



Similarities between Think of and Think about: A Corpora-based Analysis

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The main goal of this paper is to provide a comparative analysis of *think of* and *think about* in the COCA and BNC. It is interesting to note that *think of* and *think about* in the COCA show the same pattern in the TV/movie, blog, web, magazine, and newspaper genres and the academic genre, whereas they show a different pattern in the spoken genre and the fiction genre. On the other hand, *think of* and *think about* in the BNC show the same pattern in the misc and non-academic genres and the newspaper genre, whereas they show a different pattern in the fiction and magazine genres and the spoken and academic genres. These results suggest that *think of* and *think about* are synonymously used, but they are slightly different from each other in their use. When it comes to the distance between *think of* and *think about*, the newspaper genre of the COCA is the nearest between them. On the other hand, *think of* is the furthest type from *think about* in the fiction genre. It is worth pointing out that the non-academic genre of the BNC is the nearest between *think of* and *think about*. On the other hand, *think of* is the furthest type from *think about* in the spoken genre. The COCA clearly shows that *think of ways* is the most preferable collocation among Americans, followed by *think of things*, *think of people*, *think of women*, and *think of it*, in descending order. The COCA also indicates that the expression *think about things* is the most preferred by Americans, followed by *think about it*, *think about people*, *think about sex*, *think about food*, and *think about ways*, in that order. It is noteworthy that the collocations *things*, *it*, *people*, *sex*, *food*, *ways*, *life*, *death*, *money*, *women*, *right*, *marriage*, *men*, *love*, and *home* are linked to both *think of* and *think about*, whereas the other nouns are not linked to them. This in turn implies that they are synonymously used, but they are slightly different from each other in their use. The BNC clearly shows that the expression *think of ways* is the most preferred by the British, followed by *think of things*, *think of others* (*think of people*), *think of love*, and *think of life*, in descending order. The BNC further shows that *think about things* is the most preferred by the British, followed by *think about death* (*think about people*, *think about sex*), and *think about food*, in that order. It is worthwhile noting that in the BNC, the nouns *things*, *death*, *people*, *home*, *women*, *children*, *language*, *others*, and *love* are linked to both *think of* and *think about*, but the other nouns are not linked to them. It is clear from this that *think of* and *think about* are slightly different from each other in their use. Finally, this paper argues that the nouns *people*, *life*, *love*, *women*, *death*, *things*, *home*, and *ways* are linked to both *think of 1* (American) and *think of 2* (British) and that the collocations *death*, *home*, *money*, *women*, *politics*, *right*, *love*, *things*, *food*, *sex*, *people*, *work*, and *issues* are linked to *think about 1* (American) and *think about 2* (British). This in turn implies that there is a close correlation between American English and British English.

Keywords: corpus, token, type, COCA, BNC, think of, think about

1. Introduction

The goal of this paper is to provide a comparative analysis of *think of* and *think about* in the Corpus of Contemporary American English and the British National Corpus. We explore similarities between *think of* and *think about* by using the software NetMiner and in terms of Euclid's distance. By measuring the distance between the two, we can say how much they are related to each other. First, we aim to examine the genre frequency of *think of* and *think about* in the COCA and BNC. By examining the genre frequency of *think of* and *think about* in the COCA and BNC, we can reveal how much they are related with each other. In addition, we examine the distance between *think of* and *think about* in term of statistics. In this paper, we also aim to consider the collocations of *think of* and *think about* in two corpora. We attempt to reveal which collocations are the most preferable ones among Americans and the British. Finally, by using the NetMiner, we examine similarities between *think of* and *think about* in two corpora. The organization of this paper is as follows.

In section 2.1, we argue that *think of* and *think about* in the COCA show the same pattern in the TV/movie, blog, web, magazine, and newspaper genres and the academic genre, whereas they show a different pattern in the spoken genre and the fiction genre. This in turn suggests that *think of* and *think about* are synonymously used, but they are slightly different from each other in their use. We further argue that the newspaper genre of the COCA is the nearest between *think of* and *think about*. On the other hand, *think of* is the furthest type from *think about* in the fiction genre. In section 2.3, we maintain that *think of* and *think about* in the BNC show the same pattern in the misc and non-academic genres and the newspaper genre, whereas they show a different pattern in the fiction and magazine genres and the spoken and academic genres. This indicates that *think of* is partly similar to and partly different from *think about* in their use. We also maintain that the non-academic genre of the BNC is the nearest between *think of* and *think about*. On the other hand, *think of* is the furthest type from *think about* in the spoken genre. In section 3, we contend that *think of ways* is the most preferable collocation among Americans, followed by *think of things*, *think of people*, *think of women*, and *think of it*, in descending order. We also contend that the expression *think about things* is the most preferred by Americans, followed by *think about it*, *think about people*, *think about sex*, *think about food*, and *think about ways*, in that order. Additionally, we show that the collocations *things*, *it*, *people*, *sex*, *food*, *ways*, *life*, *death*, *money*, *women*, *right*, *marriage*, *men*, *love*, and *home* are linked to both *think of* and *think about*. In section 4, we argue that the expression *think of ways* is the most preferred by the British, followed by *think of things*, *think of others* (*think of people*), *think of love*, and *think of life*, in descending order. We further argue that *think about things* is the most preferred by the British, followed by *think about death* (*think about people*, *think about sex*), and *think about food*, in that order. Also, we show that in the BNC, the nouns *things*, *death*, *people*, *home*, *women*, *children*, *language*, *others*, and *love* are linked to both *think of* and *think about*. Finally, we maintain that the nouns *people*, *life*, *love*, *women*, *death*, *things*, *home*, and *ways* are linked to both *think of 1* (American) and *think of 2* (British). We also maintain that the collocations *death*, *home*, *money*, *women*, *politics*, *right*, *love*, *things*, *food*, *sex*, *people*, *work*, and *issues* are linked to *think about 1* (American) and *think about 2* (British). This in turn implies that there is a strong correlation between American English and British English.

