

# Metaphorical prepositions in L2 English

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# Prepositions are difficult



It to oh is the same as saying throi  
s arise hour when our power of c  
ince pleasures to be welcomed a  
int, sitions of business it will freq  
gs therefore always holds in these  
re else he induces pain to avc  
notid praising pain for human  
ain gain was no...  
o bef the truth...  
ome but because those who di  
n to ful. Nor...  
w also ally d...  
stem  
jects  
ire ra  
s to

s to enjoy a pleasure tha  
On the other hand, w  
harms of pleasure of th  
ensue; and equal blam  
to obtain s... shrinking from toil an  
p annoying... ce is untrammelled an  
nd with ne every gain avoided, but  
nt, so blindingly poor that presere  
gs to those... tters to this principle s  
these cases worse parts. But I mus  
nothing prev... but I must explain t  
in circ... the complete account s  
o be repud... of human happiness, &  
on... he reje... ot know how to pursu  
n to you how... loves or persists c  
all this n... which toil and pain ca



## Material



### NICLE

- The International Corpus of Learner English (Norw.)
- Untimed, argumentative essays
- Prompts provided
- Collection = 1999-2002
  
- 29 texts
- 20,466

### LINDSEI-NO

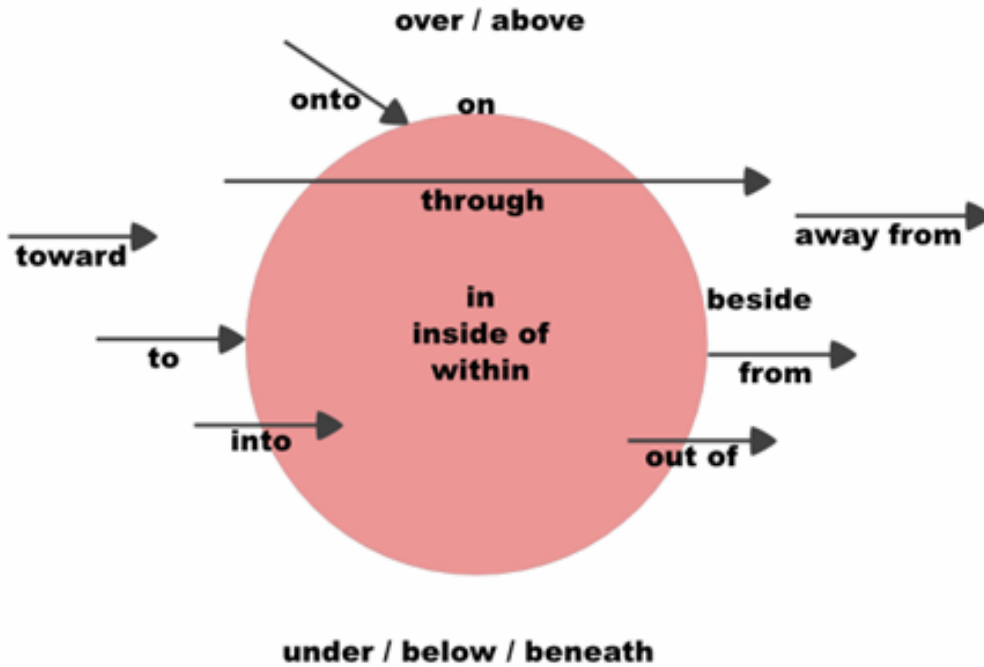
- The Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage (Norw.)
- 15-minute 'interviews'
- Tri-fold structure
- Collection = 2010-2012
  
- 50 texts
- 83,675 words (learner turns)

Year-long tertiary level course in English  
Upper intermediate - advanced proficiency

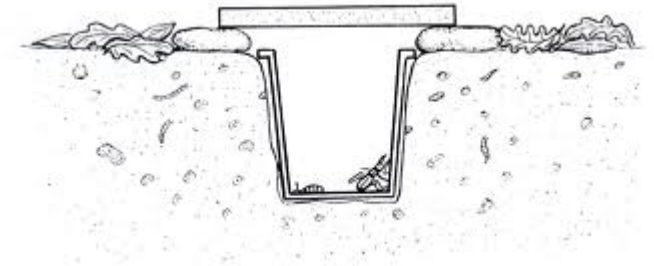
# Research questions

1. How often do Norwegian learners of English produce a divergent preposition?
2. Is there a significant difference between metaphorical use of prepositions across the spoken and written modes in Norwegian L2 learner English?
3. Is there a correlation between divergent use and metaphorical use?

# How can prepositions be metaphorical?



fall **in** love



# Procedure

- Identify prepositions
  - NICLE = CLAWS PoS tagging
  - LINDSEI = 92 prepositions
  - Exclusions
    - Phrasal verb particles, polywords, titles
    - *as, than, like*
- Categorize for divergence
- Categorize for metaphor status
  - Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP)

# Categorization of divergence



*I got some relatives (em) **in** New Jersey and **in** Salt Lake City as well (NO046)*



