)

*BE* worth pursuing

*PREVENT* (someone) from pursuing; *BE* prevented from pursuing

*BE* inclined to pursue

*BE* unlikely to pursue; unlikely to be pursued