2. A Frequency Analysis of think of and think about in two corpora

2.1. The Genre Frequency of think of and think about in the COCA

In what follows, we aim to provide a comparative analysis of *think of* and *think about* in the COCA. Table 1 indicates the genre frequency of *think of* and *think about* in the COCA:

Table 1 Genre Frequency of think of and think about in the COCA

| Genre | All | BLOG | WEB | TV/M | SPOK | FIC | MAG | NEWS | ACAD |
|-------------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| Think of | 79,760 | 12,416 | 9,897 | 14,054 | 12,062 | 13,935 | 8,543 | 5,226 | 3,627 |
| Think about | 80,695 | 12,287 | 9,676 | 18,050 | 15,665 | 10,100 | 6,715 | 5,094 | 3,108 |

An important question is “Which type is preferred by Americans?” Table 1 clearly indicates that *think about* is preferred by Americans. As alluded to in Table 1, the overall frequency of *think of* is 79,760 tokens, whereas that of *think about* is 80,695 tokens. This in turn implies that the type *think about* is favored over the type *think of* in America. Thus, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that Americans prefer using *think about* to using *think of*.

An immediate question is “In which genre is *think of* the most frequently used?” Table 1 clearly shows that in the TV/movie genre, the type *think of* is the most commonly used. This indicates that Americans most prefer *think of* in the TV/movie genre. It is interesting to point out that *think about* is the most widely used in the TV/movie genre. More specifically, the frequency of *think about* is 18,050 tokens and it ranks first in the TV/movie genre. On the other hand, the frequency of *think of* is 14,054 tokens and it ranks first in the TV/movie genre. From all of this, it is clear that *think of* and *think about* show the same pattern with respect to the use of the TV/movie genre. It should be noted, however, that *think about* is preferred over *think of* by American celebs.

It is worth pointing out that *think of* is the second most preferred one in the fiction genre. It is noteworthy, on the other hand, that *think about* is the second most preferred one in the spoken genre. This in turn implies that *think of* and *think about* show a different pattern with respect to their ranking. From this, it is clear that *think of* is partly different from *think about* in its use.

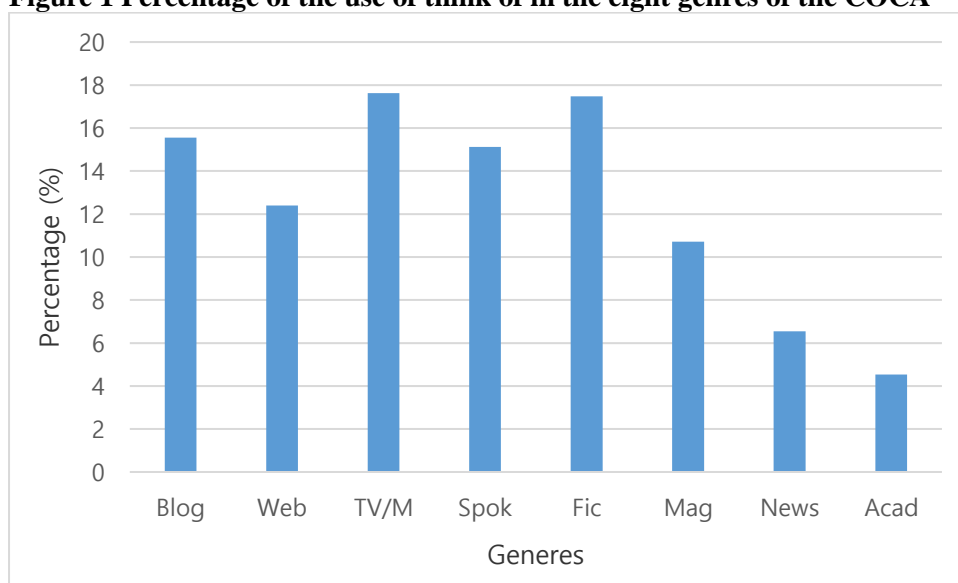
It is interesting to note that *think of* is the third most preferred by Americans in the blog genre. Likewise, *think about* is the third most preferred by them in the blog genre. That both *think of* and *think about* rank third in the blog genre suggests that American bloggers like using them. In addition, that both *think of* and *think about* rank third in the blog genre indicates that they show the same pattern with respect to their ranking. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that *think of* and *think about* are synonymously used. As Murphy (2016, 2019) points out, when it comes to *think of* and *think about*, sometimes the difference is very small and we can use *think of* and *think about* synonymously.

It is worthwhile pointing out that *think of* is the fourth most preferred one in the spoken genre. The frequency of *think about* is higher than that of *think of* in the spoken genre. This indicates that *think about* is favored over *think of* in the spoken genre. That is to say, Americans prefer using *think about* to using *think of* in daily conversation. It is worthwhile noting, on the other hand, that *think about* is the fourth most preferred in the fiction genre. This suggests that *think of* and *think about* are synonymously used, but they are slightly different from each other in their use.

Noteworthy is that both *think of* and *think about* have the lowest frequency in the academic genre. This may imply that they show the same pattern with respect to their ranking in the academic genre. It should be pointed out, however, that *think of* is favored over *think about* in the academic genre. As illustrated in Table 1, the frequency of *think of* is higher than that of *think about*. Finally, it important to note that *think of* and *think about* show the same pattern in the TV/movie, blog, web, magazine, and newspaper genres and the academic genre, whereas they show a different pattern in the spoken genre and the fiction genre. This in turn suggests that *think of* and *think about* are synonymously used, but they are slightly different from each other in their use.