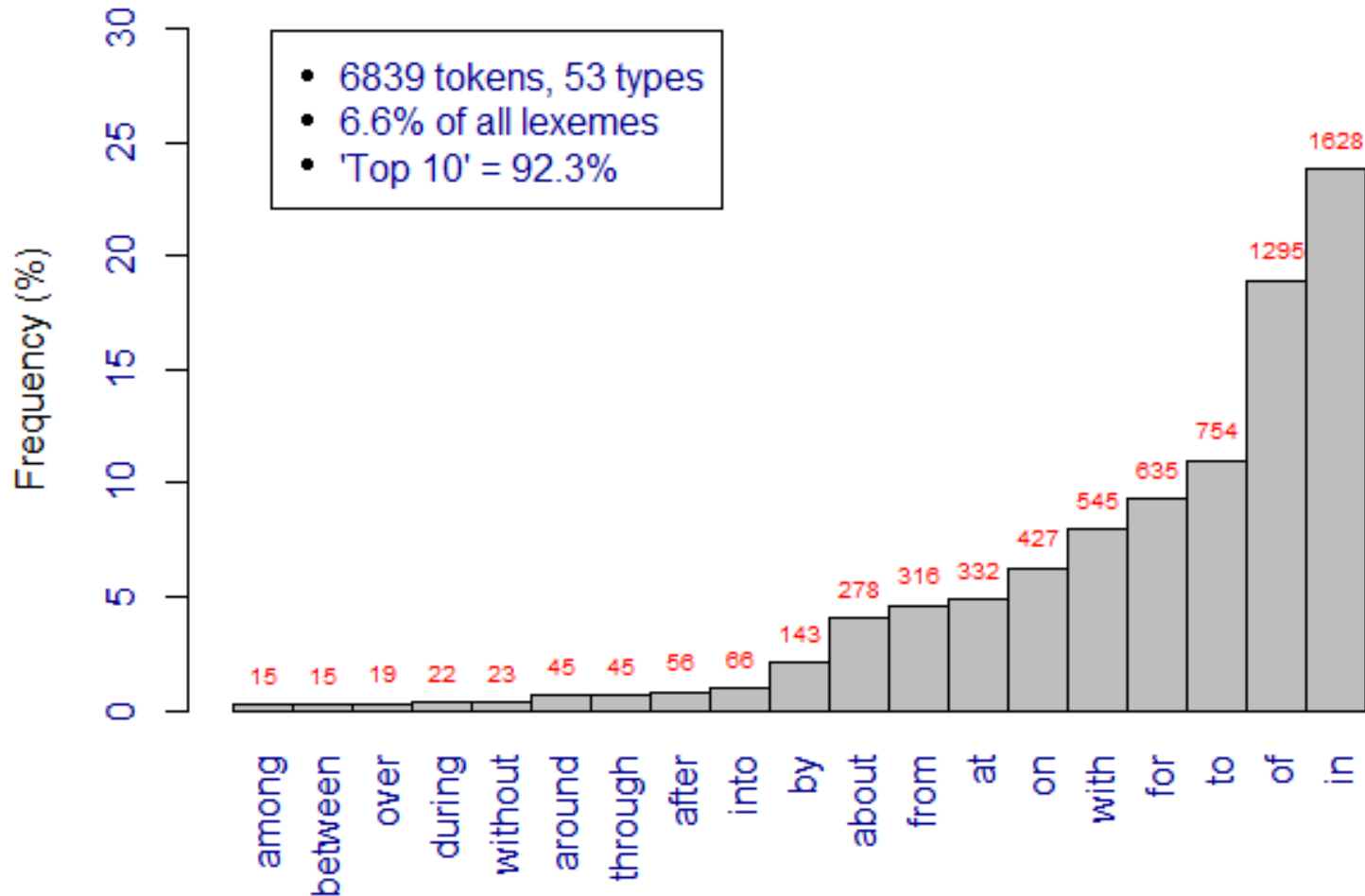
*and then (eh) there is competition **in** this level (NO006)*



*so I went there and: . I really liked it so **after** the= and it was only for three months a half semester (NO014)*



## Preposition frequency NICLE & LINDSEI

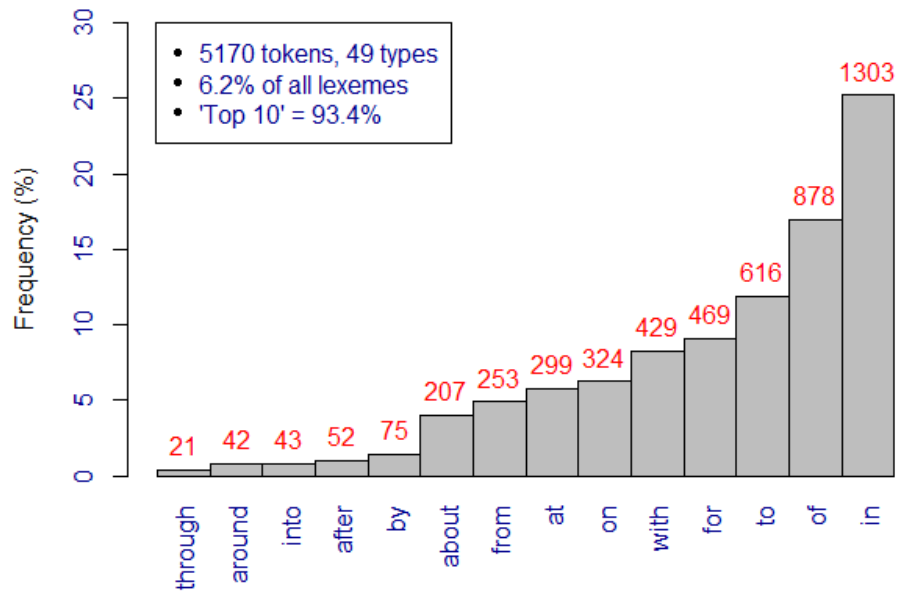


(≥ 15 occurrences)