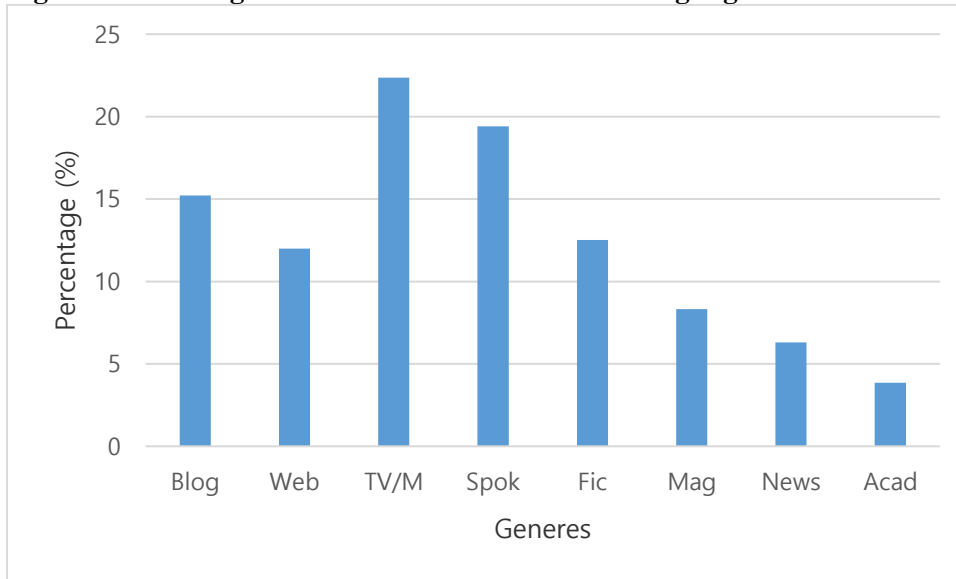
Now Figure 1 and Figure 2 indicate the percentage of the use of *think of* and *think about* in the eight genres of the COCA:

Figure 1 Percentage of the use of think of in the eight genres of the COCA



When it comes to the use of *think of* in the eight genres, the TV/movie genre is the most influenced by it, followed by the fiction genre, the blog genre, the spoken genre, the web genre, the magazine genre, the newspaper genre, and the academic genre, in descending order.

Figure 2 Percentage of the use of think about in the eight genres of the COCA



With respect to the use of *think about* in the eight genres of the COCA, it is interesting to point out that the TV/movie genre is the most influenced by it, followed by the spoken genre, the blog genre, the fiction genre, the web genre, the magazine genre, the newspaper genre, and the academic genre, in that order. As alluded to in Figure 1 and Figure 2, *think of* and *think about* show a different pattern in the spoken genre and the fiction genre, whereas they show the same pattern in the other genres. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that *think of* and *think about* are synonymously used, but they are slightly different from each other in their use.

2.2. Euclidean distance

In what follows, we aim to consider similarities between *think of* and *think about* by using the Euclidean distance. We can measure the distance between *think of* and *think about* in the eight genres in terms of the Euclidean distance:

(1) Euclidean distance:

$$\sqrt{(p_1 - q_1)^2 + (p_2 - q_2)^2 + \dots + (p_n - q_n)^2} = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n (p_i - q_i)^2}$$

The following table shows the percentage of the use of *think of* and *think about* in the eight genres and the distance between *think of* and *think about*:

Table 2 Euclidean distance between think of and think about in the COCA

| Genre | Blog | Web | TV/M | Spok | Fic | Mag | News | Acad |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|
| Percentage of think of | 15.56 | 12.40 | 17.62 | 15.12 | 17.47 | 10.71 | 6.55 | 4.54 |
| Percentage of think about | 15.22 | 11.99 | 22.36 | 19.41 | 12.51 | 8.32 | 6.31 | 3.85 |
| Euclidean distance | 0.34 | 0.41 | 4.76 | 4.29 | 4.96 | 2.39 | 0.24 | 0.69 |

Most interestingly, the newspaper genre is the nearest between the two (*think of* and *think about*). On the other hand, *think of* is the furthest type from *think about* in the fiction genre. More specifically, the newspaper genre is the nearest between *think of* and *think about*, followed by the blog genre, the web genre, the academic genre, the spoken genre, the TV/movie genre, and the fiction genre, in descending order.

Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the newspaper genre is the nearest between the two, whereas *think of* is the furthest type from *think about* in the fiction genre. This in turn suggests that *think of* and *think about* are alike in their use in the newspaper genre since they have almost similar frequencies, whereas they are not alike in the fiction genre since they have quite different frequencies. Similarly, *think of* and *think about* show very close similarities in the blog genre, but they do not show them in the TV/movie genre. On the other hand, *think of* and *think about* reveal deep similarities in the web genre, but they do not reveal them in the spoken genre. It seems thus reasonable to conclude that *think of* is partly similar to and partly different from *think about* in their use.

2.3. The Genre Frequency of *think of* and *think about* in the BNC

In the following, we aim to provide a comparative analysis of *think of* and *think about* in the BNC. Take a look at Table 3:

Table 3 Genre Frequency of *think of* and *think about* in the BNC

| Genre | ALL | SPOKEN | FICTION | MAGAZINE | NEWSPAPER | NONACAD | ACAD | MISC |
|-------------|-------|--------|---------|----------|-----------|---------|------|------|
| Think of | 6,581 | 1,421 | 2,352 | 367 | 330 | 603 | 511 | 997 |
| Think about | 3,639 | 1,122 | 1,080 | 239 | 159 | 338 | 170 | 531 |

An important question that naturally arises is “Which type is preferred by the British?” Table 3 clearly indicates that *think of* is preferred over *think about* by the British. More specifically, the overall frequency of *think of* is 6,581 tokens, whereas that of *think about* is 3,639 tokens. This in turn implies that *think of* is favored over *think about* in the UK. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that the British prefer using *think of* to using *think about*. It must be noted, however, that the type *think about* is preferred over the type *think of* by Americans. This suggests that Americans and the British show a different pattern with respect to the use of *think of* and *think about*.

An immediate question is “In which genre is the type *think of* the most frequently used?” Table 3 clearly shows that *think of* is the most widely used in the fiction genre. This may imply that British writers are fond of using *think of* in their novels. It should be pointed out, however, that *think about* is the most commonly used in the spoken genre. The frequency of *think about* in the spoken genre is 1,122 tokens and it ranks first. From all of this, it is clear that *think of* and *think about* show a different pattern with respect to their ranking. This in turn indicates that *think of* is slightly different from *think about* in their use.