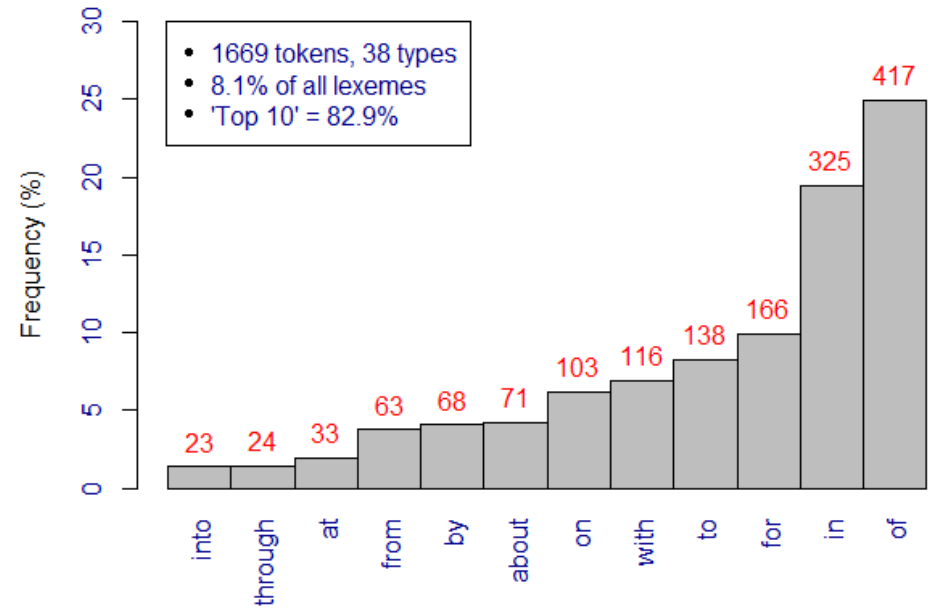


# Preposition frequency per mode

LINDSEI



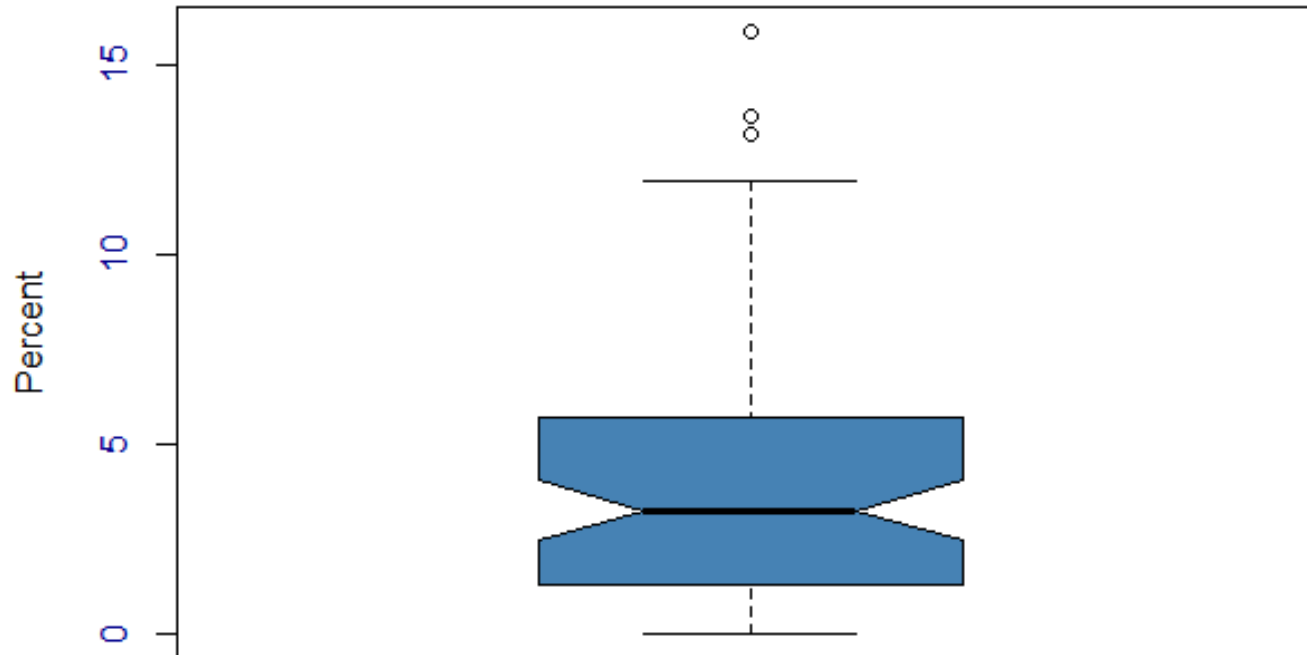
NICLE



( ≥ 15 occurrences)