It is interesting to note that *think of* is the second most preferred by the British in the spoken genre. More interestingly, in the spoken genre, *think of* is favored over *think about*. It is noteworthy, on the other hand, that *think about* is the second most preferred one in the fiction genre. This in turn suggests that *think of* does not show the same property as *think about* with respect to their ranking.

It is worth pointing out that *think of* is the third most preferred by the British in the misc genre. Likewise, *think about* is the third most preferred by them in the misc genre. This implies that *think of* and *think about* show the same property with respect to their ranking in the misc genre. It should be noted, however, that *think of* is preferred over *think about* by the British in the misc genre. There is a difference of 466 tokens between the frequency of *think of* and that of *think about* in the misc genre, which suggests that the British prefer using the type *think of* in the misc genre.

It is interesting to point out that *think of* is the fourth most preferred by the British in the non-academic genre. The same can be said about *think about*. That is to say, *think about* is the fourth most preferred by the British in the non-academic genre. Thus, they show the same property in the same genre. It should be pointed out, however, that *think of* is preferable to *think about* in the non-academic genre.

It is worthwhile noting that *think of* is the fifth most preferred by the British in the academic genre, whereas *think about* is the fifth most preferred by them in the magazine genre. From this, it can be inferred that *think of* and *think about* show a different property with respect to their ranking. More interestingly, *think of* is favored

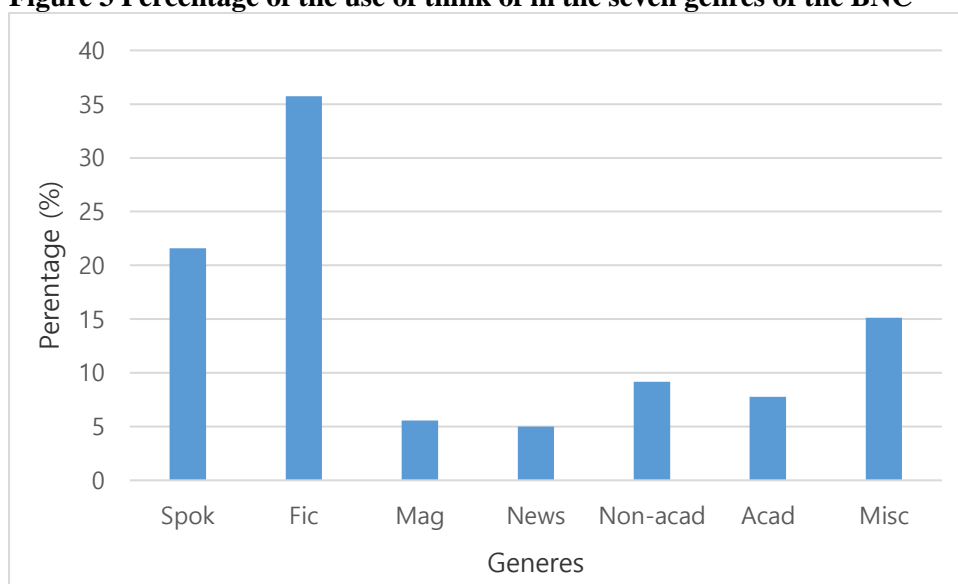
over *think about* in the academic genre. More specifically, the frequency of *think of* is higher than that of *think about*. There is a difference of 341 tokens between *think of* and *think about* in the academic genre. When it comes to the magazine genre, *think of* is favored over *think about* (the difference of 128 tokens). This in turn implies that *think of* is preferred over *think about* by British journalists.

Noteworthy is that *think of* is the sixth most preferred one in the magazine genre, whereas *think about* is the sixth most preferred one in the academic genre. This in turn indicates that *think of* and *think about* reveal a different property with respect to their ranking. More interestingly, *think of* is favored over *think about* in the magazine genre. On the other hand, *think of* is preferable to *think about* in the academic genre. Thus, it is significant to note that the British prefer using *think of* to using *think about* in all genres.

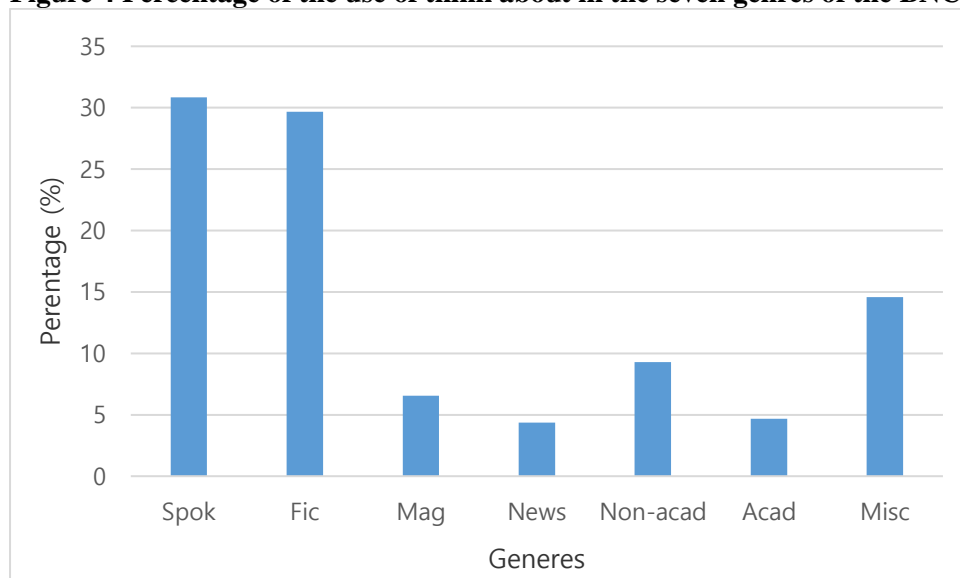
It should be pointed out that *think of* is the seventh most preferred by British journalists. Likewise, *think about* is the seventh most preferred by them. As alluded to in Table 3, *think of* is preferable to *think about* in the newspaper genre. This may imply that British journalists prefer using *think of* in their newspapers. As expected, that both *think of* and *think about* rank seventh in the newspaper genre suggests that they show the same property with respect to their ranking in the newspaper genre. To sum up, *think of* and *think about* show the same pattern in the misc and non-academic genres and the newspaper genre, whereas they show a different pattern in the fiction and magazine genres and the spoken and academic genres. It seems thus reasonable to conclude that *think of* is partly similar to and partly different from *think about* in their use.