# Question 1: How often do Norwegian learners of English produce a divergent preposition?

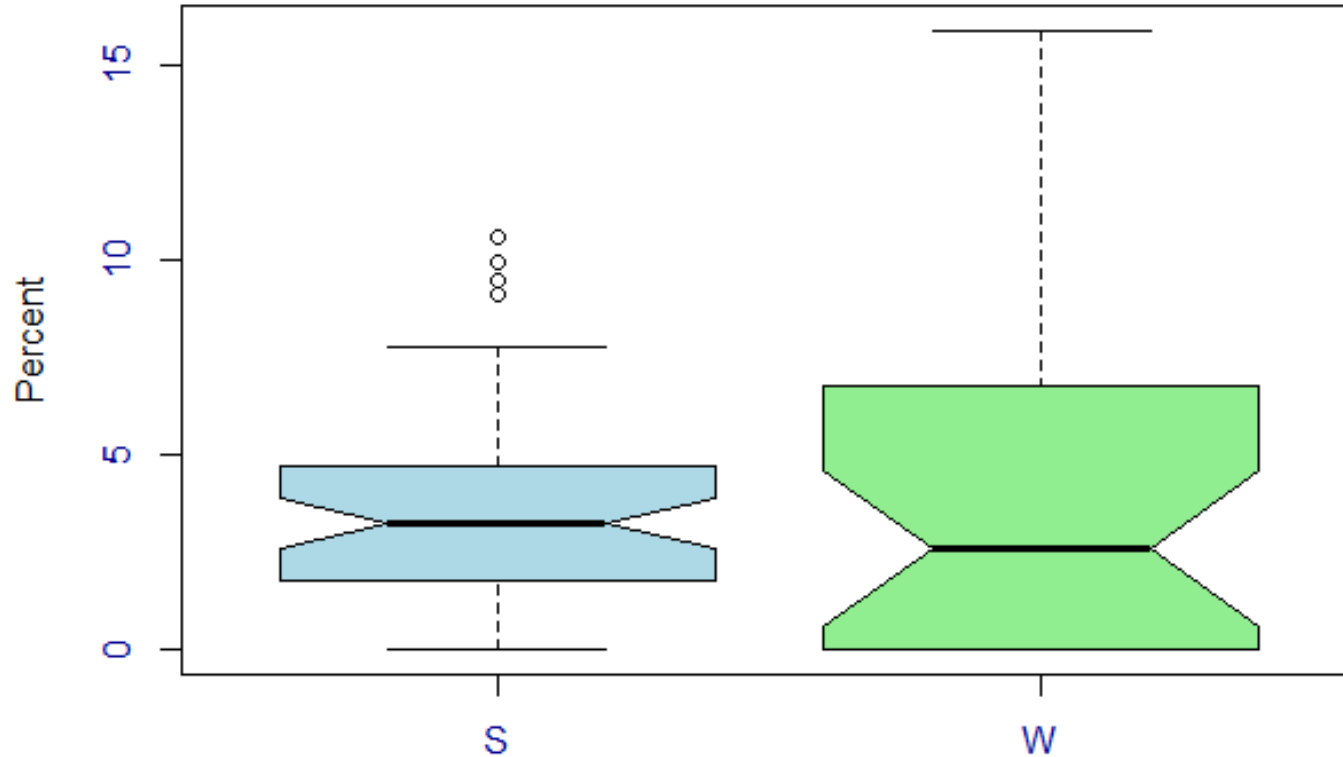
Overall divergence frequency



**Median = 3.2%**  
**Mean = 4.0%**