Now Figure 3 and Figure 4 show the percentage of the use of *think of* and *think about* in the seven genres of the BNC:

Figure 3 Percentage of the use of think of in the seven genres of the BNC



When it comes to the use of *think of* in the seven genres, the fiction genre is the most influenced by it, followed by the spoken genre, the misc genre, the non-academic genre, the academic genre, the magazine genre, and the newspaper genre, in descending order.

Figure 4 Percentage of the use of think about in the seven genres of the BNC

With respect to the use of *think about* in the seven genres, it is interesting to point out that the spoken genre is the most influenced by it, followed by the fiction genre, the misc genre, the non-academic genre, the magazine genre, the academic genre, and the newspaper genre, in that order.

2.4. Euclidean distance

In what follows, we aim to consider the distance between *think of* and *think about* in the seven genres of the BNC. A major point to note is that the Euclidean distance provides the distance between *think of* and *think about* in the seven genres of the BNC. A further point to note is that the Euclidean distance provides the similarity index between *think of* and *think about* in the seven genres of the BNC. Take a look at the Euclidean distance between *think of* and *think about* in the seven genres:

Table 4 Euclidean distance between think of and think about in the BNC

| Genre | SPOK | FIC | MAG | NEWS | NON-ACAD | ACAD | MISC |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|------|------|----------|------|-------|
| Percentage of think of | 21.59 | 35.73 | 5.57 | 5.01 | 9.16 | 7.76 | 15.14 |
| Percentage of think about | 30.83 | 29.67 | 6.56 | 4.36 | 9.28 | 4.67 | 14.59 |
| Euclidean distance | 9.24 | 6.06 | 0.99 | 0.65 | 0.12 | 3.09 | 0.55 |

Note that the more the frequency of the two (*think of* and *think about*) is similar in one genre, the more they share very close similarities with each other. As alluded to in Table 4, the non-academic genre is the nearest between *think of* and *think about*. On the other hand, *think of* is the furthest type from *think about* in the spoken genre. More specifically, the non-academic genre is the nearest between *think of* and *think about*, followed by the misc genre, the newspaper genre, the magazine genre, the academic genre, the fiction genre, and the spoken genre. From all of this, it is clear that *think of* and *think about* show deep similarities in the non-academic genre, but they do not show them in the spoken genre. Interestingly, *think of* and *think about* show deep similarities in the misc genre, whereas they do not show them in the fiction genre. Likewise, *think of* and *think about* show very close similarities in the newspaper genre, whereas they do not show them in the academic genre. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that *think of* is slightly different from *think about* in their use.

3. A Collocation Analysis of think of and think about in the COCA

In what follows, we aim to examine the collocations of *think of* and *think about* in the COCA. Table 5 indicates the frequency of the collocation of *think of* in the top twenty five:

Table 5 Collocation of think of in the COCA

| Number | Collocation of think of | Frequency |
|--------|-------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Think of ways | 213 |
| 2 | Think of things | 195 |
| 3 | Think of people | 129 |
| 4 | Think of women | 67 |
| 5 | Think of it | 61 |
| 6 | Think of right | 55 |
| 7 | Think of death | 54 |
| 8 | Think of home | 52 |
| 9 | Think of life | 51 |
| 10 | Think of food | 45 |
| 11 | Think of sex | 44 |
| 12 | Think of Mr | 37 |
| 13 | Think of president | 33 |
| 14 | Think of Dr | 32 |
| 15 | Think of music | 31 |
| 16 | Think of money | 30 |
| 17 | Think of men | 29 |
| 18 | Think of time | 29 |
| 19 | Think of comments | 26 |
| 20 | Think of love | 25 |
| 21 | Think of marriage | 25 |
| 22 | Think of me | 25 |
| 23 | Think of science | 25 |
| 24 | Think of times | 25 |
| 25 | Think of mom | 22 |

An important question is “Which collocation is the most frequently used by Americans?” Table 5 clearly shows that *think of ways* is the most widely used by Americans. This in turn implies that *think of ways* is the most preferred by Americans. As illustrated in Table 5, *think of ways* is the most preferable collocation among Americans, followed by *think of things*, *think of people*, *think of women*, *think of it*, *think of right*, *think of death*, *think of home*, *think of life*, and *think of food*, in descending order. It is interesting to point out that the collocation *think of things* is the second most preferred by Americans. It should be pointed out that the everyday expression *think of people* is the third most preferred by Americans. More interestingly, the expressions *think of death* and *think of life* rank seventh and ninth, respectively. We thus conclude that the collocation *think of ways* is the most preferable one for Americans.

Now attention is paid to the collocation of *think about* in the COCA. Table 6 indicates the frequency of the collocation of *think about* in the top twenty five:

Table 6 Collocation of think about in the COCA

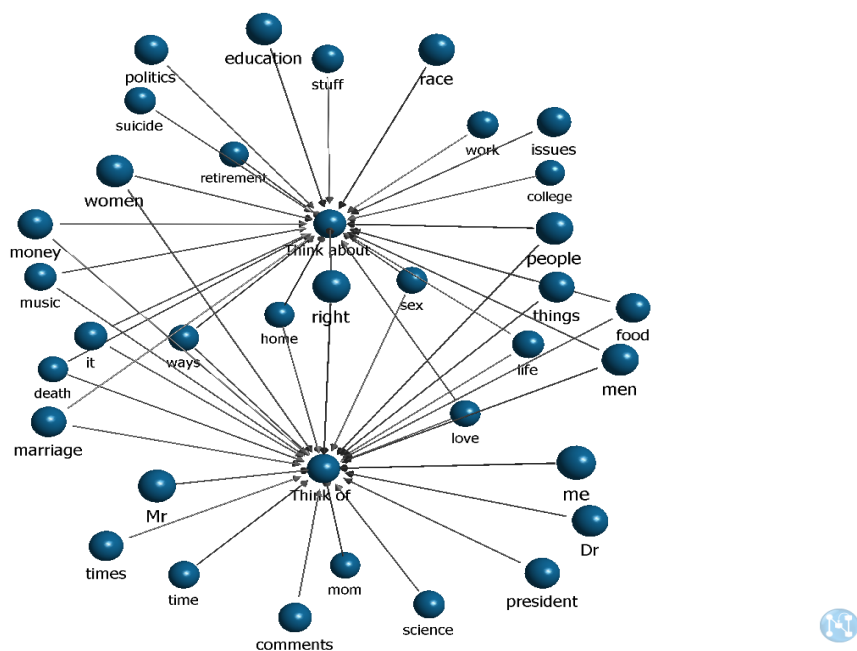
| Number | Collocation of think of | Frequency |
|--------|-------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Think about things | 490 |
| 2 | Think about it | 272 |
| 3 | Think about people | 145 |
| 4 | Think about sex | 127 |
| 5 | Think about food | 91 |

| | | |
|----|------------------------|----|
| 6 | Think about ways | 85 |
| 7 | Think about life | 74 |
| 8 | Think about death | 67 |
| 9 | Think about money | 61 |
| 10 | Think about women | 55 |
| 11 | Think about stuff | 53 |
| 12 | Think about work | 40 |
| 13 | Think about right | 39 |
| 14 | Think about issues | 38 |
| 15 | Think about marriage | 38 |
| 16 | Think about men | 36 |
| 17 | Think about love | 33 |
| 18 | Think about music | 33 |
| 19 | Think about politics | 33 |
| 20 | Think about race | 33 |
| 21 | Think about college | 32 |
| 22 | Think about education | 32 |
| 23 | Think about retirement | 32 |
| 24 | Think about suicide | 32 |
| 25 | Think about home | 27 |

An immediate question is “Which collocation is the most commonly used by Americans?” Table 6 clearly shows that the collocation *thinks about things* is the most widely used by Americans. This in turn implies that the collocation *think about things* is the most preferable one for Americans. As illustrated in Table 6, the expression *think about things* is the most preferred by Americans, followed by *think about it*, *think about people*, *think about sex*, *think about food*, *think about ways*, *think about life*, *think about death*, *think about money*, and *think about women*, in that order. It is significant to note that *think of things* ranks second in the COCA, whereas *think about things* ranks first. It is important to note, on the other hand, that *think of it* ranks fifth, whereas *think about it* ranks second, which indicates that *think of* and *think about* reveal a similar pattern in their collocations. Similarly, *think of ways* ranks first in the COCA, whereas *think about ways* ranks sixth. Again, *think of* and *think about* show a similar pattern with respect to their collocations. It should be pointed out, however, that the expression *think about work* ranks twelfth in the COCA, but *think of work* does not appear in the top twenty five.

Now let us turn our attention to the visualization of the collocations of *think of* and *think about* in the top twenty five. This 3-D visualization of the collocations of *think of* and *think about* was performed by the software NetMiner:

Figure 5 Visualization of the collocations of think of and think about in the COCA



A major point to note is that particular nouns have a collocation relationship with *think of* and *think about*. This indicates that these nouns are frequently used with *think of* and *think about*, respectively. A further point to note is that the collocations *things*, *it*, *people*, *sex*, *food*, *ways*, *life*, *death*, *money*, *women*, *right*, *marriage*, *men*, *love*, and *home* are linked to both *think of* and *think about*. This seems to suggest that *think of* and *think about* are identical and synonymously used. It should be noted, however, that the other nouns are not linked to both *think of* and *think about*. It can thus be inferred that *think of* and *think about* are synonymously used, but they are slightly different from each other in their use.

4. A Collocation Analysis of *think of* and *think about* in the BNC

In the following, we aim to consider the collocations of *think of* and *think about* in the BNC. In addition, we provide a comparative analysis of *think of* and *think about* in the top twenty five. Also, we compare the results from the BNC and those from the COCA. Finally, we visualize the collocations of *think of* and *think about* in terms of the software NetMiner.

Table 7 indicates the frequency of the collocation of *think of* in the top twenty five.

Table 7 Collocation of *think of* in the BNC

| Number | Collocation of <i>think of</i> | Frequency |
|--------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Think of ways | 17 |
| 2 | Think of things | 16 |
| 3 | Think of others | 11 |
| 4 | Think of people | 11 |
| 5 | Think of love | 9 |
| 6 | Think of life | 8 |
| 7 | Think of women | 7 |
| 8 | Think of examples | 6 |
| 9 | Think of gold | 5 |
| 10 | Think of Finn | 4 |
| 11 | Think of objectives | 4 |
| 12 | Think of situations | 4 |
| 13 | Think of summer | 4 |
| 14 | Think of death | 3 |
| 15 | Think of conductance | 3 |
| 16 | Think of artists | 3 |

| | | |
|----|-------------------|---|
| 17 | Think of genes | 3 |
| 18 | Think of home | 3 |
| 19 | Think of language | 3 |
| 20 | Think of number | 3 |
| 21 | Think of reasons | 3 |
| 22 | Think of think | 3 |
| 23 | Think of water | 3 |
| 24 | Think of words | 3 |
| 25 | Think of children | 2 |

An important question that naturally arises is “Which collocation is the most preferred by the British?” Table 7 clearly shows that *think of ways* is the most widely used by the British. This in turn implies that *thinks of ways* is the most preferable collocation for the British. As indicated in Table 7, the expression *think of ways* is the most preferred by the British, followed by *think of things*, *think of others (think of people)*, *think of love*, *think of life*, *think of women*, *think of examples*, *think of gold*, and *think of Finn*, in descending order. It is interesting to point out that *think of ways* is the most preferable for Americans and the British. Also, *think of things* is the second most preferred by Americans and the British. This in turn indicates that Americans and the British reveal the same pattern with respect to the use of *think of ways* and *think of things*. It should be pointed out that *think of people* ranks third in the COCA and BNC. It can thus be inferred that Americans and the British show the same pattern with respect to the use of *think of people*. It is noteworthy that *think of love* ranks twentieth in the COCA, whereas it ranks fifth in the BNC. On the other hand, *think of life* ranks ninth in the COCA, whereas it ranks sixth in the BNC. It is worth pointing out that *think of women* ranks fourth in the COCA, whereas it ranks seventh in the BNC. Finally, *think of death* ranks seventh in the COCA, whereas it ranks fourteenth in the BNC. It seems thus reasonable to conclude that Americans and the British reveal a similar pattern with respect to the collocation of *think of*.

Now attention is paid to the collocation of *think about* in the BNC. Take a look at Table 8:

Table 8 Collocation of think about in the BNC

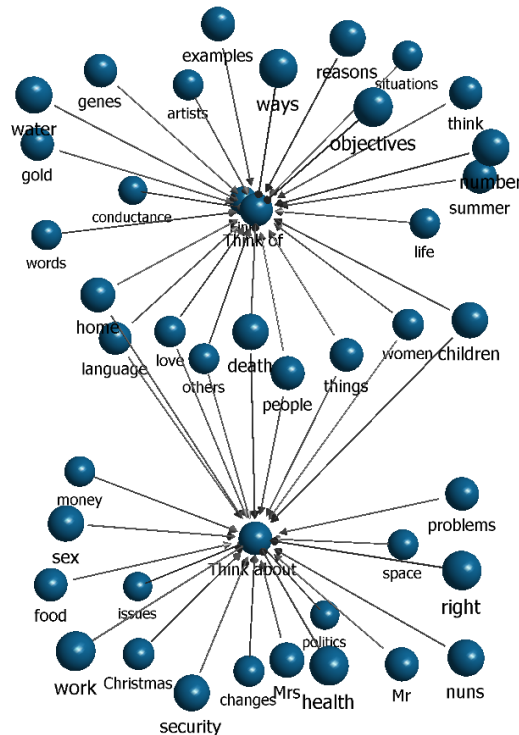
| Number | Collocation of think of | Frequency |
|--------|-------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Think about things | 23 |
| 2 | Think about death | 5 |
| 3 | Think about people | 5 |
| 4 | Think about sex | 5 |
| 5 | Think about food | 4 |
| 6 | Think about money | 4 |
| 7 | Think about Mr | 3 |
| 8 | Think about home | 3 |
| 9 | Think about health | 3 |
| 10 | Think about problems | 3 |
| 11 | Think about right | 3 |
| 12 | Think about space | 3 |
| 13 | Think about women | 3 |
| 14 | Think about work | 3 |
| 15 | Think about changes | 2 |
| 16 | Think about Christmas | 2 |
| 17 | Think about children | 2 |
| 18 | Think about language | 2 |
| 19 | Think about love | 2 |
| 20 | Think about issues | 2 |
| 21 | Think about Mrs | 2 |
| 22 | Think about nuns | 2 |
| 23 | Think about others | 2 |

| | | |
|----|----------------------|---|
| 24 | Think about politics | 2 |
| 25 | Think about security | 2 |

An immediate question is “Which collocation is the most preferred by the British?” Table 8 clearly shows that *think about things* is the most preferable collocation among the British. As alluded to in Table 8, *think about things* is the most preferred by the British, followed by *think about death* (*think about people*, *think about sex*), and *think about food*, in that order. It is worthwhile noting that *think about things* is the most preferred by Americans and the British. It is interesting to point out that *think about people* is the third most preferred by Americans and the British. As illustrated in Table 8, *think about food* is the fifth most preferred by Americans and the British. From all of this, it is clear that Americans and the British show the same pattern with respect to the use of the expressions *think about things*, *think about people*, and *think about food*. More interestingly, *think about things* ranks first in the BNC, whereas *think of things* ranks second. On the other hand, *think about death* ranks second in the BNC, whereas *think of death* ranks fourteenth. Finally, *think about people* ranks second in the BNC, whereas *think of people* ranks third. It can be inferred from this that *think of* and *think about* reveal a similar pattern with respect to their collocations.

Now attention is paid to the visualization of the collocations of *think of* and *think about* in the BNC.

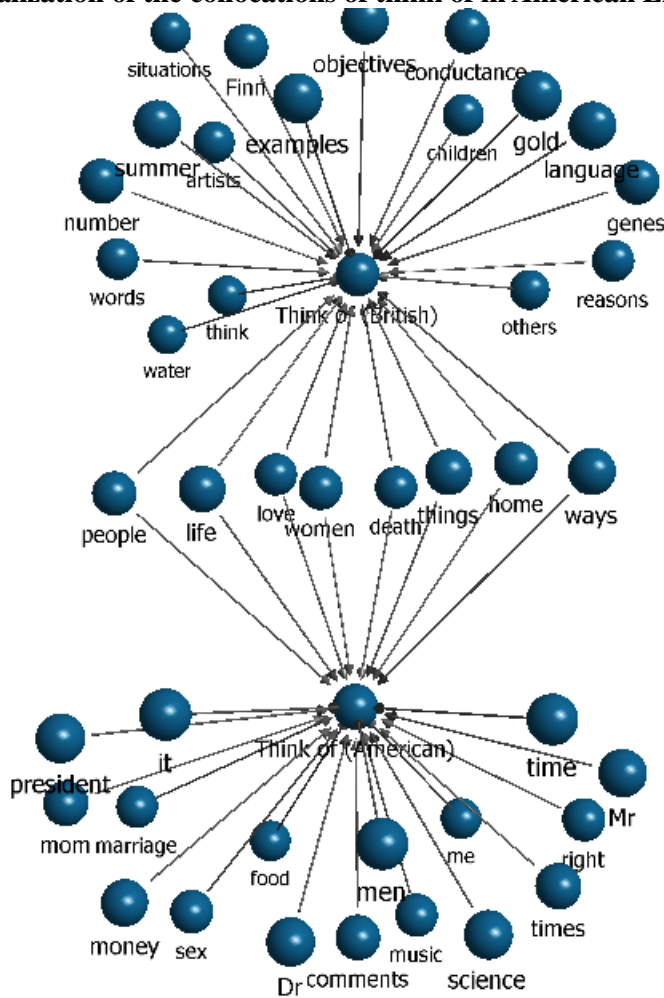
Figure 6 Visualization of the collocations of think of and think about in the BNC