# Divergence across the modes

Overall divergence frequency per mode



**Median = 3.2%**

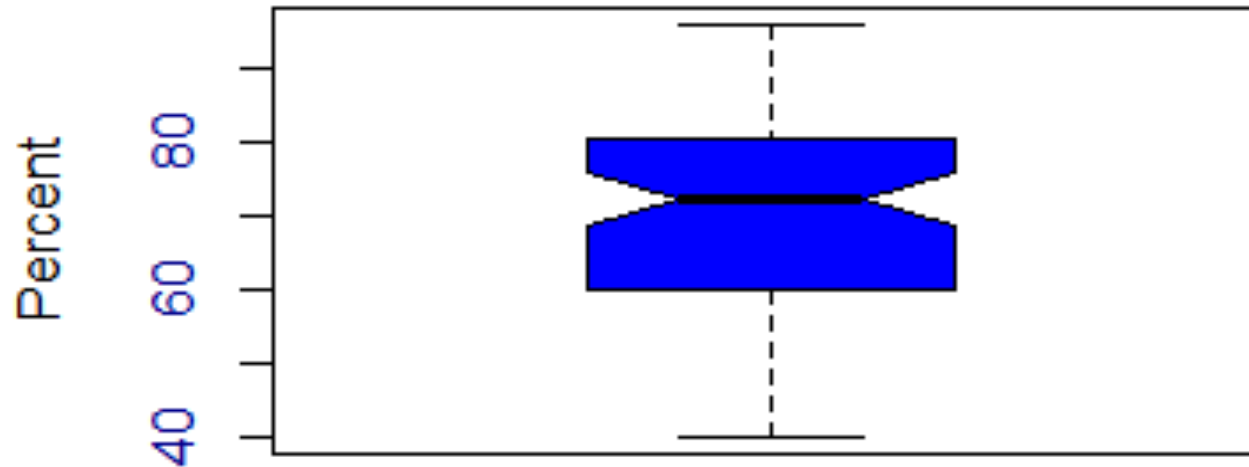
**Mean = 3.8%**

**Median = 2.6%**

**Mean = 4.4%**

# The most metaphorical word class...