As illustrated in Figure 6, particular nouns are linked to *think of* and *think about*, respectively. This indicates that these nouns have a collocation relationship with *think of* and *think about*, respectively and that these nouns are much used with *think of* and *think about*. A major point to note is that only nine nouns are linked to both *think of* and *think about*. More specifically, only the nouns *things*, *death*, *people*, *home*, *women*, *children*, *language*, *others*, and *love* are linked to both *think of* and *think about*. This in turn suggests that *think of* and *think about* are synonymously used, but they are slightly different from each other in their use. This 3-D visualization of the collocations of *think of* and *think about* was performed by the software NetMiner.

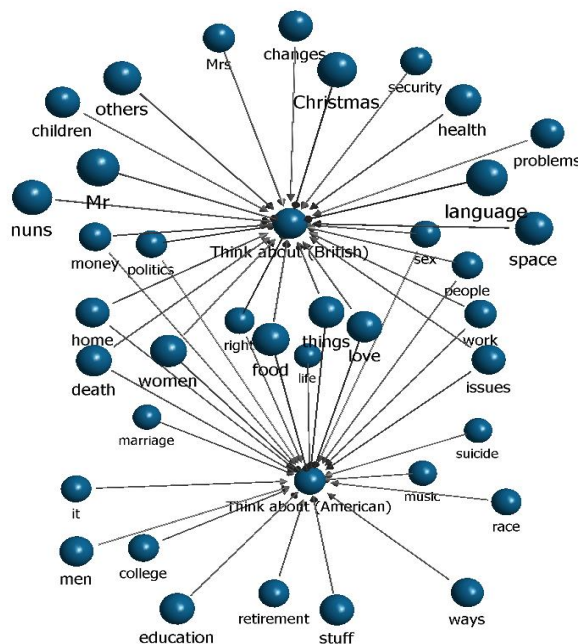
Finally, we try to visualize the collocations of *think of* and *think about* in American English and British English and compare them (national variation).

Figure 7 Visualization of the collocations of think of in American English and British English



It is interesting to note that eight nouns are linked to *think of 1* (American) and *think of 2* (British). More specifically, the nouns *people*, *life*, *love*, *women*, *death*, *things*, *home*, and *ways* are linked to both *think of 1* (American) and *think of 2* (British). This indicates that there is a close correlation between American English and British English. Simply put, they reveal a similar pattern with respect to the collocation of *think of*.

Figure 8 Visualization of the collocations of think about in American English and British English



Twenty four nouns are not linked to both *think about 1* (American) and *think about 2* (British). It is noteworthy, on the other hand, that thirteen nouns are linked to both *think about 1* (American) and *think about 2* (British). More specifically, the collocations *death, home, money, women, politics, right, love, things, food, sex, people, work, and issues* are linked to *think about 1* (American) and *think about 2* (British). This in turn implies that there is a close correlation between American English and British English.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, we have provided a comparative analysis of *think of* and *think about* in the COCA and BNC. In section 2.1, we have argued that *think of* and *think about* in the COCA show the same pattern in the TV/movie, blog, web, magazine, and newspaper genres and the academic genre, whereas they show a different pattern in the spoken genre and the fiction genre. This in turn suggests that *think of* and *think about* are synonymously used, but they are slightly different from each other in their use. We have further argued that the newspaper genre of the COCA is the nearest between *think of* and *think about*. On the other hand, *think of* is the furthest type from *think about* in the fiction genre. In section 2.3, we have maintained that *think of* and *think about* in the BNC show the same pattern in the misc and non-academic genres and the newspaper genre, whereas they show a different pattern in the fiction and magazine genres and the spoken and academic genres. This indicates that *think of* is partly similar to and partly different from *think about* in their use. We have also maintained that the non-academic genre of the BNC is the nearest between *think of* and *think about*. On the other hand, *think of* is the furthest type from *think about* in the spoken genre. In section 3, we have contended that *think of ways* is the most preferable collocation among Americans, followed by *think of things, think of people, think of women, and think of it*, in descending order. We have also contended that the expression *think about things* is the most preferred by Americans, followed by *think about it, think about people, think about sex, think about food, and think about ways*, in that order. Additionally, we have shown that the collocations *things, it, people, sex, food, ways, life, death, money, women, right, marriage, men, love, and home* are linked to both *think of* and *think about*, but the other nouns are not linked to them. This in turn indicates that *think of* and *think about* are slightly different from each other. In section 4, we have argued that the expression *think of ways* is the most preferred by the British, followed by *think of things, think of others (think of people), think of love, and think of life*, in descending order. We have further argued that *think about things* is the most preferred by the British, followed by *think about death (think about people, think about sex), and think about food*, in that order. Also, we have shown that in the BNC, the nouns *things, death, people, home, women, children, language, others, and love* are linked to both *think of* and *think about*, but the other nouns are not linked to them. This suggests that *think of* is partly different from *think about* in its use. Finally, we have maintained that the nouns *people, life, love, women, death, things, home, and ways* are linked to both *think of 1* (American) and *think of 2* (British). We have also maintained that the collocations *death, home, money, women, politics, right, love, things, food, sex, people, work, and issues* are linked to *think about 1* (American) and *think about 2* (British). This in turn suggests that there is a close correlation between American English and British English.

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