## Overall metaphor frequency

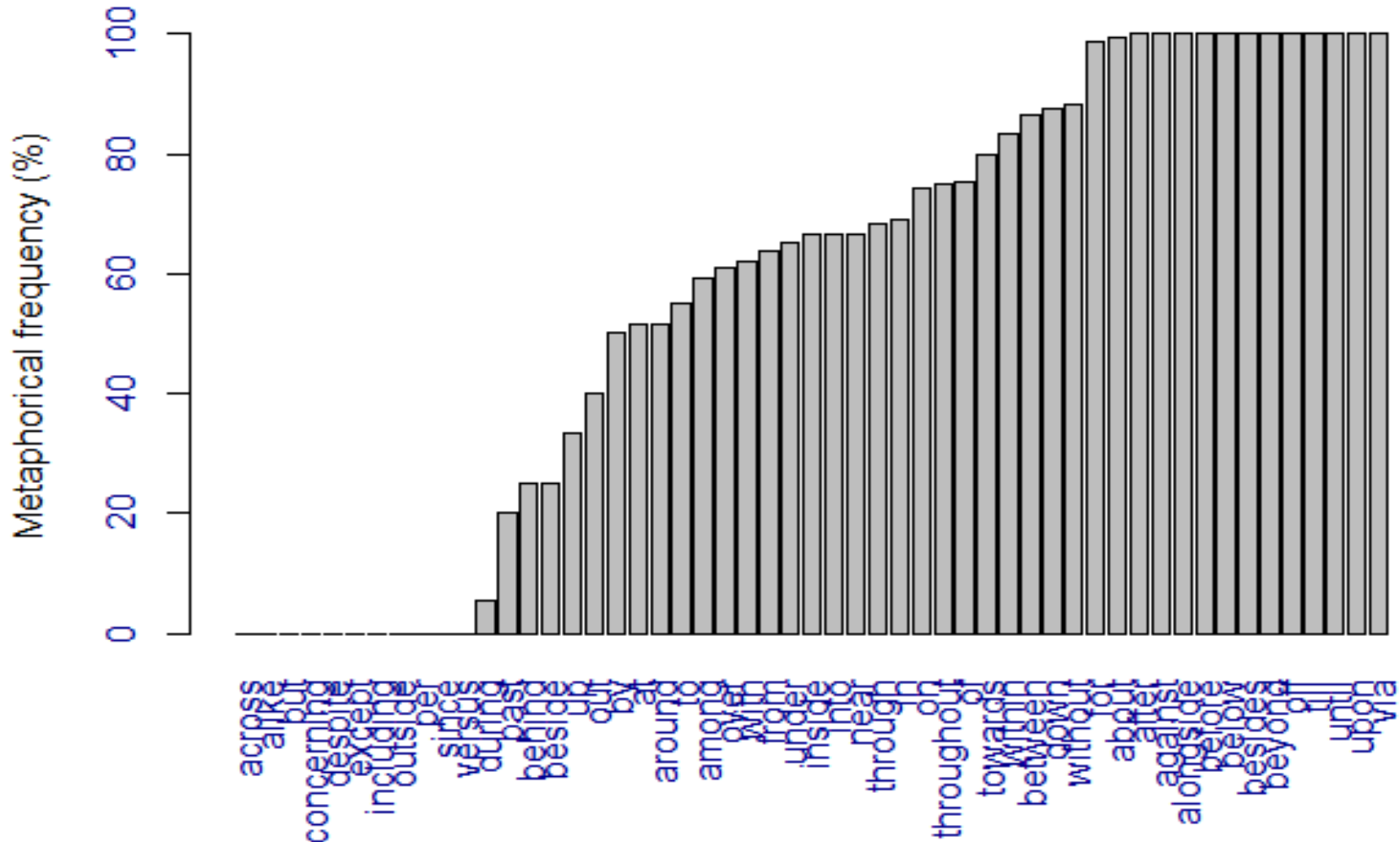


**Median = 71.9%**  
**Mean = 70.4%**

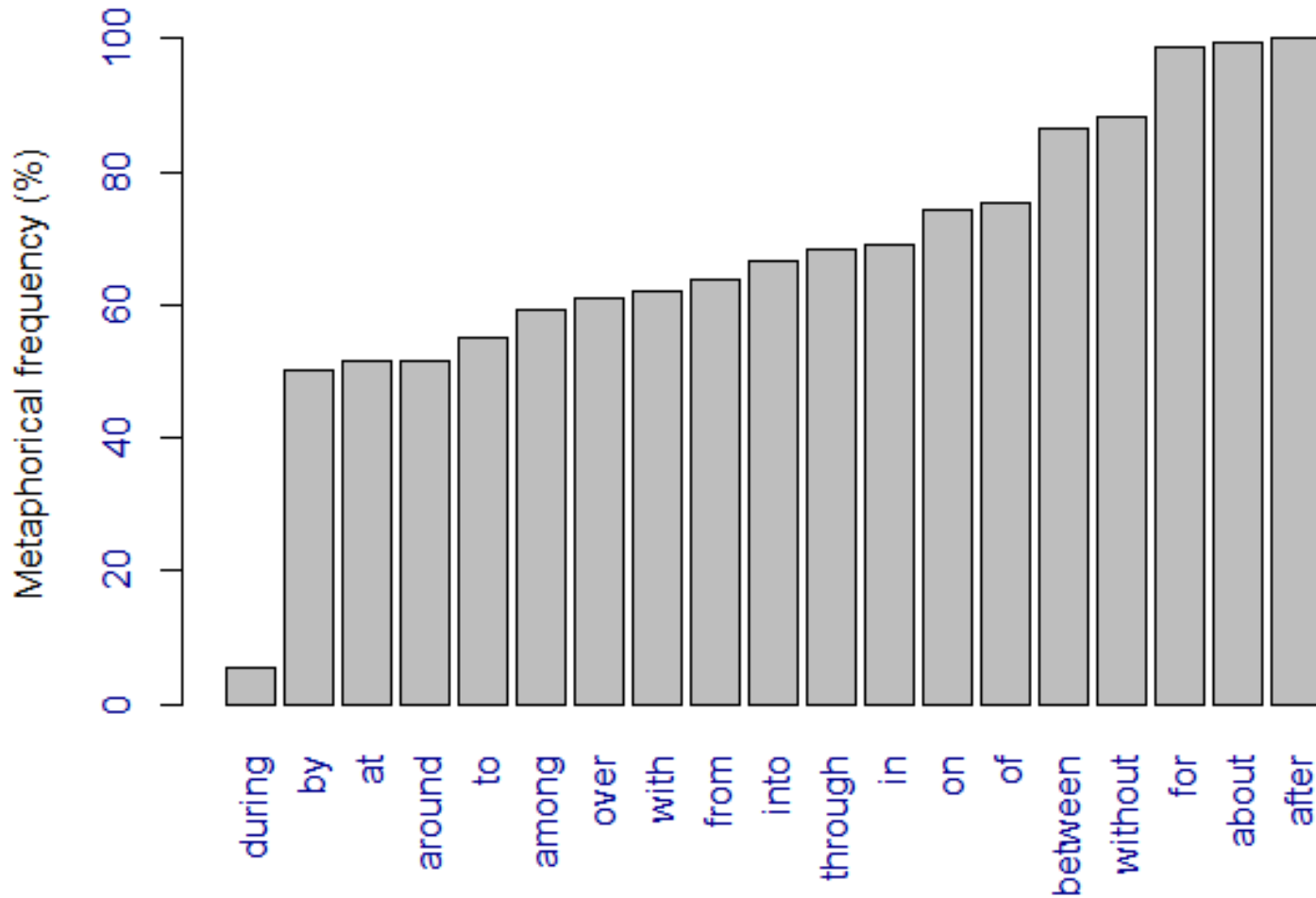
# The most metaphorical word class...

...but some prepositions are more metaphorical than others

Metaphoricity per preposition



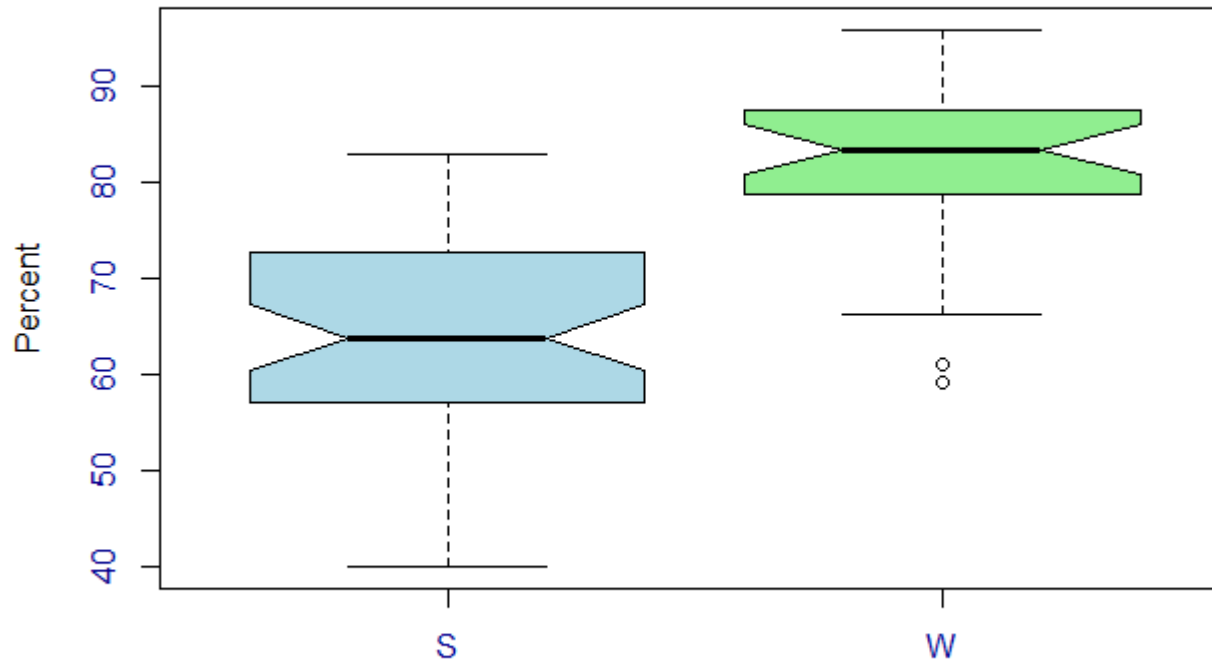
## Metaphoricity per preposition



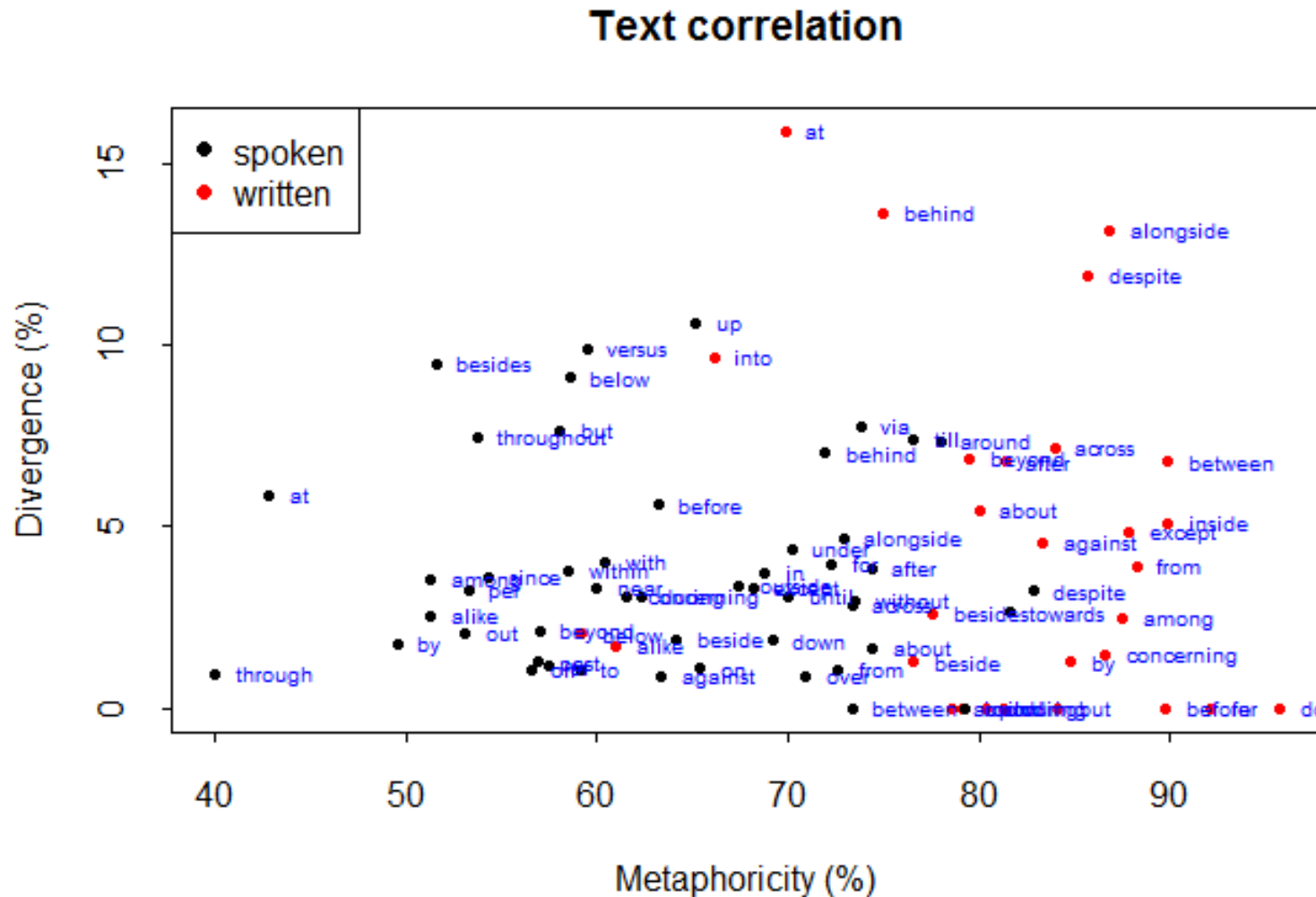
(  $\geq$  15 occurrences)

## Question 2: Is there a significant difference between metaphorical use of prepositions across the spoken and written modes in Norwegian L2 learner English?

Metaphor frequency per mode

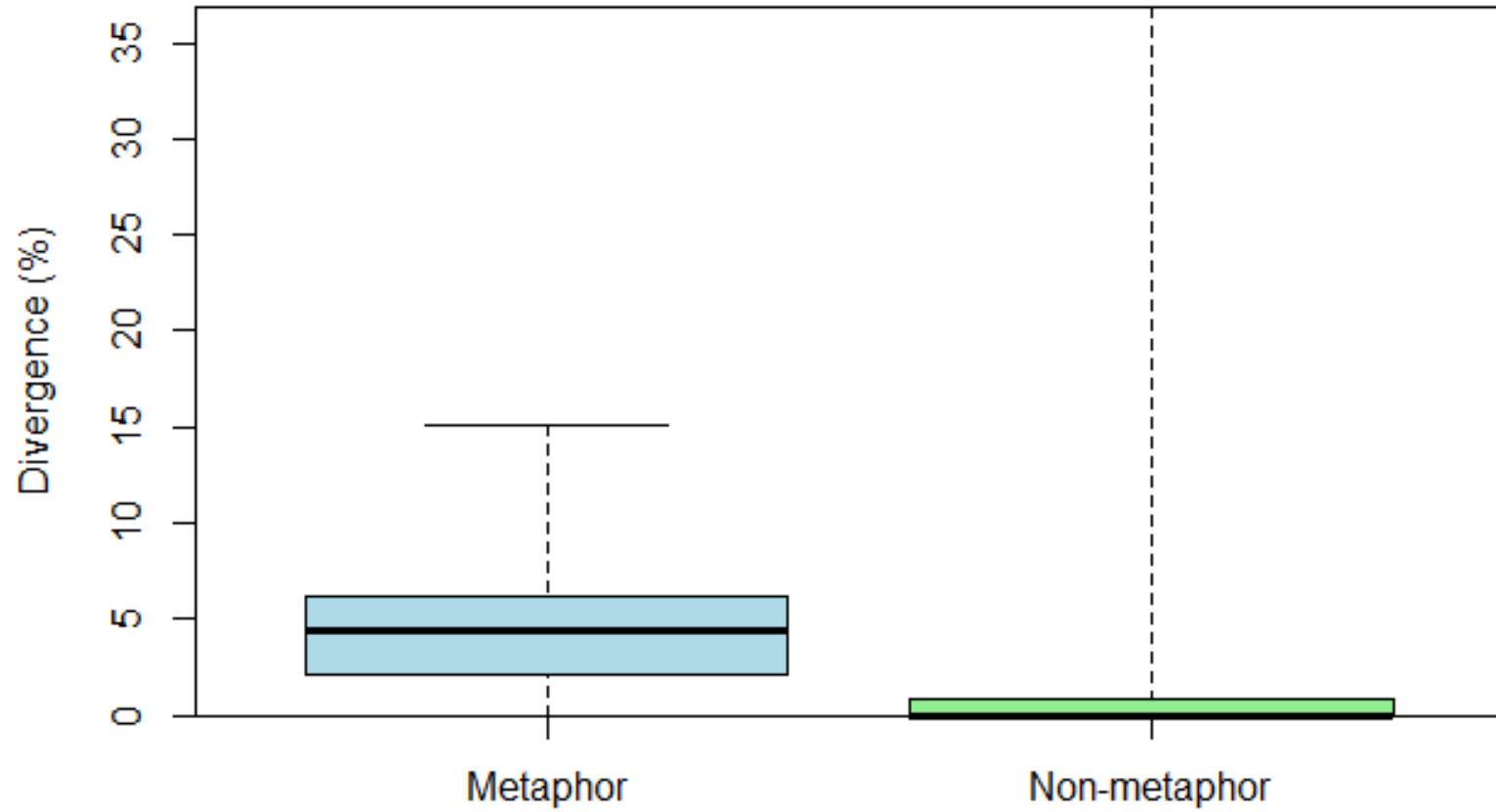


# Question 3: Is there a correlation between divergent use and metaphorical use?

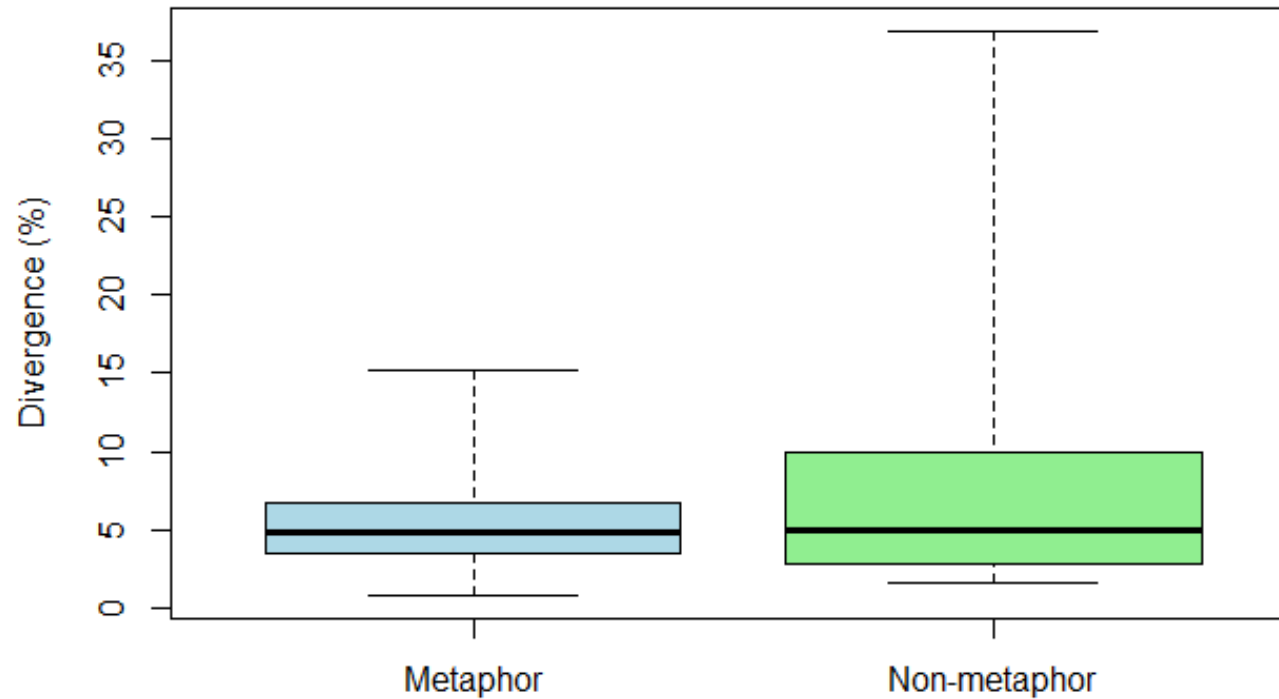




## Observation correlation



# Observation correlation



Excluding ZERO observations

# Concluding remarks

## About metaphor and prepositions:

- ✓ As a class, prepositions are highly metaphorical
- ✓ Not all prepositions are equally metaphorical

## About learner language:

- ✓ Few divergent prepositions overall
- ✓ More divergent prepositions in spoken learner language
  - Online processing
- ✓ More metaphorical prepositions in written learner language
  - Topic
- ✓ No correlation between divergence and metaphoricity

## About method:

- ✓ Consider the individual informants/texts, not (just) aggregate data
- ✓ Which average?
- ✓ Valid statistical tests for your data

# Future areas of research

- Learners with other L1s
- Younger / less proficient learners
- Longitudinal studies
- Individual prepositions

# Selected references

- Nacey, Susan and Anne-Line Graedler (2014). Phrasal verbs in spoken and written L2 learner English. Paper presented at *ICAME 35*. University of Nottingham, 30 April-5 May.
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## Corpora and tools:

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